

a significant aspect of the analysis. Readers will note that 'white' in Foster's usage means 'of European heritage', not 'differentiated from black'. In this book, white South African identity arose through an attenuation of British heritage in a new, sunny, grassy, high country. The social realities and indigenous inhabitants of that country do not figure strongly. As a telling indication, consider that the First World War battlefield at Delville Wood in France (where South Africans died in great numbers and where a Herbert Baker monument was built) figures more prominently than the landscapes of all the black reserves within the country itself.

Brown University

NANCY J. JACOBS

SOUTH AFRICAN UNDERSTANDINGS OF CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

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Darkroom: Photography and New Media in South Africa Since 1950. Edited by TOSHA GRANTHAM. Charlottesville, VA and London: Virginia Museum of Fine Arts/Richmond: University of Virginia Press, 2009. Pp. vi + 150. £31.50/\$35, paperback (ISBN 978-0-917024-89-6).

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Prior to the Football World Cup, sections of the international media reportedly warned that sports fans visiting South Africa took their lives in their hands: stab-proof vests were flagged as essential to those who survived the earthquakes and the hungry lions roaming city streets. As Tumelo Mosaka notes in conversation with Isolde Brielmaier and Tosha Grantham, the curator of *Darkroom: Photography and New Media in South Africa since 1950*, 'the media and the cultural environment in the West are still very much fixated on the myth of Africa as the "Dark Continent"' (p. 20), and certainly media reports around the Football World Cup confirmed that South Africa continues to be framed by this racist discourse. In representing 'a brief survey of photography, photo-based installations, and video art made in South Africa since 1950' (p. 2) this catalogue, and the exhibition it accompanied, aims to present a challenge to this 'dark continent' mythology by foregrounding South African understandings and perspectives of continuity and change over the past sixty years. Prefaced by Deborah Willis, the catalogue begins with an introduction by Grantham that is followed by essays from Isolde Brielmaier and Tumelo Mosaka. Brielmaier traces change in academic approaches to visual images in a critical essay that draws attention to the ways in which photographers have both challenged and worked with dominant understandings of photography. Mosaka comments on the increasingly rapid dissemination of visual images around the globe since the beginning of the twentieth century, while insisting on the importance of context in shaping competing and often contradictory understandings of such images.

The images that follow these essays are grouped into eight loosely chronological categories that flesh out and illustrate some of the points raised by Brielmaier and Mosaka. The first of these categories contains a range of 12 contrasting images that examine 'the complexities of life in South Africa after social, economic, and political restrictions based on race were codified' (p. 22) over the course of the 1950s–1970s. A central theme is the multifaceted resistance to apartheid,

perhaps epitomized in the contrast between Jurgen Schadeburg's 'Black sash, Johannesburg' and Alf Khumalo's 'Political unrest, Moroka, Soweto'. In striking contrast with this first group are the 16 images in the second category, which explore 'moments of leisure and tenderness over the same period' (p. 36). Ian Berry's image of a couple in a Fordsburg cafe, alongside work by Schadeburg, Khumalo, and Goldblatt portraying musicians, games and sporting moments, weddings, and even a mourner at a funeral, foreground the day-to-day normality underpinning the insanity of apartheid. The final images in this section, by Sukhdeo Mohanlall, draw attention to continuity and change over the same period.

Next come 12 more disparate images entitled 'Separate living: a legacy of apartheid 1970s–2000s'. David Goldblatt's 'A not white family in bed on a Sunday morning' is striking precisely because it is so mundane, while Alf Khumalo's 'Shoot to kill' and 'A protest march after the Uitenhage Massacre of 21st March, 1985' wield a powerful emotional clout. Entitled 'A day in the life, 1970s–2000s', section four 'includes images of workers, labourers as well as "municipal people" who have been charged with leading the structural changes of the new South Africa' (p. 68). Images of people at work, travelling, and protesting against apartheid are juxtaposed against others in which the landscapes are almost empty of people, or that highlight the contrasts between structures built to last and those that are more transient. Section five 'focuses on how themes related to the history of apartheid have been reconciled in contemporary art' (p. 92) and represents a shift towards using photographic images in more complicated and overtly political ways. Sue Williamson's 49 images of the 'pass' book entitled 'For thirty years next to his heart' is a case in point.

It is unfortunate that the catalogue, and the exhibition it accompanied, is dominated by a limited range of perspectives up until this point. While race and gender are both clearly social constructs, they also speak to particular lived experiences of privilege and marginalization that shape and frame perspective, and the collection could have been strengthened by the inclusion of a wider range of 'voices' in these first five sections: it is men's perspectives, and in particular white men's perspectives, that dominate the first half of the catalogue. The photo essays in section six by Santu Mofokeng and Andrew Shabangu foregrounding continuity and change over the 1990s–2000s and, through showing 'how urban and rural, sacred and secular traditions form an enduring part of South African life' (p. 104), go some way towards broadening the gaze, as does section seven, where works by Berni Searle, William Kentridge, Zwelethu Mthethwa, and Sue Williamson deploy a variety of media to elicit more critical reflections on the part of the audience. It is in the final section, where the work of young photographers and video artists such as Tracey Rose, Robin Rhode, Senzeni Marasela, Nontsikelelo Veleko, Thando Mama, and Berni Searle is featured that one begins to see a more representative range of South African perspectives, although even here there are gaps. There is nothing by Zanele Muholi, for example. Perhaps such gaps are inevitable, given the constraints of space and cost in producing the exhibition and the catalogue. Overall, however, and despite the gaps, the collection represents a welcome challenge to the 'dark continent' discourse.

University of the Western Cape

LINDSAY CLOWES