
Wake Up, This Is Joburg
Photographs by Mark Lewis
Words by Tanya Zack

**Wake Up,
This Is Joburg**

BUY

A Theory in Forms Book

SERIES EDITORS Nancy Rose Hunt and Achille Mbembe

Wake Up, This Is Joburg

Words by Tanya Zack
Photographs by Mark Lewis

WITH A FOREWORD BY ACHAL PRABHALA

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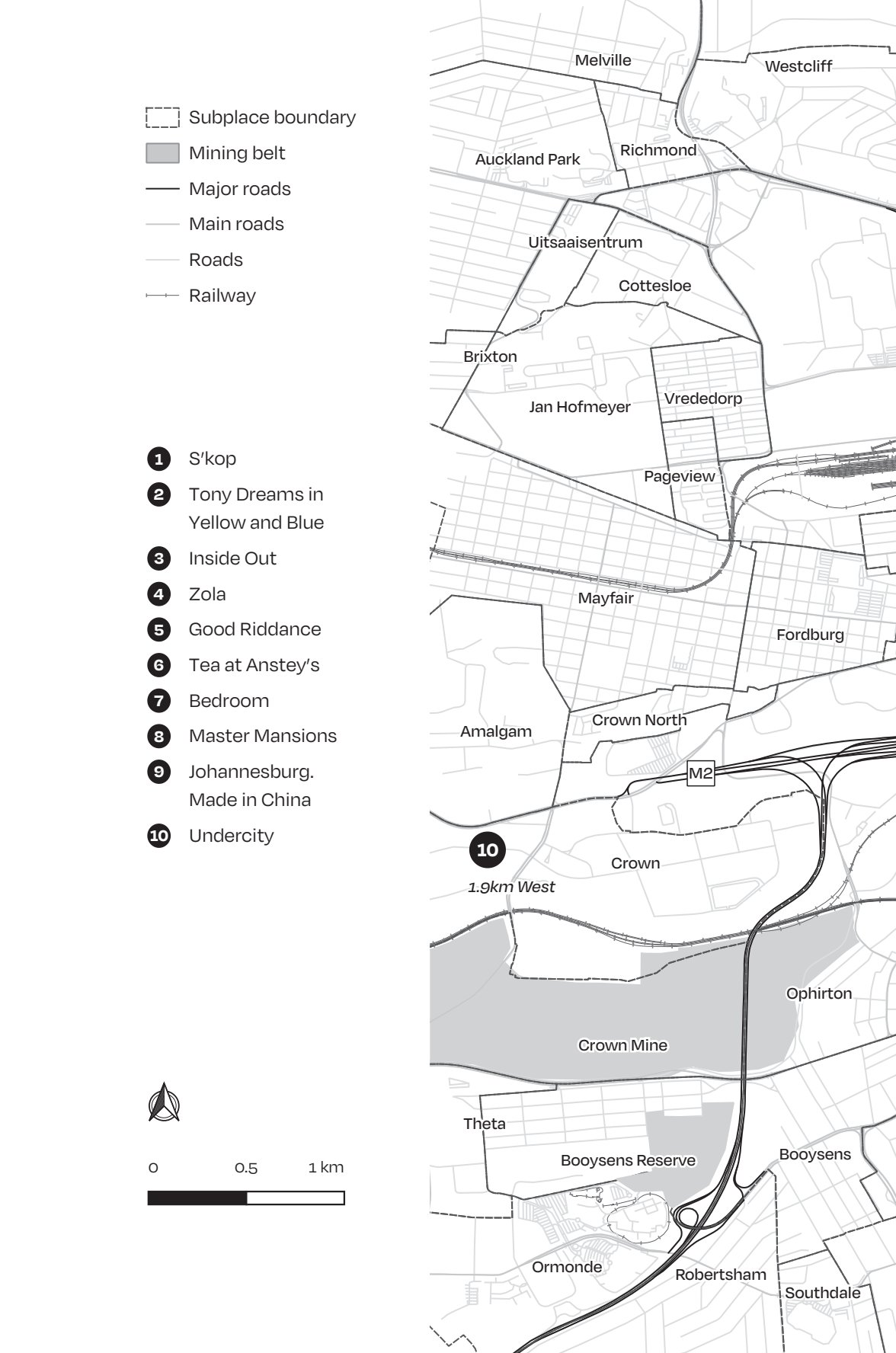
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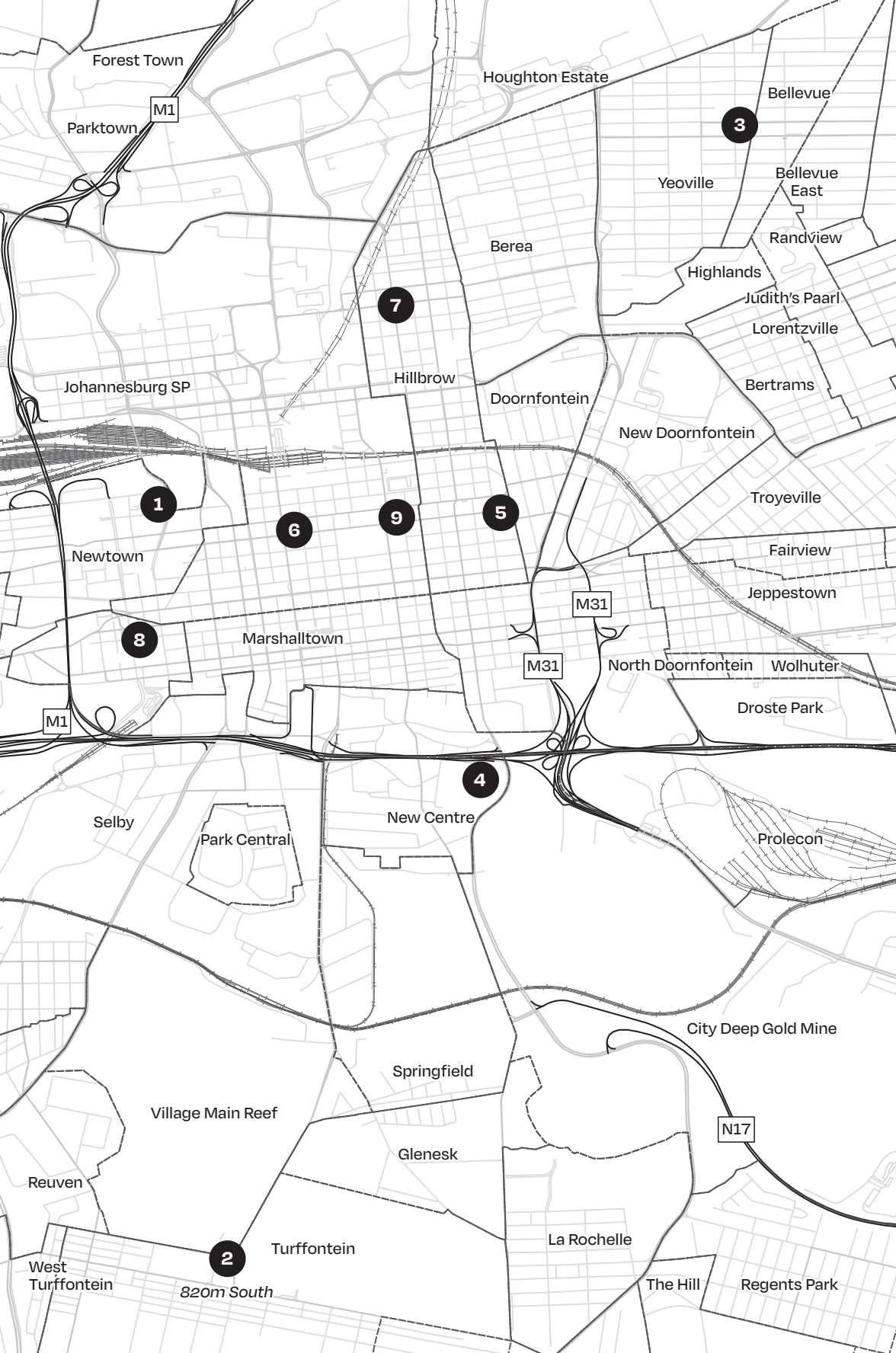
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Regents Park

Foreword True Places

ACHAL PRABHALA

It is not down in any map; true places never are.
Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale*

One evening, a few years ago, I wrapped up my last hour of teaching at Wits University in Johannesburg and drove home. I was in a good mood: the weather was perfect, the semester had gone exceptionally well, and I had two days of nothing ahead of me, after which I was going to take a flight back to my other home—Bangalore, in India—which is where I mostly live. To get home, in Yeoville, I took a route I had taken a thousand times, down Empire Road, up a road that no one ever calls Clarendon Place but is, and on to Louis Botha Avenue, a long, narrow strip with only two lanes on each side, which makes driving along it a bit like playing a late 1980s video game: choose the left lane and get stuck behind minibus taxis as they arbitrarily lurch to a halt; stay in the right lane and get stuck behind someone who wants to turn right into Berea, Hillbrow, or Yeoville.

As I pulled up to the Clarendon Place junction, I stopped at a red light by Clarendon Court, an exquisitely distressed midcentury island of flats marooned in a sea of midcentury roads. I had my window rolled down. I had the radio on. It was my fourteenth year of living in South Africa, so when I saw a young, casually dressed man sizing me up as he leaned against the outer wall of Clarendon Court, I should have known what was coming. But I did not. Instead, I stayed frozen as he sauntered over, my window still open, my hand still resting on the door, the radio still on. He asked me

to hand over my phone, putting one hand in his pocket, saying he had a gun. I remember remaining frozen, but I must have refused, because he got mildly worked up and said he would shoot me. Right then, the lights changed, traffic moved, and so did I, rolling up my window as I accelerated. My would-be assailant tried to hold on until it became clear that his arm was no match for my electric window, so he simply cursed and ran away into Clarendon Court, or the road behind it, or the teeming inner city that lay beyond the road, or somewhere even further.

The whole thing was quite funny. I can still remember every pivot on that young man's emotional register, from the initial swagger to consternation to eventual defeat. At that point, I had lived in Johannesburg's baddest zone for so long, the program—the small, oddly specific things you're told to do when you live in an area like Yeoville—had become part of my body at a cellular level. Perhaps my cells momentarily collapsed; perhaps I thought I could will my mood onto the city. Maybe I was sick of following not just one program but several at the same time—maybe all those conflicting lines of code colliding against each other in a single day or even in a single journey had finally shut my system down. Walk anywhere in the day in the inner city, but don't walk alone after dark; don't walk anywhere at any time in the rich suburbs; seek out people; fear crowds; drive a Toyota, everyone does; never drive a Toyota, everyone wants one; drive a rubbish car that no one will steal; never drive a rubbish car because the police will haunt you; talk to people; don't talk to anyone; enjoy your freedom; fear everything.

I should confess that I spend most of the year in a city where the worst thing that ever happens is the weather. In Bangalore, people discuss the single-digit variations in temperature that mark what passes for seasonal change in the hushed tones of Northcliff neighbors discussing the latest triple homicide in Johannesburg. Don't get me wrong; it's not the boondocks. Bangalore is a sprawling, snarling metropolis of eight million people, and I love it, but sometimes I just want to push it off a cliff. A decade ago, after the unhappy conclusion of a brief relationship with a resident of Karachi, Pakistan—one of the most unstable cities in the world—I received what remains the most withering insult ever hurled at my hometown: "And Bangalore! I mean, does it even *have* a crime rate?"

To be sure, I don't think crime is exciting, and I don't miss the feeling of having to watch my back in public one bit when I'm away from Johannesburg. It's nerve-racking, and the reality of crime in the city—a disproportionate

reality for poor people—is heartrending and tragic. And still, through two decades of living and working in Johannesburg, crime is also not something that has actually happened to me. Perhaps it's because I have dark skin and don't look rich. Perhaps it's because I'm male and built fairly big. Perhaps it's because I have only ever lived in working-class Johannesburg, secure inside that secret fold between poverty and wealth. And mainly, perhaps, it's because I've been lucky. But I offer you this anecdote of a doubtful crime to place this one little narrative against what is undoubtedly the ur-narrative of Johannesburg. I've loved this crucible of civilization for almost two decades now, as do millions of residents and visitors, and occasionally it can feel as if my conception of the city, the prevailing conception of the city, and even the city's *own* conception of itself are like different motorways, all with the same signs, except leading to different places.

I felt similarly dislocated when I read *S'kop*, the first in a set of slim volumes published by Fourthwall Books in Johannesburg—each story had a limited individual run before being brought together in the book you now hold—which is to say, the story felt both wrong and revelatory. You could say that *Wake Up, This Is Joburg* has its finger on the pulse of this pulsating city. You could say that it explores, with breathtaking sincerity, the extraordinary details lurking behind the ordinary lives of people who make this city function. You could say that it chronicles a remarkable catalogue of work, from mining cow skulls to mining gold, from sorting rubbish to making bowler hats, from selling fantasy weddings in a vegetable market to building baroque fantasies in Turffontein.

As for me, I would rather think of it as the equivalent of barreling down a hundred different motorways all at once, without a care for where you might end up, because wherever you do end up, you know one thing for sure: it will be a true place.

I took some time to acknowledge my own true feelings for Johannesburg. Like every other child growing up in Soviet-aligned India, I dreamed of going west and living in a fabulous Western city surrounded by fabulous Western things. What I didn't know then was that the Western city I yearned for was in South Africa, which, to be fair, is to the west of India. Try as I might—and I have—I cannot see Johannesburg as a festering sore in need of medical attention. I know the poverty, inequality, and crime statistics; in fact, I work with them on a daily basis in my life as an activist. In some factual manner, I get that Johannesburg is a wretched city, divided by a growing income gulf, plagued by persistent racism, rife with class

tension, teeming with crime, blistered by xenophobia, crowned with corruption, and inflicted with bad governance. But I did not grow up in Amsterdam or London or Boston, and I don't think cities can be defined by their worst problems. I cannot recognize the specter of imminent apocalypse that's invoked every time a new pothole appears on a road, and I am not traumatically shocked when a member of the police force asks for a bribe.

I'm sure I have low standards—spend an hour in Bangalore and you'll agree. I know I have some, but hopefully not too much, of the heartless immunity to poverty that other African immigrants to Johannesburg will recognize. Endless power cuts and the abject failure of the state are not bugs; they've been features of my daily life since I was born. Let me put this bluntly. Some people see Johannesburg as hell. I see it as a modern Western city, full of unimaginable freedoms, and run by black people: paradise. I'm not ashamed of what I feel—I think I live a responsible and engaged life, and I know it's possible to deeply love a deeply flawed city without having it imply a lack of concern for those trapped in its flaws.

This is my true Johannesburg: the glittering Western cosmopolis filled with desire and possibility and mobility, where everyone from every class and every race collides; where everything is questioned; where nothing is what it is or will be; and which is something that transforms itself, and me, every second of every day.

When I was about ten years old, I watched cycles and scooters overtake us as our car stalled in dense traffic, and I asked my father why we couldn't simply blow our horn and push them off the road—I assumed it was our right, being in a car that could go faster than two-wheelers, to go faster than two-wheelers. My father, a radar engineer who isn't normally given to moments of empathy with the class struggle, saw through my question. I was asking why we, as upper-class, upper-caste residents of Bangalore, did not have more of a right to the road than people who were not. "The reason we're not being murdered in our beds by all these people," he said, in a matter-of-fact voice, "is because they can overtake us on the roads."

I thought of my father's words in Rio de Janeiro, some years ago, at a dinner hosted by a French investment banker. I was just getting to know Brazil. His magnificent house in São Conrado had sweeping views of the South Atlantic; the pâté was perfect; the wine, wonderful; and except for my partner and me, everyone else in the room was white. As we looked out onto the ocean, I asked him the one question that was eating me up:

We had been in Rio for weeks and hadn't met a single middle-class black person. What was the deal with that? He shrugged. Were there any at his bank? I asked. None that he could think of, he replied, at least none in positions that mattered. "You know what the strangest thing about it is," he continued, expanding on the fact that 50 percent of the population had zero representation at his bank, "They don't seem to mind. They just don't seem to mind." As we left his house that night, one of the four armed security guards on the night shift clicked open an enormous metal gate. A flotilla of lights connected to an electronic security system blinked into submission, and another guard escorted us to our car. As we drove off, his military-grade security apparatus swung back into place, the guards retreating into their bunkers as the thick, opaque gate sealed shut, turning the whole place into an impenetrable fortress once again.

No, I thought: they *do* mind.

I could go on endlessly about the remarkable similarities and differences between the daily churn in Bangalore, Rio, and Johannesburg, the three cities I have lived and worked in for the better part of my adult life, but that's a subject for another time. I will say, though, that after having spent some time in the usual outposts of civilization, and having chosen to spend far more time in the tropical destinations I call home, stable societies get on my nerves. I'm convinced they're just better at hiding their flaws. Sure, I'd choose Sweden over Syria if those were the only choices, but give me the rampantly unequal, multi-ethnic, multiracial, multilingual democracies I've lived in over Scandinavia every single time. Even my bovinely placid Bangalore is churning; stubbornly and passive-aggressively, but churning it is—with conflicts over class, caste, language, and skin color flaring up at every turn. We may have no gun crime, but this city has been fiercely negotiating power and belonging from the moment it was formed, and the churn shows no signs of slowing.

When it comes down to it, there's no contest, really: as the youngest, loudest, and brashest of all third-world megalopolises, Johannesburg churns like it's being struck repeatedly by lightning bolts. The ferociousness of change can be disorienting; the direction and velocity of the change, whiplash-inducing. The change can be thrilling and liberating; it can be painful and debilitating. And I'd like to believe that the exciting, unsettling mess it leaves in its wake is something that will, one day, look a lot like progress.

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—T.Z. and M.L.

Introduction

The truth sometimes reminds me of a city buried in sand. . . . As time passes, the sand piles up even thicker, and occasionally it's blown away and what's below is revealed.

Haruki Murakami, *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*

Inner-City Johannesburg

ON NOVEMBER 12, 2018, the mayor of Johannesburg, Herman Mashaba, made a citizen's arrest. The news clipping recording this event cautions: "WARNING: This story contains graphic images." The article reproduces the mayor's tweet of the day before, which is illustrated by said graphic image (of a man pulling a trolley of slaughtered bovine heads in the Central Business District [CBD]): "I have just personally stopped this illegally [*sic*] act in our city. How do we allow meat trading like this? I am waiting for [the chief of the Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department (JMPD)] to come and attend before we experience a breakdown of unknown diseases in our [City of Johannesburg]" (Mjo 2018). Further messaging from the City noted the person who was arrested was "undocumented"[1] and

1 Foreign migrants to South Africa are required to have work, residence, refugee, or political asylum–seeking permits for their presence in the country to be deemed "legal."

would be charged accordingly. The congratulatory responses the mayor received for this act were drowned out by the negative publicity his conduct aroused. On social media and in the press, he was criticized for his anti-poor and anti-foreigner sentiments. Several commentators emphasized the ordinariness of the practice being denounced by the mayor. The removal of flesh from bovine heads is an informal but regular activity that supplies meat to the equally informal meat preparation on braziers set up at many transport interchanges in the city. But the mayor responded defiantly. This time his Twitter retort was "We are not going to sit back and allow people like you to bring us Ebolas in the name of small business. Health of our people first. Our health facilities are already stretched to the limit." That tweet landed him in front of the South African Human Rights Commission. In the days thereafter, he was compelled to apologize for the offense he may have caused street traders and foreign nationals. Within days of his expressed revulsion at the everyday sight of bloodied cow heads, the mayor announced the imminent release of a long-awaited policy for street trading in the inner city. And while this moderated impulse to direct informality through applying the law or penning a strategy still occupies bureaucrats, the economic activity attached to these cow heads—which our first story in this book probes—continues.

The executive mayor hailed from the Democratic Alliance (DA), the country's official opposition party. His leadership of the City was the product of a coalition between that libertarian party and the far-left Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). He was known for his uncompromising "back to basics" rhetoric and his support of the "free market," by which he meant formal business. He determinedly twinned his straight-talking mission for order and cleanliness in the inner city with vehement animosity toward foreign nationals and informal enterprise. His arguments spun on the "irrational jargon of criminality, backwardness and alarming health risks" (Mabasa 2018).

Mayor Mashaba had considerable support for his law-and-order approach to dealing with the problems of the inner city. The criminalizing of informal workers was not new in the City. Nor was it the position of only one political party. Rather it had currency across the political spectrum, especially when those workers were also foreign migrants. Mashaba's predecessor, the African National Congress (ANC) mayor Parks Tau, had presided over massive removals of street traders. Mashaba was simply the contemporary spokesperson for much that is feared in inner-city Johannesburg. His public statements on the inner city frequently linked high

rates of crime, building decay, congested living conditions in deteriorated buildings, and grime with the presence of informality and of foreign migrants. It is the sort of crude messaging that easily stokes a paranoia in a city built on segregation and on suspicion of the outsider. And it is the kind of messaging that fuels alarm that the inner city is tilting toward ungovernability.

This is Johannesburg. It's a place of reeling. A city where the public good is contested. Where making a living can be messy. Where the poor may be criminalized by the authorities mandated to protect them. Where violence simmers. But where people will stand up for their rights. So that there is an immediate outrage and a counter to a mayor's xenophobic messaging or acts of social injustice. In this way Johannesburg's moral measures are continually shifted and shunted across the balance board. And as the city lurches between crisis and celebration and back again, it surprises with its core strength, its agility, and its posture.

The contradictory forces that support and slacken the tension around being informal in the inner city implicate political ideologies, unemployment, segregationist histories, and hatreds as much as they invoke innovation, tolerance, and opportunity. The multiple influences beaming on the scene of a man pushing bloodied cow heads along an inner-city street are confounding. They are not explained by the mayor's assessment. Indeed the stressed environment of the inner city is enormously productive, yielding social and monetary value and globalized connections that easily outstrip those of affluent suburban commerce. As a planner and a photographer, we are curious about the complexity that lies behind the activities and scenes that are in many ways peculiar to Johannesburg's streets and buildings. The stories we tell in this volume are the product of our looking, listening, and reflecting on the ordinary and the extraordinary in ten slices of the city.

The city is generous in its manifestation of a contemporary postcolonial African urbanity. If you have the eyes to see, it offers a concentration of the plurality and the energy of an Afropolitan metropolis (Mbembé and Nuttall 2004) that would fill a library of texts. It parades modernism and its surplus with the expectant vigor of newly arrived migrants; local practices with globalized trade; exquisitely urban experiences with deep linkages to rural homesteads; and affection and hostility for the other—because in some way or another most inhabitants here are outsiders.

It interweaves the past and present in inextricable ways. There is no escaping the dramatic superimposition of eras in the few city blocks that

compose the historical core. A single frame shot from a high-rise building in Johannesburg can reveal the city's earliest history in its mining infrastructure to its modernist architectures to its chaotic informality and its yet-to-be-determined future. These views are windows to perplexity. They inspire a rabid curiosity in Johannesburg's downtown.

The transformations of Johannesburg's inner city are sometimes described in sweeping ways told as a series of dramatic changes, as if the waves of people moving in or out of the city happened overnight. But actually change happens in small adjustments and intrusions at many sites in far more incremental ways. In these stories we are interested in the *Individual*. It is the individual person in the single building or room, the particular edge of a mine dump, or the shadow of a highway underpass that tugged us into the city. The questions of how one recycler conducts his daily routine, where he lives, where his dreams locate compelled us. Call these individuals survivalists or entrepreneurs who are making their way, we are interested in their intentions or dreams or the outcomes of their actions. By looking at the minutiae of activities and people who are in the edginess of the city—whose activities are not coded and regulated and who are forging improvised livelihoods, and making decisions that are driving and altering the city—we invite readers to think about urban transformation from a different angle.

The readers of this work are people who are inquisitive about urban living in ways and worlds they do not encounter on a daily basis. This is a city that attracts debate and writing. It is a site of academic and popular writings, of works of fiction and nonfiction, of songs of praise and of resistance. It is a palimpsest for reflecting the best and worst of urbanity. We are writing for curious readers who may know some or much of that rich body of work, and who have a sense of the complexity of urbanity. Like us, they are thirsty for sense-making about Johannesburg.

History

4 From the description rolling off the tongue about Johannesburg's genesis on "the richest gold-bearing seam in the world" to its current status as a postcolonial Afropolitan metropolis, everything about the city is hyperbolic. And contrary. Exaggerated claims ring around this city fashioned from and generating extreme prosperity, conflict, oppression, and pluck. With its stubborn geography of segregation, it is the go-to case study

for urban inequality, but it is also a model of transformation. And it is the trademark arrival city on the African continent.

As Harrison and I have observed elsewhere (2012), when the world's richest gold fields were first opened up in 1886, the metal was highly sought after, as the major European economies were tied to a gold standard. The discovery attracted prospectors from as far as the news of gold could be heard, as men threw themselves toward hope on the unknown Witwatersrand. But from its onset this cunning gold field favored capital. The gold-bearing reefs breaking the surface in enticing outcrops dip steeply into the earth, requiring deep-level mining, with expensive technologies, for extraction (Beavon 2004; Innes 1984). The opportunity for small-scale artisanal miners was short-lived, and the new gold field was soon dominated by a handful of "Randlords" who had made their fortunes on the Kimberley diamond fields and who were backed by international investment capital (Harrison and Zack 2012).

There was a delicate balance between cost and revenue, with gold being mined at increasing depths and costs but earning a fixed price. The state was complicit in supporting the reproduction of low labor costs to bolster the gold mining economy (Innes in Harrison and Zack 2012). As early as 1896, the Chamber of Mines was recruiting labor not only from what would later become Bantustans in a Union of South Africa but also from neighboring countries. And the "City of Gold" was built on the paradoxical reliance on African and foreign (including Chinese) labor and the dislike for having Africans as urban occupants in increasing numbers. Regulations and working conditions were instrumental in keeping the labor force at bay. Male migrants were housed in single-sex compounds for limited periods and returned to families in rural areas when their contracts expired.

The spatial evolution of early Johannesburg was profoundly shaped by the physical presence of mining and by the hierarchies and intersections of a society emerging around the mines. The crudely laid-out, grid-patterned settlement of Johannesburg was proclaimed on a triangular piece of leftover state-owned land—*uitvalgrond*—immediately north of the mining belt (Beavon 2004). Within ten years, it was the largest urban center in Africa south of the equator (Chipkin 1993). And it was already segregated when, in 1928, it was proclaimed a city. When black Africans entered employment in other sectors, migrants found accommodation in municipal compounds and in slums in and around the center of town and in domestic accommodation in white residential areas. The state re-

fused to accept this interracial proximity and embarked on a long history of attempts to segregate out the race groups (Parnell and Mabin 1995). The whole of the municipality of Johannesburg was proclaimed white by 1933, and by the late 1930s the local authority had used the provision of the Slums Act 1934 to clear mixed-race inner-city neighborhoods and move black African residents to newly built townships such as Orlando (the first township established in Soweto). Indian and colored (mixed-race) communities maintained their foothold near the inner city, in places like Fietas, until the apartheid era, when they too were forced into peripheral townships.

Melinda Silverman and I (2007) have elsewhere described the development and decline of the property market in an inner-city neighborhood. Apartheid was formalized in a post–World War II South Africa. For Johannesburg's property investors, the 1950s was a heady time of robust economic growth. The municipality offered land-use rights to encourage high-rise development on the northeastern fringe of the CBD. The developer community responded with modernist towers in Hillbrow. The apartments accommodated a large population of predominantly single, skilled, white workers from various European countries in need of rental accommodation. These white artisans contributed a cosmopolitan flair to Hillbrow, which spawned a café society of clubs, coffee bars, and bookstores (Silverman and Zack 2007). It became an entertainment magnet for white suburbia, and later for black residents, in search of spaces of liberation from the authoritarian gaze of the government, its associated institutions, and a repressive and repressed society.

The late 1970s heralded a radical change for the inner city in the form of a massive exodus of whites from inner-city residential space as well as from commercial space. Some of this flight was emigration, and much of it was to suburbia. This flight was inspired by uncertainty following the student uprisings of 1976 as well as by a trend toward suburbanization. The city continued to expand and modernize. The state built an ambitious American-style freeway system, easing movement and decentralization of business from the CBD. Decentralized retail and office nodes developed immediately north of the CBD in Braamfontein and Parktown, and then further north to the new shopping centers around Rosebank and Sandton. A polycentric city was born. And as Sandton in particular grew as the new financial heart of Johannesburg, the inner city rapidly lost its economic dominance.

The suburbanization of residential stock was facilitated by new loans

for first-time homeowners in the suburbs. These moves led to high vacancy levels. This was coupled with a severe housing shortage in colored, Indian, and African areas. Push factors for white tenants and pull factors for blacks led to a rapid change in the demographics of the neighborhood, with increasing numbers of black tenants moving into the area in defiance of the prohibitions of the Group Areas Act. By the end of the 1970s, it was apparent the system of influx control (including the notorious passbooks) was unable to control the movement of black Africans into the city. Landlords, increasingly desperate for tenants in the face of white flight, were happy to facilitate what was then known as the "greying" of the inner city. This process was accompanied by capital flight, hikes in rentals, subletting, and overcrowding (Morris 1999). The deterioration of many buildings set in, and the inner city would over the next two decades be notorious for its "bad" or "hijacked" buildings (Silverman and Zack 2007).

The 1990s brought a new turn. The key registers of the period were in-migration, informalization, and gentrification. The dawn of democracy in South Africa, coupled with political changes, conflicts, and economic decline in several other African states, witnessed a steady influx of foreign migrants to South Africa. Johannesburg deepened its role as an "arrival city" in Saunders's (2011) framing of the term, a place where migrants, many of them rural, with ambitions fixed on the symbolic city and its opportunity, engage in monumental struggles for survival or to establish a financial or spatial foothold for their dependents. In this process, they create urban spaces with distinct networks of relationships and functions that are the imagined and, in many instances, actualized loci of transitions from poverty.

Meanwhile the conversion of office buildings and the rehabilitation of old residential blocks were set in motion by developers who rode the optimistic wave of a New South Africa and catered to a seemingly insatiable demand for well-located lower-middle-income housing. That gap was filled often at the expense of poor households who had lived in overcrowded cheaper accommodation. Years of gentrification were coupled with years of evictions from inner-city buildings.

The Inner City within Johannesburg

The drama of contestation plays out most vociferously in inner-city Johannesburg. Nowhere else in this divided city do the forces of a modernity built on big capital rub up against a present-day urbanity etched by

the poor as directly as they do in the original downtown. There are other Johannesburgs beyond the border of this business district, which was the site of the first mining settlement and is located on the eastern portion of the modern city's administrative area. The callous geographies of the city designed to service white supremacy still structure the palimpsest. Neighborhoods are divided into those pockets whose environments and residents were intended to succeed and those premeditated to fail. These mono-racial and mono-class geographies were stitched together in a pattern based on ensuring good location for white residents and white commerce and marginal, distant spaces for black residents—who were denied any proximate commercial space other than the odd industrial zones that black townships were attached to as labor pools.

In a post-apartheid city, much of the racial and class patterning prevails. Roughly speaking, the wealthy northern suburbs of the city have retained the markers of elite living—high walls, manicured lawns, securitized estates, and allied shopping malls. Sandton, the city's financial center, fifteen kilometers north of the old city center, boasts skyscrapers and all the trappings for elite living. Suburban shopping and commercial districts are similarly modeled as internalized exclusive lifestyle centers. Townships have retained their high-density, compact government-issue housing, many with backyard developments. These are spaces where microbusiness occupies residential space and where high-density living spills into street space. New formal developments in suburban Johannesburg have taken the form of townhouse developments and gated estates. But by far the most significant expansion of the city has been informal and has occurred in informal settlements at the fringes of the urban space, often attached to existing black townships. And in the more compact working-class neighborhoods hugging the inner city, dramatic shifts have occurred in demographic changes, densification, and a mix of uses and housing solutions.

These are the headline changes. But across the city there have been multiple changes in density, in demographics, and in infrastructure challenging the apartheid city form. Some of these are driven by state investment in transportation or plans deliberately forging greater inclusionary development. Others are driven by private developers' responses to the pent-up demand for lower-income residents to live in better-located parts of the city. And many more are driven by the incremental imperative of poor people to find a foothold and build a livelihood in better-located places. These actions have wrought changes across Johannesburg. The

privately militarized suburbs barricaded against the poor are finely contrasted with the working-class neighborhoods and townships, informal settlements, and the inner city where Johannesburg's lowest-income residents live. Working-class districts have been more malleable to the forces of change than others. But the urban poor live in many parts of the city—in seemingly purely middle-class or affluent neighborhoods, poor people live un-housed, in parks or riverbeds or under bridges; elsewhere poor residents occupy empty factory buildings or houses that have been abandoned or seized from owners.

No neighborhoods have changed as utterly as the inner city has since the dying days of apartheid. And none presents the mix of users—of residents, workers, commuters, and visitors—that the old Central Business Districts do. Nor does any other neighborhood boast the scale of infrastructure and the hardiness of place that attends life in the inner city. And no other neighborhood offers the opportunity for individuals to make a living in the shadow economy.

Nearly three decades into democracy, the inner city compresses multiple Johannesburgs in one space. In spite of a massive decline in the demand for office space, the City's original commercial center still retains several large banking and mining headquarters and a range of small-scale office suites. It is a local, regional, and cross-continental retail center. It remains Johannesburg's premier transport hub with many public transit routes traversing the downtown. It is a key cultural hub hosting theaters and public art and music venues. And it is a site of many low-fee, under-resourced private schools and colleges. The major investment in the area in recent decades comprises the conversion of defunct office space into residential apartments. There are pockets of city investment where public environment upgrades in the form of new paving, public parks, and lighting seek to respond to or encourage private investment. Overall the platform to support these uses strains under the load of poor management, increased densities, overwhelming and competing demands, and constrained budgets. Service levels, maintenance, and facilities have not kept pace with investment or with the enormity of change, nor have they reached many of the urban poor, who for their part have found loopholes and footholds to live and work in precarious ways alongside the more formalized changing inner city. They have led a different transformation of space.

Shadow City

The ways in which people are improvising to make a living and a home among the spaces and enormously robust infrastructure of the original city center lie at the heart of the inquiry setting up the *Wake Up, This Is Joburg* project.

All over Johannesburg—but especially in the inner city—seemingly unusable land and redundant buildings are appropriated temporarily or irregularly for living space, places of religious worship, gambling, or survivalist income generation. The spaces threatened or criminalized or ignored by the authorities are often the only remaining places of opportunity for new entrants to make a living in the saturated informal economy of the inner city. Boundaries are more powerfully signaled by micro-exclusions than by coded rules. A signboard warning people not to enter an abandoned mineshaft is flagrantly ignored in "Undercity" (chapter 10). Shielding oneself from the law demarcating where one may or may not conduct a livelihood occupies much of the energy of petty entrepreneurs in the City. Making a living involves penetrating Johannesburg's leftover spaces and freshly choreographing the places of neglect and decomposition. And these spaces define new socially constructed territories and microboundaries around who is welcome or not.

Such welcome may be signaled by the state in one way while it is withheld in another. Street trading in the inner city is trapped in an ambiguity between these poles. The municipality's restrictive approaches were interrupted by periods of tolerance and even highly permissive allowances for street trade, and the activity proliferated in the inner city. However, the overarching policy and regulatory framework remained ambiguous and kept traders vulnerable to unpredictable law enforcement and harassment. The most unexpected of these was the massive removal of traders from the streets of the inner city in 2013. Operation Clean Sweep was later declared unlawful by the Constitutional Court, and traders returned to the streets. They remain there, and the policy and governance regulating their activity remains unresolved. Operation Clean Sweep lies at the extreme of a logic about street trading focused on control and on the conjoining of informality with crime, filth, and disorder. In these ways fortunes in Johannesburg can turn in an instant. And the state is unpre-

dictable. One cannot know if a new activity or new way of living in the city might be supported or resisted.

We resist the term "underbelly." These stories reveal not some underside of the city but rather an urbanity and a making of "cityness" that is inescapably with us. The stories we encountered have allowed us to pay attention, for a time, to lives lived alongside our own, but in the shadows—possibly even shadows we ourselves cast. The stories are an exploration. They are an attempt to sharpen our perspective, to focus our senses.

The stories in *Wake Up, This Is Joburg* search for the ideas about Johannesburg that cling to expectations of the protagonists we encounter. They probe the dreams and intentions of people who live and work in the inner city and ways in which their ideas of the city are giving form and structure to certain buildings and spaces, and remaking those buildings in the contemporary city.

This compilation of stories of the shadow city into one volume offers us an opportunity to reflect on some of the themes that emerged across the books. In the following section, we trace those themes that punctuate the shadows.

Value and Effort

The statistics occupying the daily accounting of the poor pepper a number of the stories. How many platefuls of food can one cow head deliver? How many kilograms of waste can one man's sixty-one-kilogram mass drag up a hill? How many additional kilometers will a waste reclaimer drag that load to secure a few cents' additional profit from their sale? How many kilograms of gold-bearing rock can a man carry on his back as he crawls for several kilometers to surface from an underground rock face? How many buckets of water does each person in an apartment housing thirty-four people need per day, and how many containers can be stored in the corners not required for the rituals of sleeping, cooking, and daily ablutions? How many people can share a double bed in the same apartment? How much salt will keep food fresh for longer in spaces with limited refrigeration? There are also shadow worlds in which a food vendor's day begins at 2 a.m., an informal trader in a market works every day of the year, and a waste reclaimer wakes at 3 a.m. to begin his thirty-four-kilometer round trip by foot—until the day his feet will not carry him anymore.

A number of stories in this book track the labor of protagonists. There are stories of people making hats, chopping cow heads, painstakingly repairing discarded objects, pulling enormous loads of waste, digging for gold, cooking food, washing taxis, and working inordinately long hours in informal markets. In these ways survivalist entrepreneurs and workers toil the modern city. Their work is not un-modern but is locked into contemporary global processes of distribution and dealing with the debris of a late capitalist consumptive economy.

These are pathways and logistics not factored into city road signage or into the infrastructure plans for public toilets. The formal coding of the city bypasses its inhabitants. It fails to provide them with a platform of dignity. And it misses the power of their collective energy.

The City as Carcass: Transformations from Below

Informal and extralegal economic endeavor in the city is often aligned with decay and with the unmaking of a previous life and a built form in the city. It is necessarily simultaneously innovative and destructive. Metaphorically it gouges out the carcass of the city even while it inserts and fills its cavities. While it may operate at the fringes of capital and the edges of our consciousness of how the city is changing, it cannot be discounted as peripheral to the reprogramming of the city. In Johannesburg's inner city, informal endeavors undertaken by migrant entrepreneurs are proving to be more than registers of marginality and precarity. They are front and center of urban transformation and investment.

The description in "Undercity" (chapter 10) of MaLetsatsi digging for gold under her shack evokes so much about unearthing, stability, precarity, and a city eating itself. It is a city inked onto the world map by a metal incidentally deemed valuable, a metal still surfacing at ground level along roadsides and streams and even under dwellings located along the top of the reef. It is a city whose insatiable appetite for that metal transformed highveld into skyscrapers and highways and introduced toxins into its air, its groundwater, and its soil. But this robust city outlasted the gold. And there's no reason to believe it will not prevail even after the earth on which it stands is gouged out and its water sources are contaminated. This image also speaks to the tug between the vertical and the horizontal in the city. Between those energies and people inhabiting the surface world and those literally and figuratively "below"—figures, images, and rumblings stirring our fears.

The ceaseless extraction characterizing this city poses threats of material decay. Possibly, most alarmingly, threats turn again to the underworld of the city. They are the reports that informal miners might blast the remaining pillars propping up a city built atop the cavities, recklessly gouged out of the earth by a hungry gold mining industry.

A visible excavation is taking place in its inner-city buildings. Armed security guards are hired by building owners to secure their high-rise inner-city apartment blocks from "hijacking." This is a ubiquitous Johannesburg term that can signal the takeover of a building by criminal gangs or vandalism or overcrowding of apartments. These security guards also shield the remains of buildings progressively destroyed through arson and pilfering of their resalable infrastructures. "Because, you know, they eat buildings," one guard told us.

And the glimpse of a livelihood opportunity is not delinked from the fissures of scarcity disrupting this well-appointed modernist city's metropolitan ambitions. At transport interchanges, hawkers peddle plastic water boilers—so necessary where access to hot water for cooking or washing can be tight. It is a city in which the bare bones of discarded and decayed infrastructures can be repurposed, reinvented, and reinhabited in new ways. And where informalized infrastructure provision might take place in the very shadows of modernist skyscrapers.

"Everything Here Is Money"

Against these messages stand the voices of interminable hope in a city that will keep on giving. A migrant declares his host city's buildings to be extremely strong and its corruption laughably negligible by comparison with his home city of Lagos (chapter 3). For many, the City of Gold's excess infrastructure offers an intersection between exclusion and opportunity. "Everything here is money," an informal butcher in "S'kop" (chapter 1) says of his workplace in the abandoned parking garage where everything is commoditized, where different value chains are attached to the flesh, bones, and skin of a single cow head. His words could well be a tagline for the whole city.

Johannesburg is a vessel for the collective financial muscle and fervor of tens of thousands of goal-directed fortune seekers. Microtraders cluster in repurposed office towers. Their retail trade is birthing a radical new architecture in its revaluing of the city carcass. Here informal enterprise attached to a hive of cupboard-sized shops is servicing all of sub-Saharan

Africa and accounting for an annual turnover of over R10 billion (US$639 million) in an otherwise depressed commercial center. This is the setting for "Johannesburg. Made in China" (chapter 9), and it is the transnational African urban. These secret shopping centers epitomize the mass consumption of twenty-first-century global capitalism as they funnel Chinese fast fashion moving to the far reaches of sub-Saharan Africa. With its eye always on the frontiers of consumption, Johannesburg imitates and blends the brashest of contemporary culture. It is shaped then by forces far beyond its borders.

The city swanks. Its conspicuous consumption has outlasted fads and eras. From its mid-twentieth-century extravagant department stores, with their displays of glamorous French fashions and delicacies, to its first hat factory and its current low-price fast fashion frenzy, it's a "show-off" kind of place.

Darkness and Fear

Once we enter the spaces, our own anxiety about the location shifts significantly. But if we carry our own unease and fear in the inner city, we also carry the privilege of choice about where, when, and how to move through its streets. Our work has allowed us to get closer to the lives lived in spaces that felt alien and intimidating to us. The threats that have surfaced then have not been threats to us. They have been the multiple dangers many of the protagonists of our stories confront day-to-day. It is not primarily about how safe we feel but about how unsafe the city is for many people whose options are restricted.

To navigate Johannesburg is to navigate fear. The literal shadows a highway bridge casts over a taxi stand or that shroud buildings whose electrical wiring has been stripped conceal much of the inner city. Darkness and its urban companion, violence, converge in nights of terror in notorious spaces police officers refuse to enter because they are too dark. Danger and fear truncate the day's labor as nighttime flight saps the life out of energetic trading in the early evening. And danger reverberates in people's accounts of institutionalized violence and of the city's commonplace thuggery and petty crime. Everyone has been or knows someone who has been attacked and robbed in these streets. Everyone has a story about a police officer taking money. Everyone has a strategy of locking doors, hiding money on the body, adopting a confident gait, and moving in

a group. And there are micro-exclusions (De Boeck 1998) in which tribalism or associational barriers may be erected against waste pickers hoping to work at a municipal dump, or informal miners who organize themselves in ethnically defined work teams.

Violence is both alien and cruelly familiar in this city in which many residents carry memories of perils survived and escaped. It is familiar to those who fled conflicts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo or Zimbabwe or townships east of Johannesburg. And to those whose personal lives have been rocked by the violent killing of parents, siblings, or children.

Home

The obligations and hopes of migrants bind them to this arrival city as much as to elsewhere. The connections are urban and rural, and they are intergenerational. A tailor lives in Johannesburg while supporting his wife and children in Lagos; an informal miner builds a house in Bulawayo; a waste reclaimer is acquiring a herd of goats in Lesotho. The entrepreneurial endeavors of these migrants introduce unfamiliar foods, customs, and practices to the city. Native Joburgers learn to eat cassava, *kwassa kwassa,* and *injera*, while local informal miners adapt the Zimbabwean practices of the *amakhorokhoza*. The dreams of migrants carry longing. A man's experience of feeding pigeons on a Johannesburg street connects him with his memories of Bombay; Amharic music streams through Ethiopian coffee shops in Jeppe; an outsider artist decorates his house with friezes of Madeira.

And if "elsewhere" is imprinted, then there is simultaneously a determined connection with localized place. This is starkly obvious in those parts of the city that have changed fundamentally in demographic terms and in density since the end of apartheid. These are the near-inner-city suburbs of Johannesburg that defy the "geography of fortifications and enclosures" (Mbembé and Nuttall 2004, 364) so prevalent in most of suburban Johannesburg. Places where it is still possible to see the front of a house from the street, to surmise who lives there and how, rather than to be walled off from the private domain. They are centers of demographic mixing, where diversity is not exceptional.

This arrival city offers sanctuary even as it alienates. It blurs and blends identity. In "Inside Out" (chapter 3) a man asks himself, "Am I more Congolese or more South African?" The city's refuge is not to be taken for

granted. Its hospitality can turn into a dark feast of taunting, stick-wielding, petrol bombing, and looting. It is a place of which a Congolese migrant in "Inside Out" (chapter 3) says, "People will hate you without knowing your intentions."

Forced removals render the inner city a fickle host. Yet it is not absolute in its hostility. The ten stories reveal varied and at times shifting senses of belonging as they find that the personal investments people make to the buildings and streets of this part of town are surprisingly unpredictable. The intimate moments of homemaking in temporary homes or in homes that have witnessed generations of children playing along their corridors reflect enduring connections to a city all too often associated only with transience. But transience has its own domestic ordinariness. The home life remembered in family photos and stories of long dinner tables sits alongside the rituals of feeding and dressing grandchildren on the edge of a raft of beds in a flat housing thirty-four people. The need to make daily ritual and to situate oneself in the city is not exclusively the reserve of those characters or material objects staying for years.

It is in the privacy of people's lounges and bedrooms where we were privy to ordinary domesticity and to personal stories, whether of life lessons passed down from a late parent or of deep tragedy and loss. It is here too that we witnessed an act of kindness central to someone's survival. These are the textures and contours delineating individuals and households whose life in the city is so readily diluted in our generalized descriptions of community or of the poor or migrants.

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The City Within

Our own identities and positionalities in the city shaped our views as well as the access we were given to stories and images.

TANYA My own sense-making comes from looking at space through the immediate, the direct, and the intimate. I have always lived in Johannesburg. I grew up close to the inner city, in Judith's Paarl, a small working-class suburb established east of the Central Business District in 1896. The neighborhood of my childhood was small and intricate. My worldview was concentrated in the knottiness of the two city blocks where we lived,

went to school, shopped, and caught the bus outward (generally to the city center). We lived on the upper level of a two-storied apartment building. When I reflected later on the different homes I visited and played in on our short street block, they read as a study in low-rise housing forms. They included small houses set in concreted yards; semidetached, face-bricked walk-ups; large bungalow houses; and apartments. And they included the house I loved. My friend's blue-and-white tiled house—mosaicked inside and out with the remains of her father's projects as a tiling contractor. The spaces also included the small rooftop servants' quarters, located above my bedroom, and accessible via the fire escape at the back of the building. The two blocks would easily inform a map of neighborhood morphology. I walked to the school at the corner of the street. I remember the high street. I remember the lavender curtains of the hairdresser, the chime of the bell as you entered the pharmacy, the stepped display of fruit baskets at the greengrocer, the dusty smell of the wooden post office counter, the comic book stand at the corner café, and the red wooden bus-stop bench marked "EUROPEANS ONLY."

This is the neighborhood in which I was an insider. It was a localized, parochial, formative experience. Perhaps it informed my struggle with seeing the big picture, and my need to start small. I have always been attracted to the local scale, more comfortable in a compact urban setting.

My work life has often intersected with the inner city. But from around 2008, I had the opportunity—through research and policy work—to examine some of the municipality's urban planning challenges in the inner city. I became convinced I needed to spend more time in understanding and in diagnosing what I saw before I could hope to respond to it as an urban planning practitioner. At a more personal level, my urge was sensory. I needed to see, touch, smell. I walked the streets of the inner city, and I was overwhelmed with the excitement of it. I felt humbled by how little I knew and understood.

Photography became a natural extension for me in the act of watching, and I spent many months taking photos. This was also a vehicle of access because each photo required conversation and permission, and so I got talking to people. It was still a personal project—looking, taking pictures, turning these into collages for the pleasure of absorbing and playing with the extraordinary images of the inner city.

In a way, the collages were an act of taking images and remaking them into new stories by placing them in different configurations. On reflection, it was experimental story making. I tentatively started writing what I was

seeing, first in a diary fashion—reflecting on my own experience and my responses to the inner city I was rediscovering. Later I began to craft profiles of people or places I encountered. In some cases, the stories popped up because I encountered them in my wanderings. In other cases, I set out specifically to understand an activity or person and their livelihood in the city. I followed a group of waste reclaimers over a number of months by meeting with them on the road or at their home.

Relooking at an inner city I had frequented as a child, a teenager, a student, and a professional over forty years, and one that I had walked in, shopped in, and invested in, required leading with my ignorance rather than my analytical scrutiny. This was an attempt to look at my own city and the city I had worked in for over two decades in a fresh way. In this project, I was often aware of my tendency to lean into a didactic and normative stance, to think always about "what needs to be done." But these stories were collected from a different position. It was a project of entering parts of the city in a permeable way, with a focus on how places and stories looked and sounded and felt rather than what they meant against my urban planning toolset.

Listening required telling. In order to ask people to share their stories, I often first had to tell my own. These encounters highlighted my identities as a middle-aged white woman who now lives in a leafy affluent suburb, as a property owner in suburbia and in the inner city, as an urbanist, as someone who was born and raised in working-class near-inner-city neighborhoods, as a mother, and as a writer. And my identity as voyeur. I stumbled through many variations of the question "Why do you want to know these things?"

Certainly, if I am to write about the city inside of me, it is the inner city and the neighborhoods that cling to it. These are spaces of my childhood. The familiarity and unfamiliarity of places in these neighborhoods swirl around the journeys these stories took me to.

MARK I grew up in Klerksdorp, a town 160 kilometers west of Johannesburg. It was a small mining community. As teenagers, we found it parochial and dull, and all our conversations were about leaving. You knew you had to get out. As a teenager I would occasionally come to Johannesburg with friends. These were memorable days. The journey took three hours by bus. It was a big thing for us to come to Johannesburg, just to spend the day walking around, looking at shops and vinyl record bars, and being in the general buzz of the city. This city was where we wanted to be!

As a young adult I moved to Johannesburg and shared an apartment in Hillbrow. It was fabulous. I lived there and in the inner city at various times over the next decades, steeped in the edgy counterculture of the city. I lived on Jeppe Street in the 1970s, when many whites had fled. There were so many vacant apartments that we had the city to ourselves at night. It was dead quiet. But we had our own alternative communities; we went to clubs that aired an alternative rock culture and emerging crossovers between white and black South African music.

The inner city was a safe haven for subversive cultures in an otherwise repressive city. It was a punk rock scene, it was a gay scene, it was a drugging scene, it was experimental, and it was a place for many who felt outside of mainstream culture to find a sense of belonging. One could at last feel you were "from Johannesburg"—although that is something that is always a state of becoming. In some ways I am still in search of making this city my own.

I was assisting photographers and growing my own practice. I made a living shooting for commercials in an office at the top floor of the Carlton Centre—which was at that stage the tallest building in Africa (sometimes when we came to work in the early mornings, we were above the clouds). But I honed my skills shooting the places I lived and hung out in. I was always attracted to photographing street space or buildings and, more specifically, people in those spaces, making images of what was there in that moment. When I moved to London in the 1980s and started working as a fashion photographer, it was for alternative magazines. I was shooting for hip cultural magazines like *The Face* and *Blitz*—which were responses to austere Thatcherism. They were an exciting breakaway from formal magazines and the formal fashion scene, and they became social commentaries and social documentaries of the time. We were photographing people in the street, we were making clothes, we were not interested in the fashion only but in the people who wore these clothes and who listened to this music.

I returned to South Africa in the mid-1990s, and my practice moved toward documentary photography in various parts of Africa. I was thrust into cultures and places I knew nothing about. The work opened my eyes to the particularity of places. And to informality. I had never seen the scale and everydayness of informality that I encountered in the urban settings of Kinshasa, Lagos, Addis, and Mogadishu. Unbeknown to me, a new informality was rising in my home city in the 1990s. By the time I worked more intensely there in the late 2000s, much of what had seemed particular to

"other African cities" was on my doorstep. During the 2010 FIFA World Cup, I photographed stories all over South Africa. It was a welcoming moment when it was possible to cross the boundaries of South Africa's racialized living spaces in an easygoing way. That changed in the years thereafter. Violence and crime have made many parts of Johannesburg complicated to work in. And the surfacing of major identity politics has made us rethink how to work in documenting space and people. *Wake Up, This Is Joburg* has provided access to ways of working in the moment with what is possible.

Across the ten stories, our locating of ourselves and reflecting on our own experience within space and in realties to what we see and hear shifted as we grew more aware that our fascination of worlds we do not belong to is our own, and all that we can own in that are our experiences. Our inclination toward individual stories has challenged us to think about what is generalizable in the experiences of people who share a site, a working experience, a relationship to the state; and what is exquisitely specific to one person. We have considered the ways in which collective energies impact urban space, and each story focuses on one endeavor that a number of people are involved in. But we have tried to avoid assumptions about what drives each person we meet. We have learned that there are as many reasons and motivations that compel and propel people as there are protagonists in these stories.

The Collaboration

The ten stories were developed over a four-year period. Our process has involved walking and paying attention. We have looked, felt, gone back to areas or buildings or people again and again to get closer to what stories they might reveal. We have been attentive to the individual stories behind the policy, research, and creative work we were involved with together or separately. We have a personal connection with some of the places. I own apartments in the Anstey's building, for instance. Other stories are all around us—such as the stories of waste reclaimers.

A Politics of Approachability

Our field process involves several visits over many weeks and often months. The work on-site is often instinctive rather than conscious. It is a creative process in which we are not working to a predefined conclusion, but rather giving the work the freedom to be open-ended and to allow the

stories to be revealed in the process. Certainly, the camera and the notebook and our coded bodies allow us to look more closely, to make connections in the city, and to broaden our own access to places that might otherwise seem to be hostile to outsiders.

We access spaces together but differently. The combination of writer and photographer sets up a dynamic for each of us and a dynamic that presents us as a partnership in the site. At the most practical level, we look out for each other, we provide two sets of eyes on any subject, and our dynamic plays out in the chosen social space or setting. In most cases our approach as two white people entering hyper-black space has been met with reciprocal curiosity. People have wanted to talk. They have wanted to know who we are. This has often meant asking where we live and where we were born—people have been fascinated that we are South African, and not foreign tourists "looking" at the city. And they have wanted to know why we are there.

We may begin our work together and may conduct some interviews together, but much of our work is conducted independently at the same site on the same day. Mark will take photographs and connect that way, and I will talk to different people. We have had to discern when to conceal the camera and the notebook so as not to alarm people, and when to lead with the camera and notebook so as not to alarm people. Sometimes our intuition has failed us, and our miscalculation has shut down a potential story.

There's an element of spontaneity in Mark's approach. He usually enters a space with his camera clearly visible. He may even begin photographing as soon as he arrives. "You can't premeditate every image," he says. "There's something about the quickness of time, about instinct, that creates a strong image." These are generally cursory shots taken on wide-angle in public settings. Whether or not he takes photographs immediately, he arrives as the photographer, his camera already communicating what he's there for. This may attract, intrigue, or daunt someone in the space. There is still a negotiation to be set up, but the camera alerts people to what that negotiation is about. At times we are tentative and wait for invitations to enter or talk.

Most of the people we have met on this project have been open to photography and to our interest in them and what they do. It is unusual for someone to enter those spaces to simply ask what goes on there, and to be interested in who is there. That acknowledgment alone can provide access and break down suspicion.

Mark offers to give people their photo, and he is reliable about returning

within a few days with the photo. This sets up a ripple effect. If you return as promised, you start to build a relationship of trust with those who were photographed. The next time around you are likely to draw more people in, and more people are engaged and interested in participating in the project. Some people just like having their photograph taken. At the same time the camera creates a certain distance. There isn't as much talking and listening when you're taking the photograph. There is a "hiding behind" and a "looking at" that keep photographer and subject in their roles. And so the intentional talking and listening that I do necessarily elicits different contact with the people we encounter.

I am more tentative about revealing my notebook, and at times I do not take it out at all. I have found that walking into a space with the notebook has at times shut down a story completely. My taking of notes or making observations for a story often requires a lot of talking and listening long before any notes are taken. I have a very clear line in introducing my aim and myself. I always say, "If you want to talk with me, we can talk; and if not, that is fine." I also tell people we can stop the conversation at any time, and anything told to me in confidence will not be revealed in the story. I resist recording conversations because I myself feel awkward and find myself being overly careful about my words if I am being recorded. Instead, I allow the conversation to flow, and I discern when to make short notes and when to pause to get people's exact phrasing. I may ask them to repeat phrases where necessary. When people are willing to talk to me but do not want me to take notes, or when I have not yet secured permission to take notes but have made initial observations, I will take notes in the car as we leave the space.

Several stories are set in places people have appropriated. They may be more or less proprietary about that site. Different people in one site respond differently to our presence. Some may flatly refuse our entry, while others in the same space welcome us, and a discussion excluding us may be conducted about our presence before we can proceed. At times we have been given a message of "I can't stop you from being here, but I don't want you to take my photo or talk to me."

In many cases it is necessary to assess the politics of respectability—to be alert to the site community's social codes of conduct and etiquette. There have been sites in which our primary roles—with one of us looking for visual interest and the other listening for stories—have switched. And for me, there have been times of discomfort of being in hyper-masculine space, where I have felt my presence was not welcome. The edge of the

mineshaft where we interviewed several informal miners was the most complicated space for me. My instinct there was to wait for someone to approach me, rather than to deepen the awkwardness of having intruded by trying to talk with someone. Mark, who had previously photographed informal miners and had a greater knowledge of shafts and of their work, was comfortable among these miners and easily struck up conversations.

We have found it is easier to work in a place that is bounded and defined, even if it is an outdoor space like a taxi stand. These are places with local social structures, where an explanation of our intention to one or two key persons often opens access and permission for our work.

Knitting Text and Image

The images are both connected to and independent of the text. The two mediums both merge and operate in parallel.

The process of knitting text and image is interactive and takes place throughout the process. We debrief after every site visit; we discuss what we each saw and reflect together on the encounters. This is something we do both after our field visit and a day later, when we look at Mark's photos together. These are opportunities to look closely, to look at things that each of us has noticed on-site, and to think about what the story offers. We spend time going through Mark's photographs; we talk about them; we talk about the possibilities for stories, about characters, about what we think this says that is unique to Johannesburg or not. We are in constant dialogue about the story and the subtext of the story over the months that we are involved in it. And we gather much more material and more photographs than we use.

It is important to us that text and image talk to each other consciously; when readers look through the work, they should be able to tell from the images alone what the story is about. If they read the essay, they should be able to imagine the images without the pictures.

The photographs allow readers to satisfy their own curiosity, to look for more than the text can tell, and to exercise their own interpretation of a space or person. The images reveal that these spaces are not flat. They may be grim spaces, but they are human. The photography highlights the emotional content of mundane spaces. The narratives reflect on harsh realities we access in constrained ways. Within this the photography reveals the extent to which we are in fact not excluded but are welcomed and allowed to photograph and to talk.

The task of paring down stories and photographs is iterative. We are thinking about whether the text and the visual images will work together. In the main, the editing involves the images following the text. Although Mark selects the photographs for the books as he works, the decisions in his final cut revolve around the best relationship between image and text. Because there is limited space for images, and they are embedded in the text and don't sit as a photo essay on their own, there are always some images Mark would have liked to have in there but had to drop. The design of the page similarly follows the text, and Mark participates closely in the design to ensure that the relationships between text and image are maintained in the layout of the stories.

Because the text talks closely to the images, there is little need for captions. This is why we have elected only to caption portraits of people.

In the first edition of this series, each story was translated into the first language of a key protagonist. These translations appear in the original photo books. The translations in the text, which are the innovation of Bronwyn Law-Viljoen, editor at Fourthwall Books, recognize the fact that hardly any of the protagonists in the stories are Native English speakers. And that English is a limited medium on these streets. In many of our interactions we strained to hear the meaning within people's broken English, or were aided by interpreters. The translation of the texts into the mother tongue of a key protagonist in the story recognizes the multiplicity of spoken language on the streets of Johannesburg and that English is only one vehicle for communication.

IV

Urban Johannesburg confronts peculiar contestations between formality and informality, regulation and lawlessness, social exclusion and inclusion, marginalization and access. In expanding the intricate lattice of social relations and transactions, the multiple users of this space introduce and embody a deeply enriched urbanism.

It is in these cracks that Johannesburg's marginalized inhabitants—excluded through lack of income or documentation—are responding to their crises of poverty, unemployment, and lack of shelter through individual and collective actions of appropriating, adapting, and generating infrastructure for living and working. These adaptations of infrastructure occur in the shadows of formal regulation and planning. They might be

survivalist or aesthetic or entrepreneurial. They are creative innovations through which people are sculpting into a city carcass to reproduce and represent themselves, and at times they forge an entirely new cityness.

If you can weave stately embroidery patterns that signify royalty onto a dress made of brash colorful fabric your sister will wear to church in Yeoville, if you can build a castle out of waste, if you can travel forty hours to touch and feel a pink handbag for your customer in a small town in Zambia or Zimbabwe or Malawi, maybe you can make a whole new urbanity.

This is a city of extreme generosity. It is a glorious space for a writer and photographer to work in. There are so many stories. You just have to look. And listen. Despite efforts to be open to learning and to surprise, we did not attempt to be neutral in the telling of these stories. Ultimately these are our compilations, views, and choices of story. The stories use the voices of protagonists, are drawn from close looking, but they are our viewing of some characters in Johannesburg over a short period. And we led with an awareness we were not telling people's whole stories, but only small fragments of their stories as heard by us. These are ten stories we found. There are others. And it would take many more to constitute a batch of stories that might offer a social history of this changeable city in the early twenty-first century.