

early 1990s. It subsequently treats projects in Cape Town such as the Integrated Serviced Land Project (iSLP) and the Municipal Spatial Development Framework (MSDF). Makhulu contrasts the development discourse of ‘stakeholders’ and efforts to promote ‘public participation’ with colloquial discussions that depict houses with feet protruding from doors because the rooms are too small. While Makhulu is attentive to chronology, she avoids a strictly temporal approach and instead weaves the past into an understanding of the present. This perspective emphasizes continuity and thereby constructs a hard-hitting critique of the contemporary South African state and the uneven development of the country.

*Making Freedom* is as much about Makhulu’s own journey of understanding about the making of home as it is about ‘organic traditions of everyday struggle for home’ (20). The book is a rich source for historians and those seeking to understand socio-political transformations of Cape Town. But it is also an inspiration for South African researchers, as well as those with roots in this country, to sensitively and urgently capture oral histories from an aging generation who have lived through repression, transition, and continued exclusion. This book beautifully illuminates their efforts to make and find freedom in everyday routines and transgressions.

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## ART CAPITALIZED

*The Art of Life in South Africa.*

By Daniel Magaziner.

Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2016. Pp xix + 377. \$34.95, paperback (ISBN: 9780821422526).

doi:10.1017/S0021853718001020

**Key Words:** South Africa, arts, apartheid, education.

Although creation and decay could be said to be constituent parts of the cycle of life, when seen through the eyes of Daniel Magaziner and the photographer Cedric Nunn, these two opposing forces give the history of the Ndaleni art school a bitter poignancy. What were once animated and bold works of art now stand as mutilated relics. The institution’s history receives an overdue narration and acknowledgement, even though to do so means dealing with its ambivalent origins as an apartheid-era training college created to train teachers to teach not art but craftwork in African schools.

What Magaziner achieves in *The Art of Life* is not just a historical account of a forgotten art school, however. His account is also that of the unintended consequences of Ndaleni, namely, that the school did train artists and inspire in many more a desire to create. These contradictions are balanced against each other and Magaziner opts to present apartheid as a discordant orchestration which needs to be understood ‘beyond the well-worn keys’ (9). His book is therefore a call for a revised understanding of the lived experience of apartheid and with this revision emerges personalities and actors who were more than just cogs in the

machine. This perspective does not mean that Magaziner writes about apartheid as attenuated brutality. Rather, his eulogy to the Ndalení art school is undergirded by the voices of those who travelled there to be educated. By foregrounding the ideals that energised Ndalení's art students, Magaziner paints a picture of not just the naïveté of the enterprise, but of the long reach of the ethos and values that it inculcated in those who taught and studied there. Thus, although Magaziner's book is a biography of an institution, it is also a biography of the teachers and students who dared to believe that art could change the world, even if it only changed a sliver of it.

Exultation. That word is repeated so many times in *The Art of Life* that it colours the mood of the whole book. What was so special about this art school that it would make its students repeatedly speak of their elation at being either there, or of being alumni of that place? The Ndalení art school was established in 1952 as the brainchild of John Watt Grossert, who had trained in fine arts at the University of Natal and was then working as the organiser for arts and crafts in the Natal Province. Grossert was not, however, the originator of the idea of opening an art school for Africans, since this idea was already realized by other institutions, such as the Cyrene Mission in what was then Southern Rhodesia and Grace Dieu near Pietersburg. The latter institution began teaching wood carving as early as 1925. In founding Ndalení, Grossert was influenced by the international ascendance of art education in the works of theorists such as Arthur Lismer, who asserted that all children can and should be taught to create as part of their development as human beings. These ideas, together with the discovery of 'primitivism' by modernist European artists, created the context within which Grossert and others imagined the ideal institution for the training of black craftsmen and women.

What Grossert envisioned was not the creation of a new tradition of creativity among black South Africans. Rather, what South Africa's primitivists had in mind was the revitalisation of African crafts in the name of 'craft modernity' (22). The latter concept was elaborated into a variety of engagements with not just utilitarian objects such as hand-held brooms and grass beer-strainers, but was also used to re-interpret the architectural and spatial organisation of African homes and villages. This search for a distinctly African aesthetic precipitated and shaped the founding of Ndalení as the place from which these ideas would be broadcast to young black children in the classroom. However, as Magaziner illustrates in his book, the overriding limit of these ideals was not only the lack of resources (paint, clay, wood, bronze, etc.) but also the opposition to craftwork that principals and teachers often expressed. Ndalení was therefore an institution that worked against this derision and scepticism and attempted to demonstrate to the sceptics that art could be fruitfully taught even in circumstances of want and scarcity. Thus, Ndalení's alumni would contribute letters, poems, and sketches to the institution's newsletter, ARTTRA, in which they described how they were making 'something out of nothing' in their individualised and often trying environments (117).<sup>10</sup> It was this can-do spirit that typified the Ndalení graduate. Regardless of their destinations after Ndalení, these representatives of ART continued to fight against the dullness and bluntness of Bantu

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<sup>10</sup> The word 'ARTTRA' is 'art' plus its mirror image; it was the name of the newsletter that circulated among Ndalení alumni.

Education. (The word 'ART' in capitals was often used by alumni to describe what they had learned at Ndaleni.)

Ndaleni closed in 1981 and its surviving faculty member, Lorna Peirson, archived her former students' artworks, letters, and other miscellany. Yet, in Magaziner's book, the 1981 closure did not actually mark the end. In the epilogue, aptly titled 'The art of the past', Magaziner demonstrates the many ways in which some alumni, teachers, and art historians purposefully forgot Ndaleni or abbreviated its role in the creation of black artists in South Africa. Not only was the institution overshadowed by other training schools such as Cecil Skotnes' Polly Street and the Lutherans' Rorke's Drift, some of Ndaleni's artworks were simply lost in transit as they travelled from one site to another. Ultimately, what Magaziner's book demonstrates is that we should read with suspicion any volume or moment that purports to represent something called 'Contemporary South African Art', since this category is loaded with not just incompleteness but with deliberate forgetfulness.

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## A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE IN CENTRAL AFRICA

*Searching for Boko Haram: A History of Violence in Central Africa.*

By Scott MacEachern.

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. 352. \$29.95, paperback (ISBN 9780190492526).

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**Key Words:** Cameroon, violence, archaeology, politics.

*Searching for Boko Haram* offers a summary of research led by archaeologists in the *extrême-nord* region of Cameroon since the 1980s. Based on Scott MacEachern's personal experience in the region, this book aims at providing up-to-date background information to journalists and academics studying the Boko Haram insurgency. The years spent in the field make this study invaluable for those interested in the Cameroonian dimension of Boko Haram. Indeed, MacEachern has been working as an archaeologist in Northern Cameroon since 1990 and his analysis of the complex and varied Northern Cameroonian societies is extremely well-written. It is worth noting, however, that *Searching for Boko Haram* hardly examines modern North-Eastern Nigerian history; MacEachern relies on sources he gathered in Northern Cameroon and secondary sources on Nigeria. The introduction makes a very clear point: this is not merely another publication on Boko Haram but rather one that focuses on the 'cultural logics within which violence takes place' (26).

Chapter Two provides an archaeological and historical background that stretches well before the origins of Boko Haram. In very clear language, the author describes the climatic history of the Sahara and the Lake Chad Basin. Beginning his narrative with the 'Green Sahara', the author delves into the history of the first populations living on the shores of Lake Mega-Chad. For example, he mentions that one of the oldest watercrafts in the world (built between 7,000 and 8,000 years ago) was discovered in Yobe, Nigeria.