After Baines

By

John Attwood Vereker Walters

VOLUME ONE

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for
Master of Fine Art at Rhodes University

November 2010

Supervisor: Professor Brenda Schmahmann

Abstract

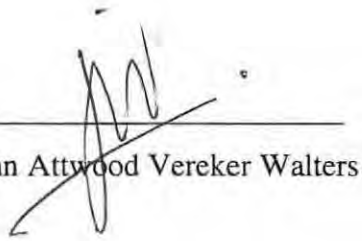
By researching the life and work of Thomas Baines (1820 – 1875) in relation to a broader discourse of painting and the lived experience of being a 'white' male in a post-apartheid South Africa, I explore the ways in which this figure from the past has provoked the three series of artworks I have produced for my Master of Fine Art exhibition. This study has been divided into two parts, represented by the two chapters contained herein.

Chapter One includes a critical retelling of Baines' biography and a discussion of the primary ways in which I have engaged with both the life and the working practice of this artist. I also address my own personal complicity in the constructions of 'the figure of Baines' as I have framed him both visually and textually during my work for this degree.

Chapter Two describes some of the practicalities of my working process as a visual artist, including how I understand the theoretical and conceptual concerns which I raise in Chapter One to be visually manifest in my work. In this chapter, I also discuss my work in relation to the work of the contemporary South African artists William Kentridge and Johannes Phokela. The artistic practice of one artist imitating another artist's work is also explored as a central conceptual thread which could be seen to weave my verbal and visual production together.

Declaration of Originality

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that all the sources I have used have been acknowledged by complete bibliographic references. This thesis is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for Master of Fine Art at Rhodes University. I declare that it has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at another university.



John Attwood Vereker Walters

19/11/2010

Friday 19 November 2010

Contents

VOLUME ONE

Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge and thank those who have helped me complete this degree: my father and mother, Paul and June Walters, my father-in-law, Robin Dwight, and my wife Catherine. I would also like to acknowledge the various funding bodies who contributed financially to my studies: the Mellon Foundation for the 'Mentors Scholarship' (2008 – 2009), the Ernst and Ethel Eriksen Foundation for a study bursary (in 2008 and 2009), the National Arts Council for a study bursary (in 2008 and 2009), and the Eastern Cape Arts and Culture Council for a study bursary (in 2008 and 2009) and for Project Funding (2010). I am grateful to Christine Dixie for her supervision of my 'Professional Art Practice', Dominic Thorburn for his interim supervision of the same, and Brenda Schmahmann for her supervision of this mini-thesis.

List of Illustrations

12 William Kentridge, *Ubu Tells the Truth* (1996-97), hardground, softground, aquatint, drypoint and engraving on paper, six etchings from the series of eight, each 25 x 35 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York. (Reproduction taken from Dan Cameron, Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev & William Kentridge. 2003. *William Kentridge*. London: Phaidon, page 32.)

13. 1 Photograph of the artist as Thomas Baines, 2010.

13. 2 Photograph of the artist as Thomas Baines, 2010.

14 William Kentridge, drawing from *Mine* (1991), charcoal on paper, 60 x 75 cm, private collection. (Reproduction taken from Dan Cameron, Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev & William Kentridge. 2003. *William Kentridge*. London: Phaidon, page 61.)

15 William Kentridge, drawing from *Felix in Exile* (1996), charcoal and pastel on paper, 120 x 160 cm, private collection. (Reproduction taken from Dan Cameron, Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev & William Kentridge. 2003. *William Kentridge*. London: Phaidon, page 124.)

16 William Gilpin, *Scene with Picturesque Adornment* (ca. 1792), etching and aquatint, dimensions and collection unknown. (Reproduction taken from http://www.shafe.co.uk/crystal/images/lshafe/Gilpin_Picturesque_Landscape_1792.jpg)

17 Anonymous, photograph of Thomas Baines (ca. 1865), Cape Archives, Cape Town. (Reproduction taken from Michael Stevenson (*ed.*) et al. 1999. *Thomas Baines: An Artist in the Service of Science in Southern Africa*. London: Christie's, page 108.)

18 Anonymous, photograph of Thomas Baines (no date), Brenthurst Library, Johannesburg. (Reproduction taken from Jane Carruthers. 1990. *Thomas Baines: Eastern Cape Sketches, 1848 to 1852*. Houghton: Brenthurst Press, plate 3.)

19 Anonymous, photograph of Thomas Baines (ca. 1865), Cape Archives, Cape Town. (Reproduction taken from Michael Stevenson (*ed.*) et al. 1999. *Thomas Baines: An Artist in the Service of Science in Southern Africa*. London: Christie's, page 10.)

20 Sketch of *Tableau*, Panel 2 (2009), pencil on paper, 21 x 29.7 cm.

21 Jeff Wall, *Double Self-Portrait* (1979), transparency in lightbox, 172 x 229 cm, private collection. (Reproduction taken from http://valka.info/projects/jeff-wall/obrazky/double-self-portrait.jpg)

22 Jeff Wall, *Restoration* (1993), transparency in lightbox, 137 x 507 cm, private collection. (Reproduction taken from http://kulturzweinull.eu/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/jeff_wall_restoration_1993.jpg)

23 Jeff Wall, *Dead Troops Talk (A Vision After an Ambush of a Red Army Patrol Near Moqor, Afghanistan, Winter, 1986)* (1992), transparency in lightbox, 229 x 417 cm, private collection. (Reproduction taken from http://www.tate.org.uk/modern/exhibitions/jeffwall/

image/roomguide/rm8_dead_troops_lrg.jpg

24 Edward Poynter, *Israel in Egypt* (1867), dimensions and collection unknown. (Reproduction taken from http://petercrawford1946.files.wordpress.com/2011/01/poynter-israel-in-egypt.jpg)

25 Thomas Baines, *Grahamstown 1850* (View from Fort Selwyn) (1850), oil on canvas, 66.5 x 45.5 cm, Albany History Museum, Grahamstown. (Photograph by John Walters.)

26 Thomas Baines, *Wagons on Market Square, Grahamstown* (The inscription on frame reads: "Mr. Humes' Waggon [*sic*] with Ivory and Skins from the Interior of Africa on the Grahamstown Market") (1850), oil on canvas, 46.9 x 64.4 cm, Albany History Museum, Grahamstown. (Photograph by John Walters.)

27 Thomas Baines, *Potter's Row, Hill Street, Grahamstown* (1848), oil on canvas, 79.6 x 121.5 cm, Syfret's Trust, on loan to the Albany History Museum, Grahamstown. (Photograph by John Walters.)

28 *Tableau*, Panel 1. Work in progress: Burnt Umber under-painting, 2009.

29 *Tableau*, Panel 2. Work in progress: Burnt Umber under-painting, 2009.

30 *Tableau*, Panel 3. Work in progress: Burnt Umber under-painting, 2009.

31. 1 Digital scan of the artist's palette (2009), oil on paper, 21 x 29.7 cm.

31. 2 Digital scan of the artist's palette (2009), oil on paper, 21 x 29.7 cm.

32 Digital scan of colour-proof: generic 'white-flesh' tone (2010), oil on canvas, 13 x 18 cm.

33 Thomas Baines, *The landing of the British Settlers in Algoa Bay in the year 1820* (1852), oil on canvas, 45.5 x 63.5 cm, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum, Port Elizabeth. (Reproduction taken from Marion Arnold & Jane Curruthers. 2000. *The life and work of Thomas Baines*. Vlaeberg: Fernwood Press, page 163.)

34 Thomas Baines, *Klaas Smit's River – waggon* [*sic.*] *broke down, crossing the drift* (1852), lithograph, 33 x 48.3 cm, private collection. (Reproduction taken from Marion Arnold & Jane Curruthers. 2000. *The life and work of Thomas Baines*. Vlaeberg: Fernwood Press, page 129.)

35 Thomas Baines, *Baines and Humphrey killing an alligator on the Horse Show Flats, near Curiosity Peak, Victoria River* (1857) oil on canvas, 45.7 x 66 cm, Royal Geographical Society, London. (Reproduction taken from Marion Arnold & Jane Curruthers. 2000. *The life and work of Thomas Baines*. Vlaeberg: Fernwood Press, page 42.)

36 Thomas Baines, *The discovery of gold* (1874), oil on canvas, 50.8 x 65.4 cm, National Archives of Zimbabwe. (Reproduction taken from Marion Arnold & Jane Curruthers. 2000. *The life and work of Thomas Baines*. Vlaeberg: Fernwood Press, page 122.)

37 Thomas Baines, *Battle of Blauwkrantz 1838* (1854), oil on canvas, 63 cm x 77 cm, MuseumAfrica Collection. (Reproduction taken from Marion Arnold & Jane Curruthers. 2000. *The life and work of Thomas Baines*. Vlaeberg: Fernwood Press, page 161.)

38 James Chapman, *The Vertical Sun, or Shadowless Man. Tues 26 Nov 1861 at Koppies*, South African Library. (Reproduction taken from Michael Stevenson (*ed.*) et al. 1999. *Thomas Baines: An Artist in the Service of Science in Southern Africa*. London: Christie's, plate 10.4.)

39 Johannes Phokela, *T-Bone*, (2005), oil sketch, 80 x 57 cm, collection unknown. (Reproduction taken from Bronwyn Law-Viljoen & Paul O'Kane. 2009. *Johannes Phokela: I like my neighbours*. Johannesburg: Gallery Momo & David Krut Publishing, page 30.)

40 Johannes Phokela, *Tender Loving Care* (Panel 2 of triptych) (2005), oil on canvas, each panel: 210 x 180 cm, collection unknown. (Reproduction taken from Bronwyn Law-Viljoen & Paul O'Kane. 2009. *Johannes Phokela: I like my neighbours*. Johannesburg: Gallery Momo & David Krut Publishing, page 33.)

41.1 William Hogarth, *O the Roast Beef of England ('The Gate of Calais')* (Detail) (1748), oil on canvas, 107.2 x 122.8 cm, Tate Collection, London. (Reproduction taken from http://www.tate.org.uk/servlet/ViewWork?workid=6617)

41.2 William Hogarth, *O the Roast Beef of England ('The Gate of Calais')* (1748), oil on canvas, 107.2 x 122.8 cm, Tate Collection, London. (Reproduction taken from http://www.tate.org.uk/servlet/ViewWork?workid=6617)

42 Thomas Baines, *Dressing the Issiyoko or Warrior's headring at Slambo Boloi Nov. 1* (1869), watercolour and pencil, dimensions unknown, Natural History Museum, London. (Reproduction taken from Michael Stevenson (*ed.*) et al. 1999. *Thomas Baines: An Artist in the Service of Science in Southern Africa*. London: Christie's, Plate 6.11.)

43 Glenn Brown, *Dali-Christ* (1992), oil on canvas, 275 x 183 cm, collection unknown. (Reproduction taken from http://www.saatchi-gallery.co.uk/aipe/glenn_brown.htm)

44 Salvador Dali, *Soft Construction with Boiled Beans – Premonition of Civil War* (1936), oil on canvas, 100 x 99 cm, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia. (Reproduction taken from http://www.artchive.com/artchive/d/dali/boiled_beans.jpg)

Introduction: 'After' (Baines)

> And it all boils down to painting. There's one kind of art, and it's painting. Everything else is a step away from that, and it all points back to that.
>
> (Damien Hirst in an interview with Gordon Burn 2001: 68)

> I am definitely inside of art history: it's my domain, my home.
> *And where are you inside that domain?*
> In the art, the painter's culture.
> *The culture of painters?*
> Yes.
>
> (Gerhard Richter in an interview with Robert Storr 2009: 391)

> Just as the individual is 'involved in mankind', so the artist is involved in artists.
>
> (Michael Ayrton 1960: 29)

Damien Hirst's first public exhibition after his two day 'clearance' exhibition and auction, *Beautiful Inside My Head Forever* (2008),[1] was a show consisting entirely of paintings that he had painted himself. The exhibition was entitled *No Love Lost* (2009 – 2010)[2] and was held in the Wallace Collection (Hertford House, London). These two Hirstian contemporary art-world 'events' have a personal significance for me as they more or less mark the beginning and the ending of my production of the three large-scale paintings entitled *Tableau* (Fig. 1) which play a central role in the body of work I have produced for my Master of Fine Art exhibition.

It could be argued that there is a possible 'cause and effect' relationship between Hirst's production of the show *No Love Lost* and the polemical statement he made on the subject of painting which I quote above. In a review of *No Love Lost*, *The Observer* critic Peter Conrad (18 October 2009) has

[1] The exhibition and auction was held at Sotheby's on 15 – 16 September 2008. 218 Lots were sold for £ 111 million GBP. Interestingly enough, this exhibition and auction could also be seen to mark the end of a kind of Capitalism as the Lehman Brothers declared bankruptcy on the 15 September 2008: the same day that Hirst's spectacle opened. It is widely believed that the declaration of bankruptcy by the Lehman Brothers is what precipitated the global economic recession we are presently experiencing.

[2] This exhibition was open to the public through the Christmas and New Year season of 2009/2010: opening on 14 October 2009 and closing on 24 January 2010.

remarked on Hirst's assumed 'move to painting' as follows: "Somewhat late in the day, Damien Hirst has decided to find out whether he can paint. So far, he has been able to do without such specialised, old-fashioned skills." Up until the 2008 exhibition/auction *Beautiful Inside My Head Forever*, it had seemed as if Hirst had indeed "been able to do without such specialised, old-fashioned skills" as painting, for his art-objects were produced for him by large numbers of 'assistants'. These notionally 'mass-produced' art-objects typically fetched headline prices, regardless of their generic aesthetic appearances. Among the 'signature' Hirstian series of art-objects were the dead animals (mostly cattle) preserved in vitrines of formaldehyde 'sculptures' and the 'spot' and 'butterfly' 'paintings', all of which were 'terminated' after the 2008 spectacle. However, in assuming that Hirst's recent 'move to painting' was a 'new' phenomenon occurring at a 'late' stage in the artist's career, Conrad has perhaps missed something important about Hirst and his work.

On reading Gordon Burn's (2001: 68) book of collected interviews with Hirst in early 2009, I realised that although Hirst is widely considered to be one of the most significant sculptors of his generation, he considers himself to be primarily a painter, hence his statement that: "there's one kind of art, and it's painting". This personal obsession with painting has been evidenced with Hirst's well-documented fixation with the work of Francis Bacon.[3] And if Hirst considers himself to be a painter, then perhaps he could be considered as a painter concerned with painting after other painters (such as Bacon). Conrad (2009) concluded his review of Hirst's show by stating that: "Bumptiously confronting Titian, Poussin and other venerable elders at the Wallace Collection, Hirst is enjoying his temporary ownership of the trampled, desecrated earth. But he's not a legitimate heir and the Wallace Collection is playing host to a jumped-up pretender." Conrad uses the word 'heir' here in relation to 'the earth', but I would rather propose that this word could be used to make a different connection, one that links Hirst to his master-painter forebears, such as "Titian, Poussin" and Bacon.

At the end of an interview with Robert Storr (2003: 309), Gerhard Richter, who is perhaps one of the most important post-war painters still living and working today, was asked: "You can be misunderstood in many, many ways. And perhaps the question is not how many ways you can be misunderstood but how would you like to be understood?" To which Richter replied: "I don't know how I would like to be understood. Maybe as the keeper of tradition. (*Laughter*) Rather that than any other misunderstandings." One could ask why Richter laughed at his response to Storr's

[3] Hirst has often expressed his immense pleasure in the knowledge that Bacon had viewed his work *A Thousand Years* (1990) at the Saatchi Gallery and that Bacon had later commented on the work in a letter to the Irish painter Louis Le Brocquy (Sean O'Hagan: 10 August 2008).

question. Perhaps it is because earlier in the same interview[4] the artist made the statement which I have used as my second epigraph above. In this exchange between Storr and Richter (2009: 391), the painter states that he sees himself as being "definitely inside of art history .... [in the] painter's culture .... The culture of painters".

If the general objective of this mini-thesis is to locate the artwork I have produced during this degree in a broader art-historical discourse or context, then this objective has already been met somewhere in between the above comments made by Hirst and Richter. I believe that both of these artists see themselves as heirs and inheritors of the tradition/s of painting and thus as belonging to "the culture of painters". Whilst I am not claiming for myself or my work any kind of equivalency with either Hirst or Richter, I am suggesting that my work, like theirs, could be described as a direct engagement with the discourse of painting in general and with "the culture of painters" in particular. In choosing to make the life and work of the painter Thomas Baines my primary area of research in this degree, I have consciously sought to discover his contribution to the discourse of painting and his role in "the culture of painters" as it can be found in the history of South Africa.

But what is this "culture of painters"? Perhaps Picasso (Levey 1981: 11) answered this question best by noting that: "I have a feeling that Delacroix, Giotto, Tintoretto, El Greco and the rest ... are all standing behind me watching me at work". According to Picasso then, to paint is to be aware of all those who have painted before you. I am inclined to agree with this proposition for I have at certain times during this degree felt particular painters "standing behind me watching me at work". One such painter was Picasso himself, and another was his painterly forbear Jacques-Louis David. While I was painting *Tableau* (Fig. 1) I certainly had in mind both Picasso's *Guernica* (1937: Fig. 2. 1), "the last great history-painting" (Hughes 2005: 110) and David's *The Oath of the Horatii* (1784: Fig. 3), a work which could be considered the proto-typical 'history-painting'. In painting *Genesis* (Fig. 4) I had the feeling that René Magritte was also somewhere 'behind' me, as his work *Attempting the Impossible* (1928: Fig. 5) became an important correlative for panel six (Fig. 4. 8) of the series. And throughout the course of this degree, the work and writings of Richter have continually offered me an important contemporary perspective on 'The Daily Practice of Painting'.[5]

---

[4] Please note that although this was the same interview I have made reference to two different transcripts. The portion of this interview in which Richter speaks about his self-location in "the culture of painters" is not included in Storr's MoMA catalogue but rather in Richter's (2009:391) own book *Gerhard Richter Writings 1961 – 2007*.

[5] This is the title of the "original volume of Gerhard Richter's texts, edited by Hans Ulrich Obrist, [which] was published in German in 1993 .... [and in] 1995, this volume was translated into English by David Britt" (Dietmar Elgar in Gerhard Richter's *Writings* 2009: 535).

Identifying oneself as belonging to this "culture of painters" also allows one to take as one's subject matter the lived experience of painting and of being a painter. As Michael Levey (1981: 7) has suggested: "In the medium of paint the painter has remarkable opportunities to create works of art whose subject-matter can be the activity of being a painter: in his studio, in private or public life, from birth and childhood to death and posthumous celebration." Levey has also remarked that: "Such subject-matter has exercised a great appeal over western European painters from the Middle Ages onwards." According to Levey (1981: 14), there are two paintings contained within the history of western European painting that are "central to this theme": Velazquez's *Las Meninas* (1656: Fig. 2. 3) and Vermeer's *A painter at work* (c. 1665). These two pictures: "are perhaps the most sheerly sophisticated masterpieces of paintings that take painting as their subject". But it is Velazquez's painting that is most pertinent to this present discussion, for it was from this work that Picasso, three-hundred years 'after' Velazquez, generated an entire suite of what Michael Ayrton (1960: 22) has termed "paraphrases" of this "masterwork".

Within the "culture of painters" there has been a long-standing tradition of painters imitating the work of other painters which, according to Linda Hutcheon (2000: 101), stretches as far back as the Renaissance. Ayrton (1960: 7) describes a painting that directly imitates another painting as a 'copy', and it was his firm opinion that artists should be unapologetic in the continuation of this tradition. As a practicing artist himself, Ayrton (1960: 29) expressed the view which is quoted as the third epigraph above, that: "Just as the individual is 'involved in mankind', so the artist is involved in artists." Ayrton adds that such an artist: "moves over an intricate web woven of the fabric of imagery and he ranges back and forth across time in the struggle to clarify his own visual experiences. The translation of images is a part of that process." Yet Ayrton (1960: 28) has taken issue with Picasso's (1958: Fig. 2.2) various 'translations' of Velazquez's *Las Meninas*, for: "the copy today, unless it is such a paraphrase, unless it is entirely coated with the manner of the copyist, and translated into his personal idiom, commands little public respect." As Ayrton (1960: 29) has argued:

> When Rubens transformed Titian's *Andrians* into his Flemish *Bacchanal* his translation is subtle and in no way drastic. Where he has imposed his own personality on Titian's he would seem to have done so unselfconsciously. There is no doubt, however, as to Picasso's imposition of himself on Velazquez. The whole image is destroyed and reassembled. This imposition, which makes Picasso's copy acceptable, in our own day, could only be significant when, publicly at least, the interest in a copy depends upon its departure from the original as opposed to its adherence to it. In Picasso' words, 'it becomes something else'.

It would appear then that Ayrton objects not only to Picasso's paraphrasing of Velazquez, but also to 'the public's' endorsement of such an 'imposition'. But one can only wonder why Ayrton did not term such a paraphrase by Picasso as a "gently mocking parody" (Hutcheon 2000: 65) which is perhaps a more plausible interpretation of the work. A few years after Ayrton published his tirade against Picasso's painterly paraphrase, two young German painters produced a series of paintings that publicly engaged in what could be safely termed a "postmodernist desire to establish a dialogue with the past" (Hutcheon 2000: 111). As Hutcheon (2000: 107) has observed:

> [Benjamin] Buchloh argues that parody can be both a mode of ultimate complicity and secret reconciliation and also a real way to revolutionize [*sic.*] art. He points to Sigmar Polke and Gerhard Richter as German painters of the 1960s who used parody, as did American pop artists, to confront history and technology, combining an ironic appropriation from low-cultural forms with a stylistic appropriation from high-art, juxtaposing 'reified code and subversive codification'.

Not once in Ayrton's essay on painters imitating painters does he use the word parody, and its absence is conspicuous. In noting a similar absence of the term, but in the context of latter-day post-modern theory, Hutcheon (2000: 115) has perhaps accurately identified the reason for Ayrton's non-deployment of parody in his critique of the paraphrase: "If Post-Modernist theorists do not often use the word parody itself, I would argue that this is because of the strong negative interdiction that parody is still under because of its trivialization [*sic.*] through the inclusion of ridicule in its definition." In response to this traditional – but problematic – association of parody with ridicule, Hutcheon (2000: 100-101) argues that:

> In the last five chapters, ... [the] ideological status of parody has been touched on a number of times. Much parody, we saw, turned out to be conservative and normative in its critical function. This is especially true of the ridiculing kind that is usually the only kind permitted to be called parody. According to a Romantic aesthetic, such forms of art are by definition parasitic. Even today, this same negative evaluation persists and its basis, as betrayed by its language, is often ideological in a very general sense: we are told that parody seeks to dominate texts but that it is still ultimately peripheral and parasitic. ... We have also seen however, that there is another kind of parody, different from the traditional mocking type that is often both limited in size and text-specific (or occasional). This other kind or mode has a wider range of pragmatic ethos and its form is considerably more extended. Parody in much twentieth-century art is a major mode of thematic and formal structuring, involving what I earlier called integrating modeling processes. As such, it is one of the most frequent forms taken by textual self-reflexivity in our century. It marks the intersection of creation and re-creation, of invention and critique.

Hutcheon (2000: 7) defines present-day parody as "repetition with critical difference", and it is this definition that perhaps best describes what has become the central artistic strategy I have deployed

in the production of my exhibition. In all three series of work on show, I have 'repeated' certain drawings or paintings by Baines, but 'with critical difference'. *After Baines* could therefore be considered a 'Parody in Three-Parts', for as Hutcheon (2000: 101) has explained:

> Parody is, then, an important way for modern artists to come to terms with the past – through ironic recoding or, in my awkward descriptive neologism, 'trans-contextualising.' Its historical antecedents are the classical and Renaissance practices of imitation, though with more stress on difference and distance from the original text or set of conventions.

In the context of the visual arts then, and according to Hutcheon, the parody and not the paraphrase, could be seen to be an extension of the long-standing tradition of one painter imitating the work of another painter, both of whom belong to "the culture of painters". This mini-thesis therefore attempts to explore the ways in which I have both referenced but also departed from the life and work of Thomas Baines in the exhibition *After Baines*. In Chapter One, I discuss the role that Baines' biography and artistic practice played in the conceptualisation of the artworks I have produced for this degree. In Chapter Two, I explain the ways in which I see my work critically differing from Baines' 'original' paintings and drawings in my painterly repetition of these pictures. I hope that in light of the discussion which follows my practice thus far could be understood as a parody not only of the life and work of Thomas Baines, but also of myself, as a white male painter of British descent living and working in the Eastern Cape of South Africa.

Chapter One: *After* the Figure of Baines

The phrase 'the figure of Baines' has come to mean certain things to me as a result of the approach I have taken to researching this artist. To me, the word 'figure' is primarily a visual term: it speaks of a likeness or representation of a human body or form. Thus when I use the phrase 'the figure of Baines' I see, in my mind's eye, a grey ghost of a man, that, try as I might, has not – and cannot – be 'fully fleshed'. One could know all there is to know about the life-story – the biography – of Baines and yet still know almost nothing about the man who once lived. All that is left of this man is *representation*, in text and in image. Certainly, Baines has left us a great deal of self-representation, but in engaging with these representations I have sought to be continually vigilant and cognisant of the propensity within each of us to flatter and delude ourselves. And if we cannot trust in Baines' own self-representation, then we certainly cannot wholly trust in the representations that others have constructed of 'the figure of Baines', regardless of their supposed 'historical accuracy'. But if representation is all we have at our disposal to access this figure from the past, then there is surely no clear-cut, 'black-and-white', way of distinguishing 'fact' from 'fiction'. Thus a creative space emerges for the enactment of a kind of fictionalised biography. A biography in which multiple 'figures of Baines' are staged: some constructed by the man himself, others constructed by those who have sought to find him in history, and some entirely of my own making, or imagining. Kathryn Smith (2004: 9-10) has described this kind of biography:

> Biography is where things have started getting interesting for me – a weird kind of biography that is a deliberate mix of reality and artifice, of artistry and art history, of returning to paintings or styles of visual representation that have made certain memories for me (or are they fantasies of memories I wish I had?) ... In contemporary South Africa, these are not innocent areas to be exploring. But for me it's another kind of colonising – of someone else's language and symbolic system, to steal, bastardise and make it my own.

Like Smith, the kind of biography I am interested in is one "that is a deliberate mix of reality and artifice, of artistry and art history": a blend of the various shades of grey through which I have sought to apprehend the 'figures' of Baines. However, I am aware of the fact that in my act of 'colonising' Baines, more is revealed about me as the 'author' of the work than about 'him', its ostensible subject. In view of this fact, I have concluded this chapter with a short discussion of two other contemporary South African visual artists who have written of – and reflected on – their personal complicity in their practice. I have done this in an attempt to apprehend my own entanglement and enmeshment with and in this 'figure' of Baines.

I. A short life story and a frontier town

Jane Carruthers (1990: 19) has recorded that "Thomas Baines was born at King's Lynn, a trading town on the coast of Norfolk, on 27 November 1820". I was born on 15 June 1983, in 'Settlers' Hospital, Grahamstown: 163 years 'after' Baines. From as early as I can remember the year '1820' has been shrouded in some kind of mysterious and foreboding 'historical' significance. Like the 'Monument' which commemorates the landing of several hundred of Baines' country-folk in Algoa Bay, the date '1820' has seemed to me as monolithic and incomprehensible as that looming bastion of 'culture' built to memorialise it. It does seem a strange coincidence that Baines should have been born in this most auspicious year, for so much of his later life was to be spent travelling through and in the same landscape that these determined – albeit desperate – Britons had 'successfully' taken occupancy of and residency in. Indeed, during a portion of his time in the Eastern Cape, Baines was also to reside in Grahamstown, documenting this frontier town in words, sketches and oil paintings: the very constituents of this degree.

'Tom'[6] was christened John Thomas Baines – after his father – on the 23 January 1821. The Baines family had, by the birth of 'Tom', two well-established familial traditions, which Carruthers (1990: 19) has identified as "the sea and painting". Baines' "father was a master mariner and his paternal grandfather had captained a whaler. Both his father and his maternal grandfather appear to have had modest talent as painters, while his younger brother, Henry, was a professional artist and art teacher." Given the choice of these two possible professions, Baines was to choose painting – and not the sea – as his trade: for "when he was sixteen Baines entered into indentures as an apprentice to one William Carr, described as an 'ornamental painter'" (Carruthers 2000: 18). After five years of indentures, Baines became an experienced ornamental *coach* painter, and as Carruthers (2000: 19) has surmised: "[H]e must have realized how limited his future would be were he to remain in Lynn". Thus, having made the acquaintance one William Roome, "a King's Lynn man who had made his home in Cape Town", Baines decided to follow Roome's encouragement and advice "that employment at the Cape would be easy to find".

After having left King's Lynn for South Africa on 8 August 1842, Baines did manage to find employment in Cape Town as a coach painter. After three years of such labour, Baines "became a self-employed marine and portrait painter, working on commission, and living a settled existence". 'Settled' that is, up until the point that "he met George Frederick Angas, the traveller and painter,

[6] As his mother abbreviated his name, see Carruthers (1999: 20).

and reread the hunting adventures of William Cornwallis Harris" after which he "was fired with enthusiasm to explore the southern African interior" (Carruthers 2000: 19). However, as Michael Stevenson (1999: 13) has noted, Baines' diaries of this time "do not show a pronounced interest in exploration. Yet, if he did have latent ambitions as an explorer, Africa was the most appropriate [location]" for him to realise these ambitions. Desireé Lewis (1999: 109) has likened this young Baines to Marlow, the narrator of Joseph Conrad's (1902) *Heart of Darkness*:

> Joseph Conrad, through his narrator's reflections about his childhood in *Heart of Darkness*, suggestively explores a fantasy that took hold in the minds of many British boys: 'Now when I was a little chap I had a passion for maps. I would look for hours at South America, or Africa, or Australia, and lose myself in all the glories of exploration. At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map (but they all look like that) I would put my finger on it and say, "When I grow up I will go there."' As this section of the narrative illustrated, Africa was one continent in particular that preoccupied Conrad's character – and that of numerous other young men. Like Marlow (and of course Conrad himself), Baines turned to 'the biggest, most blank, so to speak'. This phrase is revealing about the underpinnings of the colonial explorer's travels. The 'glories of exploration' are seen to be motivated not simply by a desire to explore new worlds, but by a need to imbue a vacant world with meaning, to fill the 'blank space' with triumphant presence.

Such a comparison between the young Baines and Conrad's narrator is not far-fetched, for Baines[7] (cited in Carruthers 1990: 15) himself has written of Africa in terms very similar to Marlow's:

> The progress of civilization may be retarded but cannot permanently be checked ... [In the southern African interior] gold of the finest quality and in nuggets of considerable size has been found ... and it seems probable that ... the auriferous regions of South Africa will rival those of California and Australia; and a stream of population will flow toward them, the increasing numbers of which, it may be hoped, will at length fill the *waste* and *unoccupied territories*, and operate as an effectual restraint upon the continual recurrence of the invasions [by Africans] to which, from its earliest existence, the [Cape] Colony has been subjected. [Emphasis added]

Baines' use of the terms "waste" and "unoccupied territories" could be likened to what J. M. Coetzee (1988: 49) has identified as the representational "problem" of the "'empty' country". This problem poses itself to the colonial artist or poet seeking to re-present – both visually and verbally – the "vacant", "blank" (Lewis 1999: 109), "empty", (Coetzee 1988: 49) "waste" (Baines) of a foreign 'colonial' country for an audience familiar with a totally dissimilar landscape or locale 'back home' in England. Thomas Baines was without doubt one such artist labouring to this end. Although possessing very little by way of 'formal' artistic education, Baines' decision to 'go

[7] See the second volume of Baines' *Journal of Residence in Africa*, edited by R. F. Kennedy and re-published in 1964.

professional', as a visual artist based momentarily in Cape Town, evidences an internal conviction that he could make a living from what skill and expertise he possessed. As Carruthers (1990: 20) has surmised, Baines must have thought: "... if these men [Angas and Harris] could finance their travels by writing and sketching, why could he not do likewise?" Perhaps prompted by this reasoning, Baines left Cape Town for the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony in 1848 to begin his (new) life as an explorer-artist.

Baines was to spend five years in the Eastern Cape between 1848 and 1852. In a book devoted entirely to sketches that Baines produced in and of the Eastern Cape in this time, Carruthers (1990: 13) has noted that Baines' sporadic and largely aimless 'exploration' of this particular landscape "coincided with a critical and traumatic period for the region, and his diary and sketches thus provide an important historical and personal record of the troubled times". Carruthers (1990: 20) has outlined the various expeditions and journeys that Baines undertook whilst in the Eastern Cape:

> Baines set out [from Cape Town] in February 1848, by sea, bound for the Eastern Cape. He arrived in Port Elizabeth thirteen days later and within a month had found travelling companions in the brothers William and George Liddle who were then embarking on an expedition through the Eastern Cape to the Orange River. The party returned to Grahamstown after three months of travelling, and a year later Baines set off again, on a solitary two-month journey through the central and eastern districts of the Eastern Cape. He ventured further afield in 1850, spending a year on an expedition to the Vaal River with Joseph McCabe. From June 1851 to January 1852 Baines was appointed official war artist to the British forces during part of the Eighth Frontier War.

Marion Arnold (2000: 132) has termed Grahamstown "the most significant frontier town, which, with a permanent garrison, played an important role in war campaigns". This little frontier town was also to have some special significance for Baines, for as Carruthers (1990: 146) has stated: "Between 1848 and 1853 Baines spent some time in Grahamstown, then a town with about seven hundred and fifty houses and more than five thousand white inhabitants." Apart from the year that Baines had spent in Grahamstown between July 1848 and 1849, he later returned to the town upon leaving the employment of the British military. As Carruthers (1990: 197) has noted:

> Baines discontinued his work as official war artist in January 1852, more than a year before hostilities finally ended with the defeat of the Xhosa in March 1853. In his journal he explained that he had left the army because he found campaigning expensive and because he had private artistic commissions to execute. He lived in Grahamstown until May 1853 and during this time was pleased to note that a number of his paintings were published and that his work was brought to the attention of Queen Victoria's consort, Prince Albert. Baines recorded nothing of his daily life in

> the town, perhaps deciding that it would not make as interesting a tale as his travels or military adventures.

Despite Baines' "daily life" in Grahamstown not being of sufficient interest to warrant lengthy description in his diaries, he did – nonetheless – make several sketches and paintings of the town as he observed it during his residency.[8] The Albany History Museum in Grahamstown has in its collection several of these pictures, the 'availability' of which played a considerable role in my initial decision to research Baines. Although separated by over a hundred and sixty years – and all the turbulent history contained therein – Baines and I share the inhabitancy of this town and the reciprocal acts of looking at it, drawing it and painting it, which in "contemporary South Africa ... are not innocent areas to be exploring" (Smith 2004: 9-10).

Frank and Edna Bradlow (Carruthers 1990: 19) have noted that Baines is a "many-sided" character, "who seems to cast a spell over those who delve into his life and work; in fact, [those so spellbound] incline to be resentful of the human failings in his makeup." Perhaps I am guilty of being "spellbound" by Baines, but I certainly do not "resent" Baines for his "human failings". On the contrary, I have found that Baines' fallibility is his most intriguing characteristic. For instance, Carruthers (2000: 28-29) has described Baines as he must have been whilst he inhabited the Eastern Cape:

> Despite the fascination of all that was new to Baines in this part of southern Africa, at the core of this chapter of his life was his lack of money – indeed, he was destitute almost all of the time. Thus, the main strand running through his autobiography, replete with descriptions of the landscape and people of southern Africa 'unfolding' before him, is the poignancy of his wretched financial situation. His travels therefore appear somewhat pathetic, for they do not stem from a sense of adventure alone but more from desperation and utter penury. ... [And] if one decodes Baines's superficial bravado, a fundamental requirement of a male Victorian, it is a piteous, destitute figure that emerges.

Stevenson (1999: 16) has perhaps identified why Baines was so 'piteous' and 'destitute' during this period of his life, and why he remained that way for the duration of his life:

> [One] hindrance in the path of Baines' aspirations as an explorer was his limited financial resources. He had no private income and came from a lower-middle class family, unlike prominent personalities in the world of British exploration such as Charles Darwin, Alexander van Humboldt, the Hookers and Murchison, who utilised their often substantial private incomes to fund their careers. Consequently,

[8] Several of these pictures will be identified in the next chapter.

> throughout his life he depended primarily on the sale of paintings to finance his desire for travel and exploration.

Although Baines "depended primarily on the sale of paintings to finance his desire for travel and exploration", Arnold (2000: 79) has revealed how fraught a strategy this was for an artist who had no interest in the art world of his day:

> For those who embraced the current concepts of 'art' and 'artist', the Victorian art world offered opportunities and the hard-working Baines should have been at least moderately successful. The subjects of his paintings – landscapes, seascapes and scenes of everyday life – were the subjects of his contemporaries; his style – naturalistic, descriptive, and heightened at times with the conventions of the picturesque – was the style of many Victorian painters. Yet because he made no attempt to court the art world, Baines failed to be accorded any serious attention. By leaving England to practise as an artist and returning to London only at irregular intervals for no more than short periods, Baines denied himself contact with the social infrastructure of British art and the institutions that determined its reception and evaluation. He made little effort to place his paintings where they would be viewed as 'art'.

Likewise, as Arnold (1995: 87) has explained: "Part of the difficulty in understanding Baines as an artist lies in the fact that he cannot be placed in only one context. He is a Victorian artist who eschewed exposure in the British art world and placed himself within the realm of science." This pursuit of a largely scientific viewership was formalised when Baines, after having managed to travel back to England from the Eastern Cape in 1853, began work for the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) in London whilst simultaneously editing and re-writing his journals describing his travels in the Eastern Cape and its surrounds. His tenure with the RGS was to prove quite productive as he was eventually dispatched to Australia on a RGS funded expedition. Having had a certain amount of success with this expedition, he was – after returning to England again – granted a place in a team bound for Africa, led by David Livingstone. However, Baines' other "human failings" were to play an unfortunate role in this fateful misadventure, causing Livingstone to "controversially"[9] dismiss him as "artist and storekeeper [of] the expedition in 1859", thereby effectively curtailing his "aspirations as an explorer" (Stevenson 1999: 15) and ending any further RGS-sponsored expeditions.

After Baines parted company with Livingstone he spent some time in Cape Town, eventually managing to join an excursion to the Victoria Falls and its surrounds. This journey lasted just under

[9] As Stevenson (1999: 15) has noted: "This is not the place to explore the intricacies of the dismissal, but it is generally acknowledged that Livingstone's actions were unfair." See Carruthers (2000: 49-55) for an in-depth account of Baines' dismissal.

four years, and it reached its conclusion with Baines returning to England, where he stayed for the following three years. In this time, he presented lectures, contributed to periodicals and co-authored the book *Shifts and Expedients of Camp Life* with William Barry Lord. Thereafter, in December 1868, at the age of forty-eight, Baines made his last voyage to Africa. As Carruthers (1990: 22) explains:

> Gold provided the lure for two African journeys which followed [his stay in England]: Baines first travelled from Natal through the Transvaal to what is now Zimbabwe as the leader of an expedition of the South African Goldfields Exploration Company, a project which ended in failure in 1872. Then, after spending a few months in Port Elizabeth, he made his way back to Natal in May 1873 and while there paid a visit to Zululand. November 1874 saw another short trip to Port Elizabeth before he returned to Durban where he died of dysentery on 8 May 1875, at the home of a distant cousin. ... The grave of Thomas Baines is in the old cemetery of Durban.

Baines died relatively young – aged fifty-five – unmarried and childless, and as his travels reveal, he had clearly felt some kind of identity with and affinity for South Africa, and indeed the Eastern Cape. Carruthers (1990: 15) has described Baines' relationship to this country:

> Although he referred to the Cape Colony as the land of his adoption, he was one of a generation of educated and observant British travellers of the mid nineteenth century who put down no roots and felt neither allegiance nor responsibility towards the countries through which they travelled. While 'committed to engaging and changing the land' they never however belonged to it.

In recounting this brief biography of Baines, I have attempted to introduce only those details which informed the conceptualisation and production of my visual artwork. In each of the three series of works I have executed there is a heavy – though not always obvious – dependency on the biography of Baines. Certainly the first series of work I produced in 2008, now re-worked and entitled *Before* (Fig. 6), is the most explicit attempt I made at visually narrating a portion of the life-story of Baines, although it is entirely imagined. Whilst executing the original drawings for this series I was thinking about the nature of 'preconceptions' and how Baines must have had several preconceptions of Africa whilst he was still in King's Lynn, awaiting his passage out of England. Later on in 2008, I came to consider the time that Baines spent in Grahamstown, as a "piteous [and] destitute figure" (Carruthers 2000: 29) as the most significant aspect of Baines' biography. The sense of failure I perceived in this period of his life was the catalyst for the "gently mocking parody" (Hutcheon 2000: 65) of three figures of Baines I painted in the 'history painting' *Tableau* (Fig. 1). When one considers that the traditional subject matter of history-painting was the depiction of certain 'epic' events in the life of a great 'hero' or 'heroes' in history, it is ironic that Baines, who was anything

but an epic 'hero', should be "trans-contextualised" (Hutcheon 2000: 101) into the language of history-painting (see section II in Chapter Two).

II. Eye / I witness

Whilst researching the biography of Baines, I came across what I considered to be an important correlation between his working practice and my own. Having spent much of my undergraduate Studio Practice reproducing images of myself in my paintings, I was interested to note that Baines had done the same. In an overwhelming majority of Baines' work, the artist repetitively inserts a diminutive and caricature-like representation of himself into his pictorial compositions. This figure is unmistakable in its consistency of appearance. It is always bearded, with a broad brimmed hat, dressed in matching monochrome yellowed-khaki pants and shirt, and accessorised with brown leather shoes (*veldskoene*) and belt. Attached to the belt is a box-like pouch, presumably containing ammunition for the rifle that is never far from hand. Adding to these accoutrements of the quintessential African-Explorer the figure typically possesses the tools of his trade: a sketchpad and some or other drawing implement. Together, these 'markers' of identity combine to form what could be termed a 'figure of Baines': a kind of short-hand stand-in for the 'Explorer-artist' himself.

Self-portraiture has been an important part of my practice as a painter since my first year as an undergraduate student. In attempting to 'objectify' myself visually in particular works, I hoped to achieve a certain kind of 'authenticity' in my practice – as problematic as that may seem. In painting myself, I hoped to 'speak' for myself. I did this in an attempt to avoid what Craig Owens has called "The Indignity of Speaking for Others" (in Atkinson & Brietz 1999: 19). But what I have found particularly fascinating about the scholarship on Baines is the variety of explanations that have been proffered by certain writers and theorists for this artist's repetitive and seemingly "habitual inclusion of himself in his images" (Stevenson 1999: 24).

There is something innately theatrical about a painter painting the figure of himself, which is only heightened if the painter depicts the figure of himself in the very act of painting. In choosing to construct such an image, the artist effectively renders the creative act of painting as pure spectacle: a performance, or an enactment tinged with a hint of absurdity. This absurdity is attributable to the fact that a painter cannot simultaneously see what he is painting and see himself in the act of painting without the aid of some other means of vision or imaging (like a mirror for instance or a

pre-produced posed photographic image).[10] Thus, the image becomes a logical impossibility, an artifice or contrivance, due to the imposition of the question as to *how* the artist produced the image: 'How could the artist see what he is painting and yet also see himself painting? Either one is untrue or both are!' Understanding this visual conundrum allows for all sorts of entertaining possibilities for the painter, as I have attempted to do in panel six of the series *Genesis* (Fig. 4). However, were an artist to attempt to ignore the inherently illogical and absurd implications of such a constructed image, and instead assert that the inclusion of one's figure in one's image might somehow enforce its believability or 'reality' – in terms of the depicted scenario having actually happened *as* depicted – only begs a kind of disbelief. And yet, this is exactly the kind of seemingly un-reflexive self-contradiction that is discernable in much of Baines' oeuvre.

Baines sought primarily to engage the scientific community of Victorian England with the production of his visual artwork and related texts. Indeed, as the title of a recent retrospective exhibition of Baines' work states, he was by all accounts: 'An Artist in the Service of Science'.[11] Arnold (2000: 87) has observed that: "The acceptance of Baines' paintings as examples of truthful realism lodged them within the realm of science in his lifetime and the major collections of his work in England are still located in scientific institutions". These 'institutions', Arnold (2000: 87) has argued, "acquire collections primarily for their documentary nature and hence viewers of paintings in these venues are predisposed to see Baines as a recorder". Similarly, Stevenson (1999: 24) has argued that:

> Because Baines sought primarily to direct his work towards scientists, he was conscious of the need for accuracy in his images and descriptions. This raises the question, how different in appearance would his images have been if his intended audience had been the art world rather than the world of science. Because his work was viewed and evaluated by a broad range of specialists in the fields of natural history and science in addition to other artists and the general public, he ensured that he was attentive to the accuracy of *all* aspects of natural history included in his images. The precisely observed details that Baines conveys in both his art and his writings can be seen in the context of the Victorian 'fanatic concern for scientific accuracy'...

As another example of Baines' pursuit of "scientific accuracy", Stevenson (1999: 24) has noted that "an indication of how conscious [Baines] was about the authenticity of his images is his *habitual inclusion of himself in his images* as if to affirm that *he witnessed* the scene" [emphasis added].

---

[10] And even then, as Jacques Derrida has observed in his *Memoirs of the Blind* (1993), the artist is ever only drawing or painting from the memory of that object, and not the object itself.

[11] An exhibition which was held (somewhat ironically) at Christie's London, in 1999. This is also the title of a collection of essays, edited by Michael Stevenson, which were published on the occasion of the exhibition which was held from 1-17 September 1999.

However, Marion Arnold (2000: 87) has also argued the converse of such a proposition, that it was to emphasise the *subjectivity* of his images, not their ostensible *objectivity*, that Baines included the figure of himself in his pictures:

> [The] artist reminds viewers that his works are interpretations of experiences framed from his point of view by including himself in his images. By using this strategy Baines aimed at informing his nineteenth-century audience that he was an eye witness to the 'truth'. He implies that his experience is authentic and the transcription faithful, and his audience accepted this. However, what Baines is actually saying is that as an artist he is an 'eye/I witness'. As an individual he sees not with scientific detachment but with all the personalized experiences and prejudices that made him a man, and with the passion and the knowledge that made him an artist. His paintings, possessing both aesthetic and social dimensions, reveal the vision of a versatile individual who viewed the world with curiosity through a filter of values peculiar to his situation in time and place.

But what could be said of Baines' depiction of the figure of himself in the very act of producing the image that he is also a part of? Jessica Dubow (2000: 99) has commented on this exact phenomenon in an analysis of one of Baines' sketches entitled *Bushman's Krantz, Baviaan's River* (1849), which was published in his *Journal of Residence*, and "was made during one of [his] many excursions in and beyond the eastern limits of the Cape Colony". As Dubow (2000: 99) has argued:

> The sketch is of the settler-poet Thomas Pringle's cave. On the rock face are images of San rock art. Above them, inscribed in white lettering, are the settler's initials, '*T. Pringle*': a kind of attenuated form of denomination in dialogue with the markings of an indigenous and now-absented presence. ... But within this rival and rhetorical economy is another announcement of 'place-making', too. In the lower left foreground, coulisse-like, we see the figure of the artist sketching the scene; the artist present in the act of wielding the tools of pictorial representation. In an important sense, then, Baines, the observer, appears caught in the net of his own observation. Seeing himself see what is enacted is precisely that subject-object entwinment [*sic*] that provides for the 'getting of sight'.

As Dubow (2000: 99) would have it, Baines' depiction of the figure of himself sketching the same sketch that the viewer is at present looking at, is his attempt to see "himself see". This attempt however, seems to serve an ambiguous function, for either Baines is emphasising his objectivity, as Stevenson would have it, or he is drawing attention to his complicit subjectivity in the image, as Arnold has argued. Perhaps aware of this ambiguity of meaning, Dubow (2000: 99) notes above that Baines' inclusion of the figure of himself "wielding the tools of pictorial representation", points to the "subject-object entwinment [*sic*]": the collapsing of objectivity into subjectivity. Patricia Davison and Sandra Klopper (1999: 104) have likewise commented on the enfolding of the artist-

subject and artwork-object produced by Baines' recurrent depiction of the figure of himself in his work:

> [A] reliance on artfulness is especially obvious in Baines' tendency to include himself in many of his sketches and paintings, a relatively unusual but highly effective device that serves to reinforce the apparent truthfulness not only of his observations, but also of his experiences ... . But while this device may have been used to emphasise the fact that Baines was indeed an authentic eye-witness of events, ironically it also alerts the viewer to the subjectivity of his presence and observations. It focuses attention, intentionally or unintentionally, on the relationship between the observer and the observed, and between the artist and the viewer. While Baines' practice of placing himself in the scenes he painted has, therefore, encouraged the understandable suggestion that he intended his presence to lend authority to his interpretation of events, it has also been argued that this device serves 'as an emotional key to the empathetic interpretation of the sublimity or otherwise of his scenes'. However interpreted, the artist's presence in the painting invites the viewer to recognise him as 'being there'.

It would appear then that regardless of whether Baines intended the figure of himself in his pictures to function as a means of objective veracity, or whether he sought rather to foreground his subjective presence in the depicted scene, the outcome is always the same: *both* claims are brought into question. In addition to noting this perceived collapsing of the subject/object binary, the writers also point to another implication of Baines' placing the figure of himself in his images. As Davison and Klopper (1999: 104-105) have argued:

> In some cases, Baines' presence in the painting probably had the additional purpose of underlining his proximity, literally and figuratively, to important African leaders. ... In other words, he created pictures in which he played an active role, albeit from the margins, where he was well situated to record the action. ... In short, while the artist's inclusion of himself in the scene serves to authenticate his powers of observation, his presence further emphasises that he was an active agent in the events he recorded.

The notion of the figure of Baines as possessing an "active" agency within the same pictorial domain as his representation has been a formative concern in the conceptualisation of the works which I have produced for this degree. This is perhaps most manifest in the series *Before* (Fig. 6), which depicts a figure of Baines 'magically' creating his own 'Africa' by means of the metamorphosis or transmutation of a series of sketches into a form of 'reality': the images 'signified' on the pages of his sketchpad becoming, through some unknowable process, the 'referent' itself. But if Baines, in including the figure of himself in his artwork, is personally implicated in his visual production, how much more so am I in my colonisation of the coloniser?

How much more am I implicated in my own visual production as I "steal, bastardise and make [Baines] my own"? (Smith 2004: 10)

III. The complicity of the self / On whiteness

> In order to expose historical fictions, one has to confront them head-on and this inevitably involves some complicity (Penny Siopis 1999: 225).

As Penny Siopis (1999: 225) has observed, one cannot attempt to "expose historical fictions", such as the legacy of white supremacy in South Africa, without oneself being immediately complicit in the construction of such an historical process. However, before one condemns a figure like Baines as being a 'racist colonialist', one has to come to terms with the fact that being 'white' in present day post-apartheid South Africa is to still enjoy the good fortune of a privileged birth and upbringing: a legacy inherited from such 'white bastards'[12] as Thomas Baines. Thus, as a 'pale male' myself, I cannot distance myself from the overt racial discourse that Baines both participated in and actively promoted as I have directly benefited from just such exertions as these. As Carruthers (1990: 46) has noted: "By taking part in the Eighth Frontier War and in publicizing his attempts to find precious metals which provided so strong a lure to further colonization, Baines had assisted in the establishment of white domination [in South Africa]". But, as several contemporary critics have observed, a figure's 'whiteness' runs far deeper than this. Indeed, one's 'race' encodes one's very vision to such an extent that one is fundamentally blind to one's own blindness: blind, that is, to one's own 'whiteness'. As Gary Taylor (2005: 14) has stated:

> White people, you might say, all suffer from snow blindness. But I, too, am 'white.' Before I could write those chapters on white objectivity, before I could think them, I had to escape the mind-numbing assumptions that had shaped my own generic identity for five decades. By definition, I could not do that by myself. To see ourselves we need something or someone outside ourselves. To glimpse the outlines of my whitehood I needed the perspective of someone who was not white.

Taylor presents to his reader the means by which a 'white' person can come to understand his or her own 'whiteness': an end that can only be achieved through the act of attempting to seeing oneself,

[12] The isiXhosa term '*Umlungu*' means 'white bastard' and is used almost always as a derogatory term meant to cause offence. The association of the word 'white' with 'bastard' was also poignantly made clear by Julius Malema, the leader of the ANC Youth League, when he threw BBC journalist Jonah Fisher, "a white Briton", out of a recent press conference held at the ANC's headquarters in Johannesburg (David Smith: 8 April 2010).

or one's own 'race', through the eyes of an-other person of 'colour'. This proposition had a marked impact on my practice during this degree. In accepting Taylor's contention I was led to seek out "the perspective of someone who was not white", someone like Johannes Phokela: a 'black' contemporary South African painter who trained as such at the Royal Academy in London. In the next chapter I will discuss the importance of Phokela's work in relation to my *Genesis* (Fig. 4) series of paintings. However, suffice it to say for now that the impact of Phokela's work on my own cannot and ought not be underestimated, as it was largely as a result of his visually critical interrogations and interpretations of 'whitehood' that I was able to "glimpse the outlines" of my own.

Rat Western (2010: 81) has asked: "Why in this current [South African] context, does the word colour still persistently more often mean race (a skin tone and no more of its complexities), than a hue denoting a chromatic representation of emotion or experience?" Although I cannot adequately address this question in this present discussion, I do think it pertinent to note that perhaps the association between 'colour' and 'skin' goes further back than just our "current context" and *that* is perhaps why the two words remain interlocked, even today. For instance, it is interesting to note, as Herman Pleij (2004: 11) has, that: "In many languages, the words 'colour' and 'paint' stem from the words for 'cover' and 'skin.' In Latin, for example, '*colour*' is derived from '*celare*' or '*occulere*,' to cover up." According to this etymology then, it appears that one could say that our skins (or skeleton-covers) have been painted with pigmentation (or colour). So to speak of 'colour' is to immediately evoke the bodily organ of 'skin', whether one does this consciously or not. Perhaps this would explain why colour and race remain intermingled. In any case, most constructions of racial identity invariably rely on the observed differences between the multitudes of skin colours (or hues or shades) that have been reductively labelled as either fairer or darker ('whiter' or 'blacker'). Though it might at first appear attractive to argue that such differences between skin colours are superficial or even superfluous to constructions of racial identity, Steven Connor (2004: 147) has proposed otherwise:

> Why, it has many times been asked, should a man or woman suffer prejudice and discrimination merely because of the colour of their skin? The question implies an attitude that is worth wondering a little about. It implies that the colour of skin is arbitrary. The injustice lies in this arbitrariness, in the fact of taking something so obviously superficial, so inessential, so little one's responsibility and therefore so little a part of what one is in oneself, as the basis for discrimination. Why does the question ask itself in this way? For the association between skin and colour is not at all arbitrary. Colour is seen as inessential because it is thought of as skin. To snip short the story I am about to spin out, skin-colour cannot but be significant in human

> history (though to be sure, in very different ways at different times and places) because colour *is* skin.

Connor's assertion that "colour *is* skin" is clearly rooted in the semantic origins of the terms that Pleij has previously described above. It is crucial to note however, as Connor does, that "the association between skin and colour is not at all arbitrary". And if this proposition is to be taken as 'valid', then the association between skin, colour and paint should equally not be seen as "at all arbitrary". Historically speaking, such a linking of coloured 'flesh-tone' to paint – and perhaps even to oil paint specifically – has not escaped the understanding of previous generations of painters, for as Suzanne Hudson (2008: 72) has noted, it was Willem de Kooning "who, after all, lasciviously maintained that 'flesh was the reason oil paint was invented'". Thomas Baines certainly painted flesh in oil paint: he painted his own flesh and he painted the flesh of others. Baines painted people 'black' or 'white', 'dark' or 'fair, of this there can be no doubt. But, what I wanted to know in researching Baines was: what was his 'view' of the people he painted? Was Baines a racist?

Davison and Klopper (1999: 106) have argued that we should "resist the temptation to stereotype Baines as a scientific racist. He was certainly prejudiced in his views about African people, and was influenced by current racial theories, but theory was mediated by his first-hand experience of certain individuals". But Lewis (1999: 110), in contrast to this, has noted:

> The notion of the colonial gaze, as it signals dominant subjects' need to codify an antithetically evaluated Otherness, helps to explain the coherence of Baines' wide-ranging activities. The idea of the colonial gaze also directly links the politics of ways of seeing to visual texts. Processes of establishing the authority of the observer through discovering, looking and representing are central to Baines' painting, despite many critics' (and frequently his own) disclaimers of systematic ideological intentions or affiliations. This coded seeing reveals the extent to which racial myth-making shapes representations of the 'difference' of other environments and people, and marks these representations in a manner that is not always obvious. Baines' art, then, registers what Griselda Pollock has called the 'colour of art history', a pattern in which the 'pigments' of a racial hierarchy pervasively 'mark' a 'social landscape'.

In essence then, it would appear that Baines was a racist. But if this was the case, then he was certainly not alone in this "white tendency" (Julius Malema in Smith: 8 April 2010), for according to Griselda Pollock, all of art history ought to be seen as 'racist': as it has been coloured 'white' by generations of artists, art-critics and art-historians. Thus to speak of "the culture of painters" that belongs in art history, is to address a legacy of whitehood: as most – if not all – of the painters in this culture were *white*. The racialisation of art-history is not something that is imposed upon it from the outside, it is rather something that is obviously deeply embedded within the discourse and

practice. The ability to recognise this 'embeddedness' within art history is what has been termed as "seeing white", and I have spent much mental and emotional energy in this degree attempting to 'see' not just the 'whiteness' of the figure of Baines, but also that of myself. As Lewis (1999: 112) has noted: "'Seeing white' has become an important strategy for interrupting the ways in which 'race refers only to blackness, to that which is not white' and for redefining race so that it is seen to signify 'a comprehensive system of hierarchical relations structured by white dominance'".

I am certainly not the only 'white' South African artist who has been interested in this pursuit of "seeing white". The photographer Michelle Booth (2004: 116), for example, has written the following concerning a series of work she produced which takes its title from this 'strategy':

> In 2002 I made a series of photographic images entitled *Seeing White*. This body of work was born out of my struggle to come to terms with what it means to be 'white' in a world where 'black' people experience racism everyday, where 'race' structures almost every aspect of their lives and their psyches. ... In South Africa, given our Apartheid past, we are aware of 'race' – but we do not share that burden equally. 'Race', for 'whites', is not a burden in the same way that 'blackness' is, mostly because the experience of being 'white' is still largely that of privilege.

"Seeing white" was, for Booth, the very substance of her work. And in turn, her work was not simply an 'academic' exercise, if that meant that she was somehow 'detached', 'disinterested', 'disengaged' or 'unemotional' in the production of her work. Indeed, quite to the contrary, Booth (2004: 119) has stated:

> The making of this work has been a reflection on my own personal journey in understanding and coming to terms with my 'whiteness' and how it continues to locate me in a position of privilege. Without vigilance, it is an easy and comfortable place to remain unless challenged. This work reflects my commitment to be seen as a 'white' artist taking responsibility for raising these uncomfortable matters in the heart of 'whiteness', and in doing so, sharing the burden of 'race'.

My own experience of producing this exhibition has been very similar to that of Booth. Although my work differs quite significantly, in terms of both its medium and *modus operandi*, I do believe that we have in common the desire to share the "burden of 'race'". But for me, at least, this desire has not been borne without anxiety. Indeed, the potential to be misunderstood "in many, many ways" (Storr 2003: 309) is – to my mind at least – a very real possibility. Penny Siopis (1999: 261), the other contemporary 'white' South African artist who has deliberately adopted an artistic strategy of "seeing white", has expressed a similar disquiet:

> I've been nervous about exploring 'whiteness' and I think I was even nervous when I worked with the idea of making an issue of an apparently invisible whiteness, facing 'race', which meant whiteness as well as blackness. But I think that it is always a difficult thing to start talking about whiteness if you are white, especially in South Africa at the moment, when there are other kinds of discourses, or shall I say popular myths around whiteness, which are actually very reactionary. ... [but f]or me not to take on the issue of 'race' would be an evasion...[13]

Like Siopis, I have become aware of the fact that in taking the decision to address my own personal complicity in the constructions of a 'white' racial identity, I have invited an entire host of accompanying and complicating issues. But, as Siopis states: "For me not to take on the issue of 'race' would be an evasion". Therefore, in electing to produce work inspired by – and critical of – the 'figure' of Baines, I acknowledge that I am personally implicated and equally condemned by whatever 'judgements' are made concerning this figure. If he is to be termed 'white' then I too must be called 'white'; if he is to be seen as a 'racist' then I too am one (though this is certainly *not* my desire); and if he is to be viewed as a 'bastard', then I ought to be given the same label. But it is all too easy to bandy about these charged and explosive terms. They are useful to us only as long as they continue to cause division and strife between people of different skin-colours. If I have realised one thing during my own enquiry into whiteness it is this: in order to be *pro*-'black' it is not therefore *necessary* for one to be *anti*-'white'. It is possible, and indeed better, for one to be *both* pro-'black' and pro-'white'.

To be 'white' in South Africa at this present moment is, to me, to be precariously balanced somewhere between the tragedies of the past and the promises of the future. A fall to either side could be catastrophically damaging for all South Africans, for the present is but an extension of the past. Lewis (1999: 109) has noted this in her own writings:

> One aim of this essay is to consider whether a figure like Baines can be so easily banished to the reprehensible myth-making of a previous century. In making these observations, I reflect generally about the inadequacies of celebrating a post-apartheid or post-colonial period without acknowledging its inextricable connection with an earlier one.

---

[13] I am aware of Siopis' more recent work, the *Pinky Pinky* (2002) series of paintings, and the ways in which this series addresses issues of race generally and of whiteness specifically. In this instance however, I refer to the comments that Siopis made concerning the role of whiteness in some of her earlier works as I consider these to be more pertinent to this present discussion. See: Siopis (1999: 246-266) 'Dissenting detail: Another story of art and politics in South Africa', in B. Atkinson & C. Brietz (*eds.*) *Grey Areas: Representation, Identity and Politics in Contemporary South African Art.*

And likewise, Ernst van Alphen (1999: 279) has expressed a similar sentiment concerning the production of visual artworks by contemporary artists seeking to address the subject of 'race':

> Clearly, [an] artist's own racial identity is not a condition for successful intervention in the traditions and politics of representation. It is precisely as intervention that works of art must work. ... [The] relationship between present and past is the battleground on which interventions could be distinguished from repetitions. Paradoxically, only art that acknowledges the past and then modifies its traditions can work through it in ways that open up a space for a future without racism.

I am not in any way claiming that the body of work I have produced for this degree might "open up a space for a future without racism". But what I am claiming is that in this body of work I have attempted to stage a kind of intervention in the relationship between "present and past" through "repetition with critical difference" (Hutcheon 2000: 7). As the next chapter will explain, it is the differences between Baines' 'originals' and my 'parodies' that are of critical importance to the interpretation of my work. And as it will be seen, much of this difference lies in the ways in which I have addressed notions of race and whiteness in a specifically post-apartheid South African context.

Chapter Two: *After* the Work of Baines

This chapter is and is not about the work of Thomas Baines. It *is* because I do address certain works by this artist, but it is also *not* because these works are not – in and of themselves – the primary focus of the chapter. The central objective of this chapter is to raise some of the theoretical and conceptual concerns which have shaped and influenced my working practice during the course of the last three years. It would simply be impossible, in the context of this limited chapter, to address *all* of the thoughts, ideas or associations my work has presented to me – and to others – during the course of this degree. I would also like to make clear, at this point, that I am all too well aware of the inevitable slippages, disassociations and misunderstandings that occur in the space between the artist's intention for an artwork and the meanings that this same object may present to a viewer in the act of interpretation. Thus in writing this chapter I can only hope that the reader – having already seen my exhibition – might have discovered some of the following meanings of my work for him or herself, in front of the work, thereby allowing this text to serve as 'confirmation' and not 'revelation'.

I. On ambiguity and William Kentridge in *Before*

Some of the first images I produced in the early stages of this degree are included in the series of ten digital inkjet prints on canvas entitled *Before* (Fig. 6). This work has been conceptualised primarily as a work of intentional ambiguity. The first – most obvious – ambiguity is the work's unclear ontological status. At first glance, the work appears as if it were a series of ten paintings, due to their superficial resemblance to the object-like nature of a painting. And yet, it is clear that the images on the surfaces of the canvases have not been painted at all, rather, these images seem to be pencil 'sketches'. But on closer inspection, the same images seem to have not been produced by the artist's hand at all, for they have (in fact) been generated via digital means as inkjet prints on canvas.[14] This ambiguity of medium is a central part of the work's intended artistic meaning and it

[14] I am aware of this medium's 'problematic' associations with mass-produced reproductions of art. In order to counteract the possible objections a critic may have against a 'fine artist' using this medium I have purposely limited the edition of prints to a single run and have pointedly utilised the highest quality of print available to me. It has also been somewhat amusing to note the recent notoriety that has been given to this medium. Sue Williamson (28 June 2010) has remarked that at a recent Kehinde Wiley exhibition opening in Cape Town, held during the FIFA World Cup: "the [painted] portraits had got stuck in Chinese customs and had not arrived in the country by the opening night, so

is hoped that the inevitable confusion caused by the appearance of the work will lend itself to the conceptual and theoretical concerns it attempts to address.

As a series of work, *Before* (Fig. 6) not only differs from its counterparts in the exhibition due to its means of production (prints masquerading as paintings), but it is also due to the limited number of quotations of works by Baines. In *Before* (Fig. 6) there are only two images that I have 'sourced' from Baines: the first is the painting *Self-portrait at the age of 38* (1858: Fig. 7) which I quote in panel two (Fig. 6. 2) of the series, and the second is a sketch of Table Mountain (No date: Fig. 8) which I quote in panel four (Fig. 6. 4) of the series. Even though the remaining eight images in the series do not directly quote any other specific works by Baines, it should be discernable that the series as a whole attempts to represent a kind of *figure* of Baines. This representational figure of Baines does incorporate certain elements of the historical figure of Baines, as I have framed him in the preceding chapter, but it is also *primarily* a figure of my imagination – and perhaps, fantasy. Given this "deliberate mix of reality and artifice, of artistry and art history" (Smith 2004: 9-10), the figure of Baines that is presented to the viewer in the series *Before* is – fundamentally – one of ambiguity.

One of the first ambiguities I discovered in researching Baines was what I have come to term the 'Baines proto-photographer phenomenon'. By this I mean that it had appeared to me quite early on in my research that Baines considered his sketches, watercolours and paintings to be 'objective' records of reality: akin to how we would conventionally consider filmic photographs notionally to 'capture' reality. As Arnold (2000: 167) has noted:

> As an artist, Baines consistently denied that his work was subjective. He deliberately strove to present his paintings as statements of an empirically verifiable reality and sought an alliance with science to authenticate his vision. ... Indeed, Baines' work tended to be seen as illustration and when so much of it eventually returned to South Africa to be housed in museums and archives, it was viewed as 'Africana' and analyzed by historians as information. In failing to understand the devices of persuasive imaging that Baines used to interpret reality and construct paintings, viewers overlooked his importance as an artist.

The contention that a painting (or a drawing) could once have been believed to have functioned like a photograph is – apart from being counter-intuitive – an interesting fantasy. But as Barbara

---

overnight the Scanshop, working from digital images, had printed the portraits on fabric and stretched them like canvases". Williamson was also uncertain whether any of the visitors to the opening had even noticed that the paintings were *not* paintings.

Savedoff (2000: 84) has observed, one cannot escape the inherent ambiguity, and perhaps even illogicality, in and of such a proposition:

> Rightly or wrongly, a photograph is thought of as having a closer connection to the objects and events it depicts than even the most documentary paintings. Because of the mechanical nature of its production, the photograph seems to have a special connection with reality and an independence of the photographer's intentions. For example, if there is a horse in a photograph, we assume that there must be a horse in front of the camera, since the horse cannot just be the product of the photographer's imagination. For this reason, a photograph is thought to verify the existence of its subject in a way a painting never could; the photograph requires the presence of a horse for its production, while a painting could depend wholly on the artist's imagination.

As Savedoff argues, a photograph conventionally possesses a function of veracity that "even the most documentary painting" lacks. In other words, just because we see a sketch of Table Mountain (Fig. 8) executed by the hand of Thomas Baines – replete with its pseudo-scientific captioning – it does not necessarily follow that this thing actually exists independent of the artist's mind. For if I had never been to Cape Town and seen the large geological morphology that in some ways resembles this drawing, I would be none the wiser as to whether such a thing exists at all apart from this drawing. Indeed, for all I might know, Baines could have invented this 'Table Mountain', which is precisely one of the ambiguities of meaning that I have attempted to exploit in the work *Before* (Fig. 6). Although as "an artist, Baines consistently denied that his work was subjective" (Arnold 2000: 167), Stevenson (1999: 11) has observed that the pursuit of 'veracity' or 'facticity' was actually (on occasion) totally abandoned by Baines, for once "at the London Polytechnic [Baines] even lectured on Abyssinia, where he had never been". Similarly, Carruthers (1990: 192) has observed that: "In his early career, Baines had painted scenes of war which he had not personally witnessed". I have found that these two observations, by Stevenson and Carruthers, are not isolated and that several other writers have also echoed this very same view of Baines. Indeed, it seems that by all accounts, Baines was typically quite liberal with the 'truth' when it suited him, a trait that is perhaps attributable to the Romantic vein which has been seen to run through much of his writing and imaging of South Africa. As Carruthers (1990: 28) has observed:

> The significance that Baines attached to his personal experiences and his desire to put them before the public, together with his clear enjoyment of sketching, 'the least premeditated form of art,' proclaim that he was fixed in the mould of nineteenth-century Romanticism which extolled individual imagination, intuition and primacy of emotion over reason. Dr Johnson saw Romanticism as 'resembling the tales or romances; wild ... improbable; ... fanciful; full of wild scenery,' this description being applicable to some of the work of Thomas Baines. That Baines was obsessed with scenery is clearly demonstrated by the fact that landscapes far outnumber any

> other subject that he sketched, and accounts of the landscape and its components dominate his journals.

The enormous surge not only in the depictions of landscapes in western art, but also in their popularity in the cultures of their creation, is directly linked to the rise of the 'intellectual' and 'emotional' movement of Romanticism in art and literature. As Carruthers argues above, it was very likely that Baines, who was born in 1820 when Romanticism was at its height, had 'imbibed' this philosophy through his cultural upbringing and so viewed his visual production through this very particular viewpoint. In looking at Baines' work, it is indeed clear that he sought to paint landscapes "full of wild scenery" but, as we have already established, Baines was at times capable of entirely dispensing with the pursuit of objectivity, thus it is perhaps likely that these landscapes might be "fanciful" and not 'factual' records of reality. Although not writing on Baines specifically, Simon Schama (1995: 6-7) has also made a similar observation:

> [If] a child's vision of nature can already be loaded with complicating memories, myths, and meanings, how much more elaborately wrought is the frame through which our adult eyes survey the landscape. For although we are accustomed to separate nature and human perception into two realms, they are, in fact, indivisible. Before it can ever be a repose for the senses, landscape is the work of the mind. Its scenery is built up as much from strata of memory as layers of rock.

If "landscape is the work of the mind" then Baines' sketched and painted re-presentations of landscapes can only be the repetition and manifestation of this mind-work. Aware of this point of view, I originally intended that the sketches that I have used in *Before* (Fig. 6) might in some way give expression to the idea that our vision of the world is inherently flawed and complicated, and that we are not able to distinguish between the thing in itself, as it exists 'out there', and our internal image of it. This subjective-objective ambiguity was therefore to me yet another notable feature in the work of Baines.

The 'figure' of Baines that the viewer encounters in the work *Before* (Fig. 6) has been conceived of as a vision of Baines as 'demiurge': a "name for the Maker or Creator of the world" who is also "conceived [of] as a being subordinate to the Supreme Being, and sometimes the author of evil" (*Oxford English Dictionary Online* [*OEDO*]). This is Baines as the creator of his world, and in the ten panels of *Before* (Fig. 6), this Baines 'animates' his world, this Africa or 'Eden'. Several contemporary post-colonial theorists and writers have observed the 'Africa as Eden' and 'European as Adam' trope in colonial art and literature. For instance, Elizabeth Delmont and Jessica Dubow (1995: 11) have observed that in many European depictions of the African landscape in the colonial era:

> ... spacious vistas ... spontaneously open up before, or rather below, the eye of the newcomer. [And as] such, it is a landscape whose emptiness and de-population is usually explained in terms of the European who, like Adam in his garden, walks this wilderness, scans its perimeters, naming as he pleases, augmenting emptiness with wilful fantasy.

Mary Louise Pratt (1992: 51-52) has also made the same point albeit with reference to Anders Sparrman's literary comparison of himself to Adam walking in the Garden of Eden. And J. M. Coetzee (1988: 50) has made a similar allusion to this trope, although not in relation to either Sparrman or Baines. It is however Anne McClintock's (1995: 30) observation that during "extravagant acts of discovery, imperial men reinvent a moment of pure (male) origin" that is perhaps closest to my act of framing Baines as demiurge. For it is McClintock's (1995: 29) contention that: "The imperial act of discovery can be compared with the male act of baptism. In both rituals, western men publicly disavow the creative agency of others (the colonized/women) and arrogate themselves the power of origins". Although Baines was not among the very first European explorers of Africa whose ambition it was to discover entire new 'lands', Stevenson (1999: 29) has noted that:

> The ultimate accolade for [Baines], and other travellers and amateurs, was of course to find a species new to science which may be named after them. Stafford places this quest and mania for new species in a more critical perspective when he points out: 'New information... constitutes actual as well as cultural capital, and it represents a prize for competing individuals, interest groups, and nations seeking the honour of discovery and control.'

According to McClintock it is the very act of naming (an entire land or a species of plant or animal) that constitutes the "moment of pure (male) origin". Thus my act of framing Baines as demiurge is not without some substantiation, for as Stevenson has already established, Baines did crave this sort of 'creative' agency. Although not directly addressing either Baines or the figure of the demiurge, the contemporary South African artist William Kentridge (2003: 108) has commented on the legacy that has been left to present-day artists of historical paintings that construct 'Africa as Eden':

> [The] idea of a pre-European Africa of innocence is firstly false and more importantly it obscures the strange contradictory relationship between Western conquest and the tribalism that still endures. This utopian Africa of mysticism, spiritual healing, untamed nature, is not unlike the Africa as Eden in the paintings of the famous South African landscape artists.

There is no doubt that Kentridge is aware of the post-colonial work that has been done on such paintings. But it is the manner in which he, as a practicing visual artist, has incorporated this trope into his artwork that has had a significant impact on my formulation of *Before* (Fig. 6). For instance, in the series *Colonial Landscapes* (1995-1996: Fig. 9), Kentridge 'quotes' and re-works various pictures by several historical South African artists, one of which resembles a painting by Baines (Fig. 10), and in this way these drawings were a significant influence on my work *Before* (Fig. 6).

From the perspective of my generation, Kentridge appears to be a dominant figure of the national and international art-world, which is perhaps why the young and 'trendy' Avant Car Guard collective recently portrayed him as a kind of Frankenstein in their painted portrait of him entitled *Poor Man's Picasso* (2008: Fig. 11). In this work, it would appear that to the artists Zander Blom, Jan-Henri Booysens and Michael MacGarry who comprise Avant Car Guard, Kentridge might as well be Picasso, for all of his imputed 'fame' and 'glory'. I am not, however, particularly enamoured of the *Poor Man's Picasso* (Fig. 11), as it is, in my opinion, a 'cheap shot' at a 'big name'. But by the same token, I am prepared to admit that my approach to Kentridge has perhaps been too devout, particularly in the work *Before* (Fig. 6). For apart from the *Colonial Landscapes* drawings, I was also influenced by Kentridge's practice of using himself as a model for his pictures, both in the medium of printmaking (*Ubu tells the truth* 1996 – 1997: Fig. 12) and in his continuing series of animated films (incorporating the figures of Soho Eckstein and Felix Teitlebaum). In several instances, whilst I was in the process of drawing the sketches of *Before* (Fig. 6), I made reference to photographs that I had taken of myself enacting Baines (Fig. 13). But there are perhaps more obvious references to Kentridge in *Before* (Fig. 6) than just these two examples. For instance, in the first panel (Fig. 6. 1) of the series I reference the title of Kentridge's third animated film *Mine* (1991: Fig. 14), and I 'stole' the visual effect of paper being blown by the wind (Fig. 6. 3 & Fig. 6. 9) from Kentridge's fifth animated film *Felix in Exile* (1994: Fig. 15).

Given the heavy influence of Kentridge on *Before* (Fig. 6), it is necessary to explain how I view my work as a departure from his, no matter how slight a departure it may be. For instance, in the first panel (Fig. 6. 1) of the series, I inserted the word 'MINE' into the lower portion of the schematic outlined map of Africa (or 'Eden') in an attempt to cause a certain degree of ambiguity in the interpretation of the image, and not primarily as an act of homage to Kentridge. For the word could either denote that the author of this map has 'claimed' this 'blank' or 'vacant' land as his own, or that he has 'mined' or intends to 'mine' this particular area of the map; which, in its location, coincidentally correlates with the broad geographical region of the gold-rich areas of Southern

Africa (which Baines had spent a portion of time exploring). In playing with the semiotic ambiguity of this first word-image, I had hoped that the viewer might be alerted to the ambiguous nature of the linear visual-narrative sequence depicted in the subsequent nine panels, and not just made aware of the series' indebtedness to Kentridge.

There is however one other intended ambiguity of the over-all meaning of *Before* (Fig. 6) that perhaps needs some identification. This ambiguity rests entirely upon the double meaning of the word 'animate' and, in *Before* (Fig. 6), I have attempted to blur the notional boundary that separates these two meanings in the sequence of events that I have depicted Baines as enacting. Savedoff (2000: 9-11) has observed that 'animation' has a particular history in western visual culture:

> There is a long standing fascination, in literature and myth, with the idea that representations are alive or come to life. According to Ernst Gombrich, there are legends and folk tales from all over the world "of images that had to be chained to prevent their moving of their own accord and of artists who had to refrain from putting the finishing touch to their painting to prevent the images from coming to life." There are stories of animation in both biblical and classical literature. In Genesis, for example, God breathes life into a body fashioned from earth, and in Greek myth the sculpture Galatea comes to life in answer to Pygmalion's prayer. ... The fascination with the animation of sculpted objects and painted images can be found not only in literature and ballet, but also in the visual arts themselves, most blatantly in illustrations of the Pygmalion theme (by Gérôme, Burne-Jones, Daumier, and others) and in medieval manuscript illustrations of miracles. But such literal illustrations of the theme are comparatively rare. More common are paintings that toy with the idea of animation by depicting painted and sculpted figures as though they were living beings. In such paintings the distinction between 'real' and 'represented' is blurred. Representations that are depicted as animate have an *ambiguous status*: although we may recognize them as depictions of paintings and sculptures, they do not function simply as paintings and sculptures within their compositions. They function in some ways as the objects or beings they represent. [Emphasis added]

As Savedoff explains above, the mythological conception of the artist as supernatural animator – or even demiurge – is a prevalent fable in numerous cultures. But Savedoff also draws our attention to the "ambiguous status" of "representations that are depicted as animate". This observation is especially applicable to the images in the series *Before* in which a representation of Baines animates certain of his own representations (of Africa, Table Mountain and then the Garden of Eden itself) through the process of representation (sketching) and then 'magical' animation whereby the representation (or sketch) becomes the thing in itself. But the "ambiguous status" of "representations that are depicted as animate" could also be seen to mirror the internal ambiguity of the word 'animate'. The derivative word 'animation', for example, can refer to both "the action of animating, or [the] state of being animated" (*OEDO*). Which means that the same word can be used

to describe something that is 'real' as well as something that is 'represented' as being 'real' (which is not 'real'). Savedoff has noted above that the God of the Bible is recorded as animating the body of Adam in the book of Genesis, by breathing life "life into a body fashioned from earth" – a phrase that could well be used to describe the process in which an 'animation artist' notionally 'breathes life' into a drawing in order to generate the visual effect of a 'moving picture'.

It has been noted previously, by a member of staff in the department, that the drawings in *Before* (Fig. 6) resemble 'illustrations', which is apparently not an appropriate 'area' for a Master of Fine Art candidate to be working in. Perhaps the work is 'illustrational'. And if it is, I do not necessarily believe this to be a 'failure' in the work. Indeed to the contrary, I believe that *Before*'s (Fig. 6) 'illustrational' quality is its strength, and that in this way it only deepens its ties with the work of Baines. For as Arnold (2000: 166) has observed:

> There is a sense ... in which all of Baines' output can be seen as an attempt to instruct others. Although he himself declared that the mainspring of his life was his desire to travel, the fact that he left such a full record of his journeys is indicative of his equally strong urge to enlighten others about what he saw and did.

Baines *illustrated* his world – the Africa of his perception – for the benefit of others, for his readers and viewers back home, who could not or would not leave England. As Davison and Klopper (1999: 92) have noted: "[F]or the large numbers of newly literate people in Britain who read accounts of travel, conquest and conversion from the comfort of their homes, the Empire remained an empire of the mind". How are empires of the mind constructed? They are constructed through the illustrations of *ideas*, and *Before* (Fig. 6) is primarily an illustration of an idea (or perhaps several ideas). This idea is that Baines, as demiurge, merely created a world he had already pre-conceived of in England 'before' he left on his voyage to Africa. And this idea is perhaps best *illustrated* in the final panel (Fig. 6. 10) of the series. In this picture, the figure of Baines stands motionless, enfolded in a landscape. But this is not just any landscape. It is an *ideal* landscape, a vision of paradise on earth, of Eden returned to, and it was drawn not by Baines, but by the 'father' of the Picturesque – William Gilpin. The *Scene with Picturesque Adornment* (ca. 1792: Fig. 16) is the prototypical example of a landscape of the mind, the perfect Picturesque landscape. However, the landscape in *Before* (Fig. 6. 10) has been sutured: the paper on which it was drawn has been torn, and then pieced back together again and this accidental intervention into the image perhaps draws attention to its status as nothing more than a sketch: the 'illustration' of an idea.

II. On photography and history painting in *Tableau*

> tableau, *n.* (and *int.*)
> 1. A vivid or picturesque scene or description; (also) a picture, a painting.
> 2. a. A group of people or objects positioned so as to form a vivid or picturesque scene.
> 2. b. *Theatre.* A representation of the action at some stage in a play (esp. a critical one), created by the actors suddenly holding their positions. Also a stage direction; hence (in extended use) as *int.*, drawing attention to a dramatic scene or situation.[15]

> And in our own day the 'history' picture has become a tableau [...] (Levey 1981: 65)

The departure point for the triptych *Tableau* (Fig. 1) was three photographic portraits of Baines that I had encountered whilst conducting researching on him (Figs. 17-19). This work, however, also represents the first most direct engagement I made with specific paintings by Baines. In panels one (Fig. 1. 1) and three (Fig. 1. 3) of *Tableau*, I refer to two photographs that seem to have been taken in the same 'shoot' or 'sitting'; and in panel two (Fig. 1. 2) I refer to a third studio portrait photograph from what appears to be a different sitting. In early 2008, I had scanned and printed these three studio portrait photographs of Baines and placed them on my studio wall. These images were to stay there for almost over a year before I realised that in them I had found the beginnings of what was to become the central work of my exhibition.

These three photographic portraits of Baines are in keeping with the stylistic characteristics of early studio portrait photography. In discussing the origins of this visual genre, Jean Sagne (1998: 112-114) has commented on the role such images played in the construction of the personal identities of the sitters:

> If adopting a certain style of dress was a way of distinguishing identity, it was also a sign that a less clear-cut form of experimentation was going on. The [photographer's] studio became a place where people could play with identity. Every photographic session produced a proof of at least one of the sitter's possible images.

Interestingly enough, Sagne (1998: 114) also makes the comparison of an artist to the figure of a demiurge. In this instance, however, it is the photographer – not the painter – who possesses such mystical powers:

---

[15] Entry from the *OEDO*.

> The photographer became 'the great creator', almost a demiurge. The signature of a famous photographer in the corner of a tiny portrait was a mark of distinction, perhaps the only thing that could distinguish it from a host of identical images. His signature, that miniscule inscription, encapsulated the photographer's power to bestow 'identity' upon his subject.

The advent of the photography studio (in Paris and London primarily) coincided almost exactly with the travels and explorations of Baines, a coincidence that has allowed us the privilege of no less than three glimpses of the ways in which Baines sought to represent himself to the public eye. I have dubbed these images as follows:

1. 'The Imperial Conqueror for Britain' (Fig. 17)
2. 'The Explorer of Africa' (Fig. 18)
3. 'The Thinker in Repose' (Fig. 19)

I am continually struck by how hyperbolically theatrical these images seem to be and I have subsequently discovered that I am not alone in making the association of such early studio portraits with the spectacle of the theatre. Indeed, as Sagne (1998: 119) has noted:

> The room in which the photograph was taken was almost exactly like the props department of any theatre. There was no logic as to how the balustrades and columns were arranged on oriental rugs or parquet floors, jumbled together alongside a variety of chairs and tables of every style. Heavy drapery swags opened onto painted backcloths showing snow-capped mountains, undergrowth or the view of the port. It was unusual for a portrait to be taken in an everyday setting. ... In nearly every studio, space was stage-managed, filled with props and accessories.

It would seem then that there was a very fine line between the photographer's studio and the theatre of the 1850s and onwards. It could thus be argued that the photographer's studio became a stage on which personal identity was performed and captured for posterity. Given this conception of the photographer's studio, I began to see these three simulacra of Baines as possible attempts made by the artist to locate 'the self' in the midst of a turbulent lifestyle of trans-Atlantic travel.

In the first photograph, (Fig. 17) this 'Baines' is attired in what is perhaps 'his' formal 'evening dress', replete with 'tails' and white gloves. But then again, perhaps this attire was not his at all. Perhaps he had borrowed it or rented it from the 'props department' of the photographer's studio? In any case, in this photograph 'Baines' stands erect: his right hand gripping his hip, his left hand casually resting upon a petite crafted pedestal, with a large Union Jack suitably arranged in an

opposing diagonal line drawn against the figure. The inclusion of a cascade of drapery, positioned just behind the flag, lends itself well to the enhanced 'theatricality' of the photograph. The third photograph (Fig. 19) seems to have been taken in the same sitting due to the identical dress of this 'Baines' to that of the preceding image. However, in this instance this 'Baines' is seated: posed (or is it choreographed?) as 'the thinker' at his table, his head held by his right hand, his arm resting atop what seems to be the same pedestal that appears in the preceding image. There is, however, no Union Jack in this photograph, but the rich drapery hung behind the seated figure again seems to be that of the preceding image now repositioned.

In the painted triptych *Tableau* (Fig. 1), these two portraits of Baines 'open' and 'close' the panorama that stretches across fourteen and a half square metres of canvas. In painting these photographs, I deliberately over-emphasised the 'black-and-white' nature of the original images, attempting to render a somewhat 'flat' and binary image with sharp delineations between the areas of 'black' and the areas of 'white'. I did this in an attempt to draw attention to the un-life-likeness of these figures, their inherent 'artificiality'. I had hoped that these figures would appear as 'cut-outs': of a similar kind to the ubiquitous large-scale two-dimensional cardboard cut-outs that one encounters in a visit to the present-day movie theatre. In a strong sense, I desired to make these images foils to the confrontation that occurs between 'the figure of Baines' and 'the figure of myself' in the central panel of the tableau.

I started painting the figures in panels one (Fig. 1. 1) and three (Fig. 1. 3) before I had solved the problem of how I was going to integrate the remaining studio photograph of Baines (Fig. 18) into the central panel of the triptych. This photograph was the same image of Baines that I had referred to in the process of drawing the sketches in *Before* (Fig. 6). And it was, quite literally, the 'central' and most important image I had of 'the figure of Baines'. The importance of this image lies in its representation of what Baines must have looked like whilst he was in South Africa. Here was the colonial abroad, kitted out in his 'explorer-outfit' or 'safari-suit'. After a large number of failed attempts to resolve the layout of the middle panel of *Tableau* (Fig. 1) (in the form of many binned sketches) I eventually drew a version of this 'figure of Baines' on the left-hand side of the page I was working on, and as I was drawing I then realised that I should mirror this figure; not with yet another 'figure of Baines', but with a figure of *myself*: enacting the pose and duplicating the dress and mannerisms of this most important 'figure of Baines' (see Fig. 20). It was then that I decided to

photograph myself in the 'costume' I had assembled some months before, whilst I was executing the sketches that have been reproduced in the work *Before*.[16]

As I was sketching this 'mirror-image' design for the central panel of *Tableau* (Fig. 1), I immediately wrote down the first possible antecedent image that had sprung to mind as I was drawing: Jeff Wall's *Double Self-Portrait* (1979: Fig. 21). Although this is an image of two possible 'selves', co-inhabiting the same pictorial space, there was something about these twin figures' sense of dislocation and lack of identity that evoked the same emotional effect that I was hoping to achieve in my painting. But this was not the first time that I had had recourse to Wall's photography. Indeed, I can recall justifying to myself the initial decision to paint *Tableau* on such a large scale by quoting Wall's words on the subject of scale. In a television interview, the interviewer asked Wall why he had chosen to adopt his 'signature style' of large-scale photographic prints on transparency, mounted in light-boxes: an aesthetic which had inevitably drawn critical comparison to the scale and 'illuminated' appearance of old history-paintings.[17] Wall (2007) responded to this question by remarking:

> I never set out to make big photographs. But the size I use is based upon the way I see. So I work a lot at life-scale. If you see another figure or person in a picture at a scale similar to you – when you're looking at it – I think you feel rather closer to them. And I always felt that traditional photographs were too small.

In essence, I wanted to paint *Tableau* (Fig. 1) on a large scale because I wanted to simulate the sense of closeness or proximity that one gets when one stands in front of a representation of a figure (or figures) that have been reproduced at a scale similar to one's own, just as Wall has articulated above. And historically speaking, this was precisely the same 'effect' on their viewers that painters such as David had once intended their Grand Manner history-paintings to have. Wall himself has engaged photographically with this once 'Great' genre of western visual art production. I have long been fascinated by several of Wall's 'contemporary' history-paintings *qua* photographs, such as *Restoration* (1993: Fig. 22) and *Dead Troops Talk* (1992: Fig. 23). It was in looking at these photographs that suggest history-paintings that I became aware of the desire to return to "paintings or styles of visual representation that have certain memories for me (or are they fantasies of memories I wish I had?)" (Smith 2004: 9-10).

---

[16] As most of the poses of the figure of Baines in these sketches originate purely from my imagination, it became necessary to assemble a costume that I could wear and be photographed in, so that I could use these images as reference material for the various postures, poses and actions of the represented figure of Baines I was drawing.

[17] Joanna Lowry (2000: 97-111) has previously addressed the relationship Wall's work has with the history of history painting.

Arnold (2000: 77) has noted that Baines was certainly aware of the tradition of history-painting. She refers to Baines' "comment on Sir Edward Poynter's *Israel in Egypt* (exhibited in 1867) [Fig. 24], which he describes as a 'fine painting'," a description which suggests that he had been "seduced by the technical virtuosity of this pretentious, minutely detailed history painting". Arnold (2000: 154) continues:

> Both the Eighth Frontier War paintings and the imaginary depictions of historical events raise the issue of artist as History Painter cognisant of prevailing academic conventions. Baines would have been familiar with Victorian History Painting which had strayed from the objectives outlined by Sir Joshua Reynolds, first president of the British Royal Academy, in his *Discourses*.

As Anthony Langdon (2001)[18] has noted, Reynolds' *Discourses* (1769-90) emphasised "the history painter's concern with general ideas rather than particular description, exhorting students not to stray from the conventional Grand Manner". Baines did not receive instruction at the Royal Academy and his paintings reveal that he was arguably more concerned with "particular description" (Langdon 2001) than with "general ideas". Although Arnold (2000: 154-55) does discuss several paintings in which Baines depicts 'historical' events, her conclusion is that Baines was certainly *not* a history-painter. But whether or not Baines was himself a history-painter was not a central concern to me. In conceptualising *Tableau* (Fig. 1) I was more interested in the parodic potential of "trans-contextualising" (Hutcheon 2000: 101) Baines into a history-painting, rather than to sticking to a kind of notional 'historical accuracy'.

Photography was also the means by which I reproduced the altered versions of Baines' three depictions of Grahamstown: the pink rectangular sections in the otherwise grey canvasses of *Tableau* (Fig. 1). The paintings, *Grahamstown 1850* (View from Fort Selwyn) (Fig. 25), *Wagons on Market Square, Grahamstown* (1850: Fig. 26) and *Potter's Row, Hill Street, Grahamstown* (1848: Fig. 27) were all available to me to view by appointment at the Albany History Museum in 2008 and 2009. At first, it was important to me that I be able to have access to these works themselves, as opposed to mere reproductions of them in books. As it transpired however, in the actual act of painting my altered versions of these pictures I had to depend solely upon photographs (Figs. 25 – 27) that I had taken of these paintings. In addition to the desire to create a contemporary history painting which addresses the history of painting and the painting of history, I had – from the start – wanted to 'relocate' or 're-contextualise' these three townscapes, although it was not at first clear exactly how this was to be done. It eventually occurred to me that I should position my re-paintings

[18] In an entry on "history painting" from *The Oxford Companion to Western Art* (Online).

of these townscapes as if they were hanging on the back wall of the photographer's studio in which the portraits of Baines had been taken. I had hoped that this arrangement might perhaps create a visual dialogue between the 'creator-artist' and the 'created-artwork': a forced juxtaposition that might persuade the viewer to compare or evaluate one against the other. This was however only part of the solution I was hoping for. It was simply not going to be enough to merely 'repaint' these paintings: I knew that I had to alter them in some substantial way.

I was seeking to stage an intervention into the original paintings: to make visible in my copies something that was not immediately obvious in the 'original' paintings themselves, but was nonetheless an integral – if latent – part of their construction and meaning. Eventually, the phrase '*He was painting his whiteness*' insistently and repetitively worked its way into my mind, perhaps prompted by the reading on whiteness I was doing at that time.[19] To my mind, whiteness – as signified by a particular kind of skin pigmentation – can only be represented by the colour of 'pink'.[20] Thus I decided to pigment Baines' townscapes 'pink', and in so doing perhaps make visible that which "thrives ... on invisibility" (Dyer 1997: 42).

Arriving at the practical realisation of a pink-pigmented townscape is not as easy as it may sound. After attempting a series of dismal 'tests' I decided that the best way to render the desired pink pigmentation was first to paint the picture in a neutral monochrome (such as Burnt Umber) and then glaze a series of pink washes over this under-painting. I executed all three under-paintings (Figs. 28 – 30) in approximately eight weeks, which was to me an extraordinarily long time to spend with a tiny brush painting a large canvas.[21] Unfortunately, the realisation of the proposed 'pink glaze' was not nearly as straight-forward as the under-painting. Every new glaze I mixed kept altering in colouration when I applied it over the monochromatic under-painting. I later discovered that this is due to the 'proximity effect': a visual phenomenon in which the appearance of a single colour seems to alter in its hue or intensity depending on its proximity to any other colour it is placed next to or over. Thus, with each successive glaze, the resulting effect was one of an intensifying brightness of pink, due to the increasing quantities of Titanium White I was adding to the mixtures

---

[19] Certainly, my journals of this time record the influence of Desireé Lewis' (1999: 110) reference to Griselda Pollock's notion of "'the colour of art history', a pattern in which the 'pigments' of a racial hierarchy pervasively 'mark' a 'social landscape'".

[20] Here I must acknowledge the influence that Penny Siopis' *Pinky Pinky* (2002) series has had on my practice in terms of my use of the colour pink. As Nuttall (2009: 104) has noted: "The fact that pink is shown in some [of these] paintings as 'flesh-coloured' gestures towards what Siopis refers to as a 'Western conceit in which whiteness (pink) becomes the universal colour for flesh'."

[21] I had at first envisaged the finished work of *Tableau* as hanging on a wall opposite the 'originals' such that the viewer could compare the altered versions of the townscapes with the 'originals', thereby necessitating an acute attention to detail on my part due to the imagined intense scrutiny by the viewer.

of each glaze. As I added more 'white', and watched it obscure everything it covered over, I began to see that there was something quite significant about this process of painting. It struck me then that it was quite apt that the colour 'white' should be obscuring the re-painted copies of Baines' Picturesque paintings of a little settler frontier town, which had – by virtue of its 'white' population and their dwellings – itself obscured the issues pertaining to the right to own land in a country not one's own, and the manner in which such painted representations of towns functioned to *naturalise* the presence of the British settler in this landscape. The impression that one gets from such townscapes is the sense that the settler and his architecture had *always* been there, covering over and occupying the land with their streets of buildings and homes. Indeed as Delmont and Dubow (1995: 13) have noted: "'Taking over' here is also a 'making over.' It denotes the symbolic signing of a landscape, the disclosure of a sense of belonging. In short, the garrison town is at once an objective place and a site of subjective emplacement".

III. On whiteness and Johannes Phokela in *Genesis*

> genesis, *n.*
> 1. With capital initial. (The name of) the first book of the Bible, which includes the stories of the creation of the world [...]
> 3.a. The action of building up from simple or basic elements to more complex ones; composition.
> 4. The origin or mode of formation of something. In early use chiefly with allusion to sense 1.[22]

The title of the work *Genesis* (Fig. 4) is taken from the first book of the Old Testament: a religious text shared by both the Judaic and Christian faiths. As the above *OEDO* entry indicates, the first two chapters of this book detail "the creation of the world" by the Judeo-Christian God. As I have suggested in the section on *Before* (Fig. 6), the imperialist view of the historical processes of the British colonisation of the Eastern Cape of South Africa could be read as that of a kind of 'god' creating *his* world. Thus *Genesis* (Fig. 4) is linked conceptually to the theoretical concerns I attempted to address in the work *Before*, as both works employ the analogy of 'the figure of Baines' as demiurge. I had laid this analogy to one side in late 2008 for the sake of executing *Tableau* (Fig. 1), but I returned to it afresh almost exactly a year later, at the end of 2009, determined to find another way of developing it.

[22] Entry from the *OEDO*.

The difficulties I had faced in the painting of the pink-pigmented townscapes (Figs. 1. 4 – 1. 6) had caused me to think about the deceptively simple question: 'What colour is white-flesh anyway?' There have been others who have asked this very same question before me but in different contexts. For example, in his definitive work *White* (1997), Richard Dyer has discussed the central issue of *how* 'white' people (in this case, mostly *men*) have historically and contemporarily represented themselves to themselves (and others) as 'white'. As Dyer (1997: 42) has stated: "White people are neither literally nor symbolically white. We are not the colour of snow or bleached linen, nor are we uniquely virtuous and pure. Yet images of white people are recognisable as such by virtue of colour". However, the problem of visually signifying 'whiteness' posed itself to me – as a painter – in a very peculiar way. The problem of whiteness that I faced in my practice as a painter was the technical problem of how to go about mixing a generic 'white- flesh' colour in oil paint: a single colour that could perhaps signify an entire racial 'genre' of human beings.[23]

Even the most superficial glance at one's own skin – whether it be 'white' or otherwise – answers this question outright: our skins are not single colours, they are rather a multitude of hues and tonalities that have been mistakenly labelled in monosyllabic terms, for reasons of sheer expedience. But I had an agenda in asking this question. I wanted to create for myself a colour that could approximate 'whiteness' in a way that would be more 'convincing' than the bright pink hue of the townscapes in *Tableau* (Fig. 1). I wanted to mix a generic 'white-flesh' tone of the sort that some manufacturers of artist's oil paint still persist in producing. In order to create this envisaged colour, I attempted to mix as many individual shades of 'white' as I could observe in colour photographs[24] that I had taken of my own skin. But this attempt inevitably ended in failure as my experiments did not yield a single instance of a meta-'white-flesh' tone from which all of the various oscillations of my skin colour could be derived. Thus, in desperation, I went back to the records I had kept of the palettes (Fig. 31. 1 and Fig. 31. 2) I had mixed whilst painting my self-portrait in Panel 2 of *Tableau* (Fig. 1. 9). Amongst these dried daubs of paint, I found a colour that I could remember having used to mix a large majority of the other tonalities I used to paint my face. Using this specimen as a referent, I then proceeded to re-mix this colour. The result of this effort

[23] Of course, there is the inherently symbolic implication latent in the very act of a white person attempting to evoke his own 'flesh-tone' in paint, which does resonate strongly with Dyer's and others study of the subject, but this was not my *primary* concern. I wanted to solve the fundamental problem of what kind of 'pink' is 'white', and what kind of 'white' am I?

[24] The parameters of this present discussion do not allow for the exposition of the inherent complexities and ambiguities of editing such reference photographs in Adobe Photoshop, prior to printing. With every photograph I took of myself I had to constantly adjust the 'Hue and Saturation' and the 'Levels' of each photograph such that what I was seeing on my computer screen was resembled as closely as possible what I could see in a mirror. This is also not to mention the technical problems of the photographic print which can further shift the colouration of any given image towards red, green or brown.

was not quite what I had expected. In its undiluted form, this colour seemed to be a kind of 'white-flesh' tone, but when I diluted this colour with medium (either with genuine turpentine, which thins the oil paint down without tinting it – but which also problematically removes all of the gloss from the oil – or the opaque and 'coloured' liquin which enriches the gloss of the oil) on a white canvas, the same colour appeared to become a reddish-muddy brown (see Fig. 32). On reflection, I realised that this chromatic shift towards a kind of earthy-red was in fact conceptually useful to the intended meaning of the *Genesis* (Fig. 4) series. For, as Genesis Chapter 2 verse 7 (New King James Version) states: "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground..." I thus began to see that I had inadvertently mixed a kind of Adamic-mud: a reddish-brown colour that seemed to both approximate a kind of 'white-flesh' and yet, simultaneously, also seemed to speak of the biblical creation of the 'first man'. This was an 'accidental' association of meaning which I believe has lent itself well to the broader conceptual aims and objectives of this series of work.

Using the biblical narrative of the seven days of creation as a conceptual framing device, I have both invented and inventoried a series of seven chronological 'events' – or 'days' – that I have imagined as occurring in and during the process of the British colonisation of the Eastern Cape, the notional 'Genesis' of a 'White African'. In the direct quotation of five pictures by – and one photograph of – Baines, I have attempted to represent the story of the 'genesis' of the 'White African' in a linear visual narrative, all uniformly rendered in a single diluted 'white-flesh' tone. I have also applied the literal meaning of 'day' to the practical execution of the paintings, thereby precluding any labour on an individual canvas beyond twenty-four hours of actual production.

Each of my imagined 'events of colonisation' is linked to a single 'day of creation':

Day 1 – Arrive
Day 2 – Trek
Day 3 – Hunt
Day 4 – Kill
Day 5 – Fight
Day 6 – (In his) Image
Day 7 – The Rest (is history)

For each of these notional 'events' I selected what I considered to be the most iconic or emblematic image of each stage of the progression as found in particular works by Baines. In some cases, there is a direct correlation between the event I was seeking to depict and the original title of the selected

Baines image. For instance, the three boats filled with white people quoted in 'Day 1 – Arrive' has been sourced from the painting *The landing of the British Settlers in Algoa Bay in the year 1820* (1852: Fig. 33). Likewise, the image of a trekking wagon quoted in 'Day 2 – Trek' has been sourced from a lithograph based on a Baines painting entitled *Klaas Smit's River – waggon* [*sic.*] *broke down, crossing the drift* (1852: Fig. 34). And again, the quotation of a group of white people fighting in 'Day 5 – Fight' has been sourced from the painting *Battle of Blauwkrantz 1838* (1854: Fig. 37), an image that ostensibly 'represents' a conflict that occurred "between Zulus and Boers" (Arnold 2000: 154). However, I did take some liberties when it came to the depiction of Days 3 and 4. For example, 'Day 3 – Hunt' is originally set in Australia, not South Africa, as the title explains: *Baines and Humphrey killing an alligator on the Horse Show Flats, near Curiosity Peak, Victoria River* (1857: Fig. 35). And the image of the dead elephant in 'Day 4 – Kill' is a direct quotation of the painting *The discovery of gold* (1874: Fig. 36) which depicts the "incident of [Henry] Hartley shooting an elephant near old Mashona gold diggings" (Duncan Miller 1999: 160), in a geographical area which is now located in present-day Zimbabwe.

In painting my versions of the five pictures by Baines identified above, I utilised a similar visual strategy to the one I deployed in the painting of the figures of Baines in *Tableau* (Fig. 1), which could be described as a 'cut-out' or 'cut-and-paste' aesthetic. However, *Genesis* (Fig. 4) differs from *Tableau* in that I have made no attempt to suggest any kind of background to the scenes I have painted, thereby leaving large areas of exposed white canvas. I also omitted to paint any other figure from the original Baines pictures who was not *white*, thereby resulting in the 'broken' shapes that sometimes occur in the series. Thus, *Genesis* could be termed a series of 'white' on white paintings. But it could also equally be described as a sequence of 'de-contextualised' historical events, which have been re-contextualised in the broader context of the exhibition as a whole, and in relation to *Tableau* specifically.

As a series of work hanging alongside both *Before* and *Tableau*, the 'pigmented' colouration of the *Genesis* canvases should stand out from the otherwise predominantly grey canvasses of its counterparts. In the same way that I had intended to establish a visual link between the skin colour of my self-portrait in the central panel of *Tableau* and the pink-pigmented townscapes of the same series, I had also hoped that the viewer might give some thought to the visual relationship between the 'coloured' depictions of white people in *Genesis* and the 'coloured' depictions of early Grahamstown in *Tableau*. In my mind, this chromatic relationship suggests a kind of 'cause and effect' (or 'before' and 'after') dialogue between the events of colonisation depicted in *Genesis* and the townscapes of *Tableau*. Although it is unlikely that many viewers, if any at all, will make this

connection for themselves, I view the historical events that are represented in *Genesis* as being explanative of the causes that led to the eventual occupation and inhabitation of the area of the Eastern Cape that has became the city of Grahamstown.

Panels six and seven of *Genesis* are markedly different from the five preceding panels in two primary ways. The first is the introduction of the painted figure of myself in costume, rendered in black-and-white, as opposed to the preceding panels with their purely 'white-flesh' colouration, and the second is the move to exclusively photographical source material. In seeking out a 'figure of Baines' that I could adopt for 'Day 6 – (In his) Image', I was struck by a photograph of Baines by James Chapman entitled *The Vertical Sun, or Shadowless Man. Tues 26 Nov 1861 at Koppies* (Fig. 38). To my mind, this photograph represents the quintessential image of Baines as African 'explorer'. The figure's pose is rigid but – paradoxically – simultaneously at ease: the left hand rests comfortably on the belt, the right hand carelessly propping up the muzzle of the gun leaning against his body. As Delmont and Dubow (1995: 12) have noted elsewhere, an image such as this photograph represents: "an enactment of that arch-Romantic conceit of the Victorian abroad: the artist as hunter-explorer, his imperium visioned through the barrel of a gun". Given such a symbolically rich image, I decided to paint this photographic figure of Baines in 'Day 6' of the series *Genesis*.

'Day 6' is an important panel not only in the context of the series itself, but also in that of the entire exhibition. Indeed, it is perhaps the *most* important image of all the three series of works, for this panel marks a radical reversal of the line of argument I had previously taken in the works *Before* and *Tableau*. The biblical reference of this panel is to the creation of man by God on day six of the creation story. But in this panel, I identify the figure of *myself* as a notional 'painter-god' or demiurge, in the act of creating the figure of Baines as found in the above described photograph, albeit rendered in the same 'white-flesh' tone as all of the preceding panels.[25] I have included the figure of myself as demiurge in an attempt to invert the symbolic power structure of colonizer and colonized. I want the viewer to identify the figure of myself as the colonising-subject and the figure of Baines the Explorer as the colonised-object. This is also importantly an inversion of the derivative relationship that I attempted to establish in *Tableau*, where the latent 'invisible' colouration of the Grahamstown townscapes – now made visible through the pink over-painting – actively defines my pigmentation or 'whiteness' in a post-apartheid South African cultural context.

[25] Although I was unaware of René Magritte's *Attempting the Impossible* (1925: Fig. 5) at the time of conceptualising 'Day 6', Magritte's painting has subsequently become to me an important means of comparison to 'Day 6', but unfortunately the parameters of this present discussion do not allow me to address this painting directly.

Given the symbolic weight of this single panel, the conceptualisation of the final panel 'Day 7 – The Rest (is history)' took several months. The problem of creating a 'last word' on three years' worth of research and process was a seemingly insurmountable task; however I do believe that the image I did eventually construct does punctuate the exhibition suitably well and links this entire series back into its chronological predecessor, *Tableau*. In the biblical account of creation God rested on the seventh day, thus ordaining the Judaic cultural custom of the Sabbath-rest. And I eventually realised that it was the word 'rest' that suggested the solution I was after, but not in the sense of a reprieve from work. Rather, the word 'rest' suggested to me its other use, that of describing what comes after a certain event. As the expression goes: "And the rest was history". In the finished panel (Fig. 4. 7), I painted a full-length, costumed version of myself holding a rectangular 'painting' of Baines' face over my face. This is the identical face to that of the figure of Baines that appears in the first panel of *Tableau*, in this instance, however, it has been rendered in the muddy flesh-tone of the preceding panels, not in 'black-and-white'. This painted face of the figure of Baines thus both conceals my 'identity' – as it is located in my face – but also simultaneously reveals the 'identity' of this face as it has been rendered in the same generic 'white-flesh' colour of the preceding panels. It is intended then that this Baines is here invoked as a patriarchal stand-in and representative for all of my own English forebears.[26] Thus, it was in this sense that I meant that 'the rest is history': a history that inevitably leads back to me as the 'white' author of the work.[27]

The self-imposed time limitation of no more than twenty-four hours of actual production on any given panel resulted in my having to make key decisions as to what I was going to prioritise in the actual execution of each image. In some cases I managed to complete the image as I had envisaged it but in others only certain portions of the picture have been 'finished'. I would argue that this 'unfinished' quality of the paintings lends itself to the comparison of the construction of a post-apartheid white South African male identity, which is itself quite clearly 'unfinished' and still *Under Construction*.[28] Read as 'unfinished' paintings, the *Genesis* series also challenges the very notion of what constitutes a 'finished' work, and when viewed in relation to the 'highly-finished' triptych *Tableau* (as it will be in the exhibition), *Genesis* could be seen to represent an antithetical position to the idea of the complete/d artwork, thus foregrounding the sense of 'genesis' as

---

[26] I am of direct British descent on my father's side of the family, as he was born in South Africa whilst his father was on active service in the Royal Air Force during World War II.

[27] In terms of the title of this panel, I happened upon it almost by accident. Given that 'God rested' on the seventh day of creation, I initially titled this panel as 'The Rest'. But these two words are also the beginning of the popular colloquial saying: "And the rest is history..." Which, taken as a statement, is a central objective of not just the series *Genesis*, but also of the entire exhibition.

[28] I intentionally refer to the book of this title edited by Natasha Distiller and Melissa Steyn (2004).

denoting: "The action of building up from simple or basic elements to more complex ones; *composition*" (*OEDO*) [emphasis added].

There is, of course, a precedent for this notion of the 'unfinished' painting, and it lies in certain examples of the work of the South African born and British trained painter, Johannes Phokela. Bronwyn Law-Viljoen (2009: 10) has commented on this exact aspect of the painter's practice:

> ... Phokela is a trickster artist for whom history is more than a source of intellectual navel gazing and technique is an opportunity to remark on what (physically and philosophically) *makes* a painting. This is why his oil sketches ... are as vital a part of his work as the large oils. They are a deliberate challenge to notions of completeness in painting, offering the bones of the painting - the cartoon in both senses of the word - as finished work.

As Law-Viljoen argues, Phokela's 'oil-sketches' are "a deliberate challenge to notions of completeness in painting" and, as such, have offered me a useful means of analogy for the images I have constructed in the series *Genesis*. One oil sketch in particular by Phokela has been a continual source of reference and inspiration for my own practice, especially in the painting of *Genesis*: this is the work entitled *T-Bone* (2005: Fig. 39). In this oil sketch, rendered in what appears to be the same Burnt Umber colour I used in executing the townscapes in *Tableau* (Figs. 28 – 30), Phokela has depicted a fat white 'friar' fingering a large side of beef which lies in the arms of what appears to be a 'black' 'chef': the latter figure's occupation denoted by the traditional European chef's hat and white apron. Apart from the immediate comment that the image seems to make on traditional African-European 'race' relations, the image also begs a comparison with the central panel of Phokela's large-scale triptych entitled *Tender Loving Care* (2006: Fig. 40). In what appears to be a near-identical image to that of *T-Bone* (2005: Fig. 39), this highly-finished oil painting has one notable difference to its predecessor: the 'black' man is no longer depicted as a some kind of pseudo-European 'cook', but instead as an 'indigene' of Africa: replete with the ubiquitous 'bone' dress and head-ring of historical European representations of Africans, akin to those by Baines (see Fig. 42).

The obese white friar figure is a direct quotation of a near-identical figure as found in William Hogarth's *O the Roast Beef of Old England ('The Gate of Calais')* (1748: Fig. 41. 1 and Fig. 41. 2) and there is, of course, a large degree of irony in Phokela's parody of Hogarth's satire. Hogarth intended his painting to be a satirical comment on the then contemporary international relations

between France and England. As the official Tate[29] caption states of this painting: "Hogarth visited France in 1748, and was arrested while sketching the fortifications at Calais; this is shown at the far left. He represents the French by a rabble of scrawny soldiers and a fat friar, contrasting France implicitly with an England where all eat roast beef and not *soupe maigre* (watery soup)."

Paul O'Kane (2009: 65) has observed of Phokela's triptych that: "This painter is something of a comedian. While these paintings revere the techniques of the Old Masters, they are also laced with incongruity, like a story you think is real, then, halfway through, you realise it's going to have some twist, joke or sting in the tail". I would contend that the so-called "sting in the tail" is not just the direct quotation of the obese white friar, rendered by Phokela with suitably fat and juicy brushstrokes, but rather the alteration and 'problematic' insertion of the figure of the 'black' 'servant'. In Phokela's painting, the fat friar seems somehow to be overly 'white': his figure containing not just a surplus of body fat but also of racially encoded identity or 'otherness'. The 'black' background also seems to enforce this reading, the figure of the 'servant' receding into it, whilst the figure of the friar is forced outwards toward the viewer, his flesh readily likening itself to the enormous chunk of beef cradled in the hands of the figure of the servant beside him.

Perhaps one could subtitle Phokela's painting as: 'O the Roast Beef of Africa', for such a caption does seem to describe the scene that the artist has constructed: a politically charged and historically loaded tableau which caricatures the traumatic past of interracial relations between the white European and the 'black' African in Africa. O'Kane (2009:66) has likewise observed that in Phokela's paintings: "The past is present but somehow refused, pushed away, kept at arm's length. ... [but] We can't completely shake off the past, and so must continue to inhabit it despite the absolutist dreams of a modernity that wished to escape or break with it". O'Kane has also observed, somewhat more generally and more philosophically that:

> The past is there [in Phokela's practice], in a personal way, in a cultural way, but how do we live with it, so much of it, so complex, so many conflicting histories, memories? How do we keep ourselves from being swallowed up by it? How do we distinguish memory from history? Maybe just draw the line. 'You've got to draw the line somewhere', reasonable voices often tell us, between memory and history, self and other, now and then, past and present, one moment and the next, wrong and right, worse and better. Draw the line but don't forget, never forget to look back and don't stop moving on, use the past as an engine, an outboard motor, behind you, firmly gripped, there to steer by, keep moving but don't run away – the only way to do that is to think and think again.

[29] As found at http://www.tate.org.uk

O'Kane's above lines seem to encapsulate the project not just of the work *Genesis*, but also of all three series of works I have produced during this degree. Throughout this discussion, I have attempted to argue that "the past is there, in a personal way, in a cultural way" in each of these artworks. This thesis represents a personal and professional 'drawing of the line' as it were: it is a moment to stop and 'think', to reflect on what I have done and what I had hoped to do. And perhaps it has become clear that I have, as O'Kane encourages us to do, endeavoured throughout this degree to "use the past as an engine, an outboard motor, behind [me], firmly gripped, there to steer by...".

Conclusion: *After* 'After Baines'

In 1960 Michael Ayrton admonished his readers that they should free themselves from the popular misconception that the advent of mass-produced photographic reproduction of paintings and sculptures was a 'good' and 'natural' development in the 'progression' of western visual culture. To the contrary, Ayrton (1960: 7) sardonically stated that:

> Not the least of the dubious propositions we entertain today is that through the medium of mechanical methods of reproduction, all art is available to all. Since we can now inspect a coloured postcard of Michelangelo's *Last Judgement* it is available to us. A reproduction, notwithstanding the inevitable falsification of scale, surface, handling and everything else which we patently overlook, is more acceptable to us than a copy.

By 'copy', Ayrton (1960: 7) means a "copy of an oil painting made in oil paint", and it is his firm opinion that even a 'bad' copy produced in this way by an "inferior painter partakes of at least the same physical nature as the original". Which *is* a 'good' thing. Given such a strong sentiment on the subject of photographical reproductions of artworks, I wonder what Ayrton would make of the somewhat ironic turn of events that has been heralded by the contemporary painter Glenn Brown, a product, like Damien Hirst, of Goldsmiths College.

During the last eighteen years, Brown has made a name for himself by painting *exclusively* from 'bad' photographical reproductions of 'original' masterpieces. These painterly 'copies of copies' are both visually striking and provocatively memorable. Indeed, as Sarah Kent (2009:35) has commented: "I will never forget my first encounter with a Glenn Brown painting. It was in 1992, when I happened upon *Dali-Christ* (Fig. 43) – a nine foot version of Salvador Dali's *Soft Construction with Boiled Beans* (1936: Fig. 44), which measures only three and half feet square." As Kent indicates, Brown not only repaints paintings belonging to a bygone era, but he also dramatically alters their scale and renames his painted 'copies' as he pleases. In addition to these most notable and immediate differences between 'copy' and 'original', Kent (2009: 35) has also remarked that in his version of the Dali painting, Brown has "made the colours sweeter".

In an interview with Kent (2009: 35), Brown attributed this intentional 'sweetening' of the colours to the fact that he had painted *Dali-Christ* "from a bad colour reproduction". In another interview with Matthew Collings (1999: 179), Brown remarked that the characteristic alteration of colours in

his painted 'copies of copies' was something that originated in the photographic reproductions he worked from: "The exaggeration comes from the colour. It's hyped up colour, so it appears drug-induced, acidic. In my best paintings the colour is almost as if the painting's gone off. It's decaying. It was fresh once." In comparing a Brown 'copy' to its ostensible point of origin, Collings (1999: 177-178) has commented that: "There seem to be even more details than in the original. Now all the wriggling sheens, arbitrary lights and darks, and new colours of the reproduction from which the new image is being painted, are details too." Thus in Brown's copies we find a surplus of visual detail, of ocular 'information'. Indeed, Brown paints more than there was to be found in the 'original' painting to begin with. Thus Brown's paintings could be said to belie an 'over-saturation' in the contemporary field of sight.

If Ayrton had a problem with the explosion of the art postcard in the 1960s, it would be logical to assume that he would have an even larger problem with the seemingly infinite photo-mechanical reproductions of artworks that he might encounter today, perhaps on our television sets, let alone on the internet. Ayrton (1960: 16) noted that: "[It] is important to remember that until relatively recently even the wealthiest, most travelled and most studious of artists, a Dürer or a Rubens, could only see in his entire lifetime the quantity of material now displayed to the casual visitor who spends one day in the Louvre or the Metropolitan Museum". Perhaps this is why Brown paints not from another painting, but instead from a 'bad' reproduction of another painting. Perhaps it is in this very act of copying from a copy that Brown points to the limitations not just of the 'source image' but also of our very visual existence. As Brown (Kent 2009: 35) has stated: "There's a purposeful impoverishment in living via secondhand information in a world of videos, computers, films". But Brown does not consider this impoverishment as an end in itself. Rather, this recognition of our 'wretched' visual state, our present-day 'human condition' is an artistic and painterly point of departure. "To make something up from scratch is nonsensical," Brown (Kent 2009: 35) has remarked. "Images are a language. It's impossible to make a painting that is not borrowed – even the images in your dreams refer to reality."

Brown is then – without doubt – a contemporary painter firmly situated in "the culture of painters". His work is entirely dependent on the existence, history and perpetuation of this culture. And as such, Brown's practice has offered me an invaluable means of self-assessment and examination. But more than this, I have found in Brown a painter who seems to work in a methodical manner that is near-identical to the ways in which I have been painting since 2003. As Brown (Kent 2009: 35) has explained:

> I scanned [a reproduction of a chosen painting] into [Adobe] Photoshop, then flattened it and changed the colours ... I realised that I could do it all on a computer and project the image onto the canvas to draw round it. The first stage is like painting by numbers. The second phase is more interesting, because I no longer look at the original; all the decisions about texture and colour are made then.

In producing the *Genesis* series, for instance, I worked in much the same way as Brown has described above. I scanned all the 'original' images I had chosen from the books I had bought on Baines, and then edited these scans in Adobe Photoshop until they started to resemble the picture I had in mind for the final paintings. I then projected the edited images and traced their outlines carefully onto the pristine surfaces of the custom ordered spotless white canvasses. I then painstakingly copied the altered versions of the Baines in my 'generic' 'white-flesh' colour, but then, at a certain arbitrary point (when I became conscious of the time I was spending on a canvas) I stopped where I was, and then proceeded to 'blank out'[30] the areas that I had not 'finished' copying. Far from this practice being restrictive, it was in fact liberating. In forcing myself to stop short of the 'envisaged' outcome of the painting, as contained in the digitally altered version I was working from, I allowed an unforeseen element into the process. I could not have planned when or where the time allocation would run out, I just had to focus on what I thought to be the most important aspect of each image and try to get these portions down. The rest was up to chance or up to the painting, depending on one's point of view.

Kent visited Brown's recent retrospective exhibition at Tate Liverpool. Having seen a few of the works still in process in Brown's studio some weeks before the show, Kent (2009: 36) was interested to note that:

> As a stroll through the exhibition reveals, Brown's paintings become more disquietingly weird as they diverge further and further from their origins. Can he envisage jettisoning the reproductions altogether? 'Definitely not,' he replies. 'I need to have a conversation with something in the real world, otherwise I'd become too self-absorbed. I see images as a part of the urban landscape, something in the air, and I like things that have already had something thrust upon them by someone else. It would be very dull to make a painting that didn't refer to something that preexisted [*sic.*] it.'

The sentiment expressed by Brown above is in many ways a clear articulation of my own fundamental artistic strategy. I believe that my practice as a painter must be rooted within the

[30] One could just as well say 'whitened out', but I prefer the word 'blank' as it resembles the Afrikaans word for whites: 'blanke'. While I was blocking in the solid portions of 'white-flesh' tone in the *Genesis* series I was reminded of the wording of the old apartheid-era sign that was often prominently displayed in certain public areas, on a bench for instance: "Slegs blankes" or "Whites only". I like the idea that to be white is to be 'blank' so to speak. It is also interesting to note that the series deals exclusively with the representation of the genesis of the white African, thus its content is: "Slegs blankes".

broader framework of the so-called "culture of painters" and that each of the paintings I produce must intentionally be engaged in a dialogue with other historically-antecedent paintings. I cannot claim that such an approach to painting is 'new' for as Ayrton (1960: 8) has argued: the "now discredited activity" of copying from another painting (or perhaps even copying from a copy of a painting) "has been practised for hundreds of years by artists, among them the greatest in history, for a variety of valid reasons". Thus, with reference to Brown's practice, but speaking entirely for myself, I would contend that he and I are not attempting to "show [our] individuality by demonstrating [our] independence" (Ayrton 1960: 13). Indeed, given this exhibition and this mini-thesis, I have attempted to show my dependence on "the culture of painters" and the broader discourse of painting, as I have found it in the life and work of Baines.

Bibliography

Allan, E. 2009. 'Art of cruel laughter'. *Mail & Guardian Friday* 9 April: 2.

Arnold, M. 2000. *The life and work of Thomas Baines.* Vlaeberg: Fernwood Press.

Atkinson, B. & Brietz, C. 1999. 'Introduction', in B. Atkinson & C. Brietz (*eds.*) *Grey Areas: Representation, Identity and Politics in Contemporary South African Art.* Johannesburg: Chalkham Hill Press, pp. 13-29.

Ayrton, M. 1960. 'Introduction', in K. E. Maison (*ed.*) *Themes and Variations.* London: Thames and Hudson, pp. 7-29.

Baines, T. 1961. *Journal of Residence in Africa: 1842 – 1853* (edited by R. Kennedy). Cape Town: The Van Riebeeck Society.

Baines, T. & Lord, W. 1975. *Shifts and Expedients of Camp Life, Travel and Exploration.* Johannesburg: Africana Book Society.

Bester, R. 1999. 'The politics of the photographic encounter in colonial southern Africa', in M. Stevenson (*ed.*) *Thomas Baines: An Artist in the Service of Science in Southern Africa.* London: Christie's, pp. 136-145.

Booth, M. 2004. 'Seeing White – Sharing the Burden of Race', in N. Distiller & M. Steyn (*eds.*) *Under Construction: 'Race' and Identity in South Africa today.* Sandton: Heinemann, pp. 111-119.

Burn, G. 2001. *Damien Hirst: On the way to work.* London: Faber & Faber.

Carruthers, J. 1990. *Thomas Baines: Eastern Cape Sketches, 1848 to 1852.* Houghton: Brenthurst Press.

Carruthers, J. 2000. *The life and work of Thomas Baines.* Vlaeberg: Fernwood Press.

Chilvers Lubin, B. 2008. 'Thomas Baines (1820 – 1875): An Artist of the Empire in Africa'. *African Sporting Gazette* 13(4): 40-43.

Christov-Bakargiev, C. 2003. 'In conversation with William Kentridge' in *William Kentridge*. London: Phaidon, pp. 6-35.

Coetzee, J. 1988. *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa*. Sandton: Radix.

Collings, M. 1999. *This Is Modern Art*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Connor, S. 2004. *The Book of Skin*. New York: Cornell University Press.

Conrad, J. 1902. *Heart of Darkness*. London: Dent. [Reprinted in 1960]

Conrad, P. 2009. 'Damien Hirst: No Love Lost, Blue Paintings'. *Guardian* [Online] 18 October. Retrieved from: http.//www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2009/oct/18/damien-hirst-no-love-lost.

Davison, P. & Klopper, S. 1999. 'Images of distinction: Thomas Baines as ethnographer', in M. Stevenson (*ed.*) *Thomas Baines: An Artist in the Service of Science in Southern Africa*. London: Christie's, pp. 90-107.

Delmont, E. & Dubow, J. 1995. 'Thinking Through Landscape: Colonial Spaces and their Legacies' in C. van den Berg (*curator*) *Panoramas of Passage: Changing Landscapes of South Africa*. Johannesburg: University Art Galleries, University of the Witwatersrand and Meridian International Centre, pp. 9-17.

Derrida, J. 1993. *Memoirs of the Blind: the self-portrait and other ruins* (Translated by P. Brandt & N. Maas). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Distiller, N. & Steyn, M. 2004. 'Introduction: Under Construction', in N. Distiller & M. Steyn (*eds.*) *Under Construction: 'Race' and Identity in South Africa today*. Sandton: Heinemann, pp. 1-11.

Dubow, J. 2000. '"From a view on the world to a point of view in it": Rethinking Sight, Space and the Colonial Subject'. *Interventions* 2 (1): 87-102.

Dyer, R. 1997. *White*. London: Routledge.

Hudson, S. 2008. 'Cecily Brown' in H. Werner Holzwarth (*ed.*) *Art Now Vol 3*. Italy: Taschen, pp. 72-75.

Hughes, R. 2005. *The Shock of The New*. London: Thames & Hudson.

Kent, S. 2009. 'Putrid Beauty'. *Modern Painters* May: 34-36.

Hutcheon, L. 2000. *A Theory of Parody*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Kentridge, W. 2003. 'Artist's Writings' in *William Kentridge*. London: Phaidon, pp. 102-143.

Langdon, A. 2001. 'History Painting' in H. Brigstocke (*ed.*) *The Oxford Companion to Western Art* [Online]. Retrieved from: http://0www.oxfordreference.com.wam.seals.ac.za/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t118.e1210. Accessed through the Rhodes University Library single-user licence.

Law-Viljoen, B. 2009. 'Introduction' in *Johannes Phokela: I like my neighbours*. Johannesburg: Gallery Momo & David Krut Publishing, pp. 7-10.

Levey, M. 1981. *The Painter Depicted: Painters as Subject Matter in Painting*. Hampshire: Thames & Hudson.

Lewis, D. 1999. 'Thomas Baines: Tracing the present in the past', in M. Stevenson (*ed.*) *Thomas Baines: An Artist in the Service of Science in Southern Africa*. London: Christie's, pp. 108-117.

Lowry, J. 2000. 'History, allegory, technologies of vision', in D. Green & P. Seddon (*eds.*) *History Painting Reassessed: The representation of history in contemporary art*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 97-111.

Meuris, J. 2007. *René Magritte: 1898 – 1967*. Cologne: Taschen.

Nuttall, S. 2009. *Entanglement: Literary and cultural reflections on post-aparthied*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

Nuttall, S. 2005. 'The Shock of Beauty: Penny Siopis' *Pinky Pinky* and *Shame* Series', in K. Smith (*ed.*) *Penny Siopis*. Johannesburg: Goodman Gallery, pp. 134-159.

Miller, D. 1999. 'From science to allegory: Geological observations of Thomas Baines', in M. Stevenson (*ed.*) *Thomas Baines: An Artist in the Service of Science in Southern Africa*. London: Christie's, pp. 146-161.

O'Hagan, S. 2008. 'The Fan: Damien Hirst on Francis Bacon'. *The Observer* [Online] 10 August. Retrieved from: http.//www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2008/aug/10/art1.

O'Kane, P. 2009. 'How to hypnotise a chicken' in *Johannes Phokela: I like my neighbours.* Johannesburg: Gallery Momo & David Krut Publishing, pp. 63-68.

Pleij, H. 2004. *Colours Demonic and Divine* (Translated by D. Webb). New York: Columbia University Press.

Pratt, M. 1992. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London: Routledge.

Richter, G. 2009. *Writings: 1961 – 2007* (edited by D. Elger & H. Ulrich Obrist). New York: Distributed Art Publishers.

Sagne, J. 1998. 'The Photographer's Studio' in M. Frizot (*ed.*) *A New History of Photography*. Cologne: Könemann, pp. 102-122.

Savedoff, B. 2000. *Transforming Images: How Photography Complicates the Picture*. New York: Cornell University Press.

Schama, S. 1995. *Landscape and Memory*. Bath: Harper Collins.

Siopis, P. 1999. 'Dissenting detail: Another story of art and politics in South Africa', in B. Atkinson & C. Brietz (*eds.*) *Grey Areas: Representation, Identity and Politics in Contemporary South African Art*. Johannesburg: Chalkham Hill Press, pp. 245-266.

Smith, D. 2010. 'ANC's Julius Malema lashes out at "misbehaving" BBC Journalist'. *Guardian* [Online] 8 April. Retrieved from: http.//www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/apr/08/anc-julius-malema-bbc-journalist.

Smith, K. 2004. 'Marginalia' in *Euphemism* (Exhibition Catalogue). Johannesburg: Studio 5, pp. 7-28.

Stevenson, M. 1999. 'Introduction: Thomas Baines, An Artist in the Service of Science in Southern Africa', in M. Stevenson (*ed.*) *Thomas Baines: An Artist in the Service of Science in Southern Africa*. London: Christie's, pp. 11-29.

Storr, R. 2003. *Gerhard Richter: Forty Years of Painting*. New York: Museum of Modern Art.

Taylor, G. 2005. *Buying Whiteness: Race, Culture, and Identity from Columbus to Hip-Hop*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Van Alphen, E. 1999. 'Colonialism as historical trauma', in B. Atkinson & C. Brietz (*eds.*) *Grey Areas: Representation, Identity and Politics in Contemporary South African Art*. Johannesburg: Chalkham Hill Press, pp. 269-281.

Wall, J. 2007. 'Episode Six: Snap Judgements', in *The Genius of Photography* [Television Documentary]. Produced by T. Kirby & D. Lee, Directed by D. Lee. London: BBC Four.

Wallis, J. 1976. *Thomas Baines: His life and explorations in South Africa, Rhodesia and Australia, 1820 – 1875*. Cape Town: A. A. Balkema.

Western, R. 2010. 'Prologue'. *Art South Africa* 9 (1): 81.

Williamson, S. 2010. 'Sue Williamson's Diary' [Online] 28 June. Retrieved from: http://suewilliamsondiary.blogspot.com/2010_06_01_archive.html.

Please note:

All of the dictionary definitions used in this mini-thesis were retrieved from the *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (2010) [Abbreviated throughout the text as *OEDO*] at http://dictionary.oed.com. Accessed through the Rhodes University Library user license.

After Baines

By

John Attwood Vereker Walters

VOLUME TWO

Book of Illustrations

Figure 1
Tableau (2010)

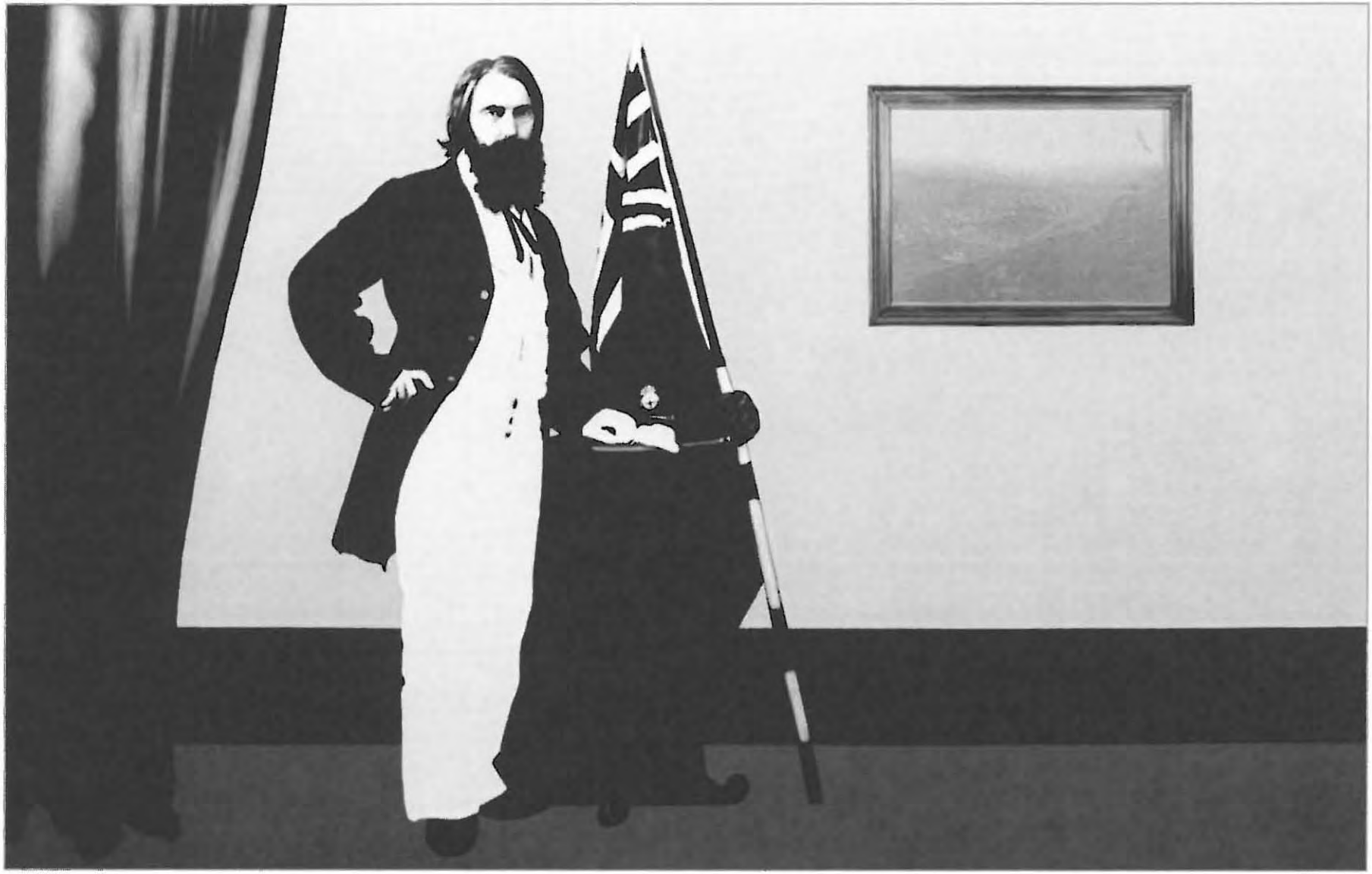


Figure 1. 1
Tableau (2010)
Panel 1

Figure 1. 2
Tableau (2010)
Panel 2

Figure 1. 3
Tableau (2010)
Panel 3

Figure 1. 4
Tableau (2010)
Panel 1: Detail

Figure 1. 5
Tableau (2010)
Panel 2: Detail

Figure 1. 6
Tableau (2010)
Panel 3: Detail

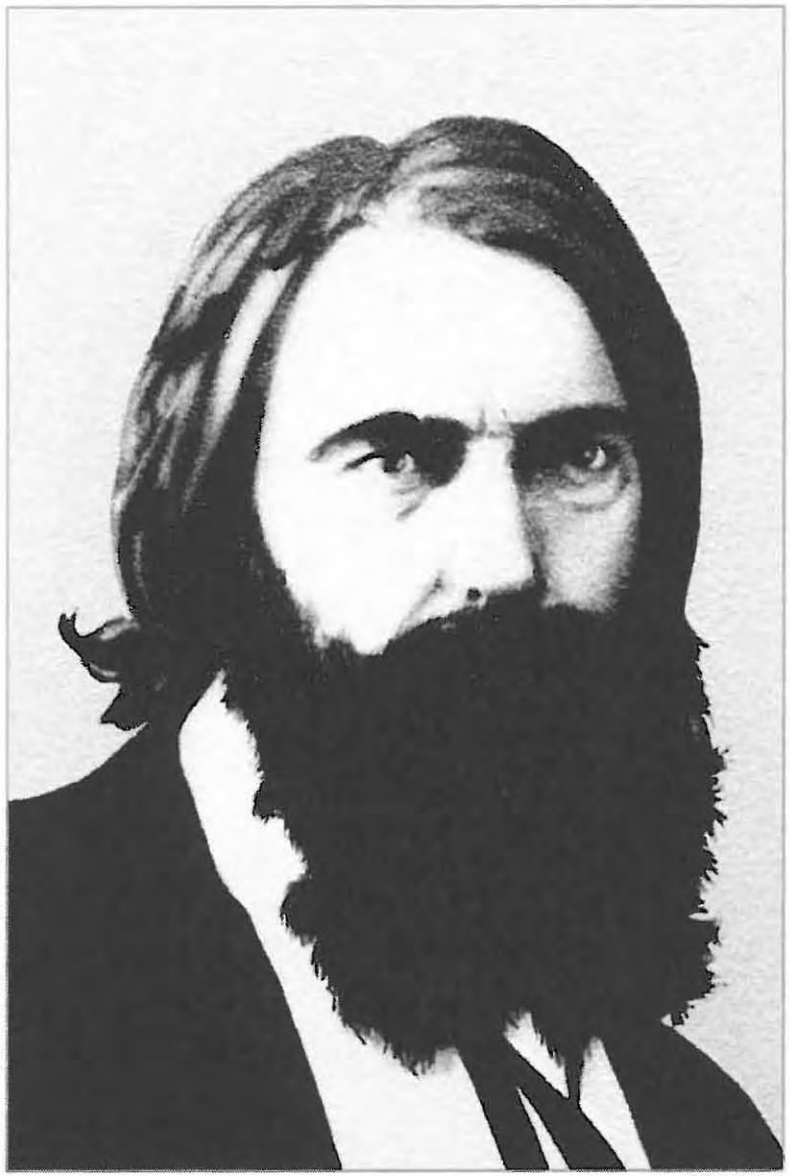


Figure 1. 7
Tableau (2010)
Panel 1: Detail

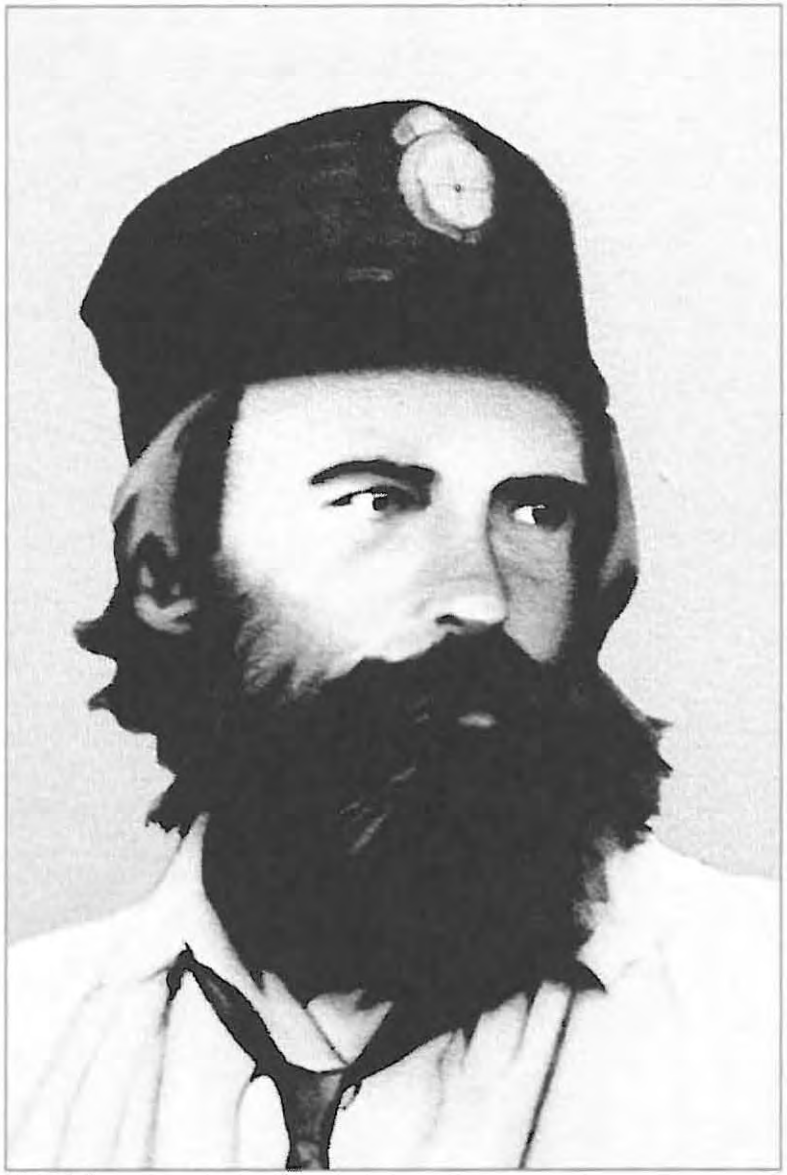


Figure 1. 8
Tableau (2010)
Panel 2: Detail

Figure 1. 9
Tableau (2010)
Panel 2: Detail

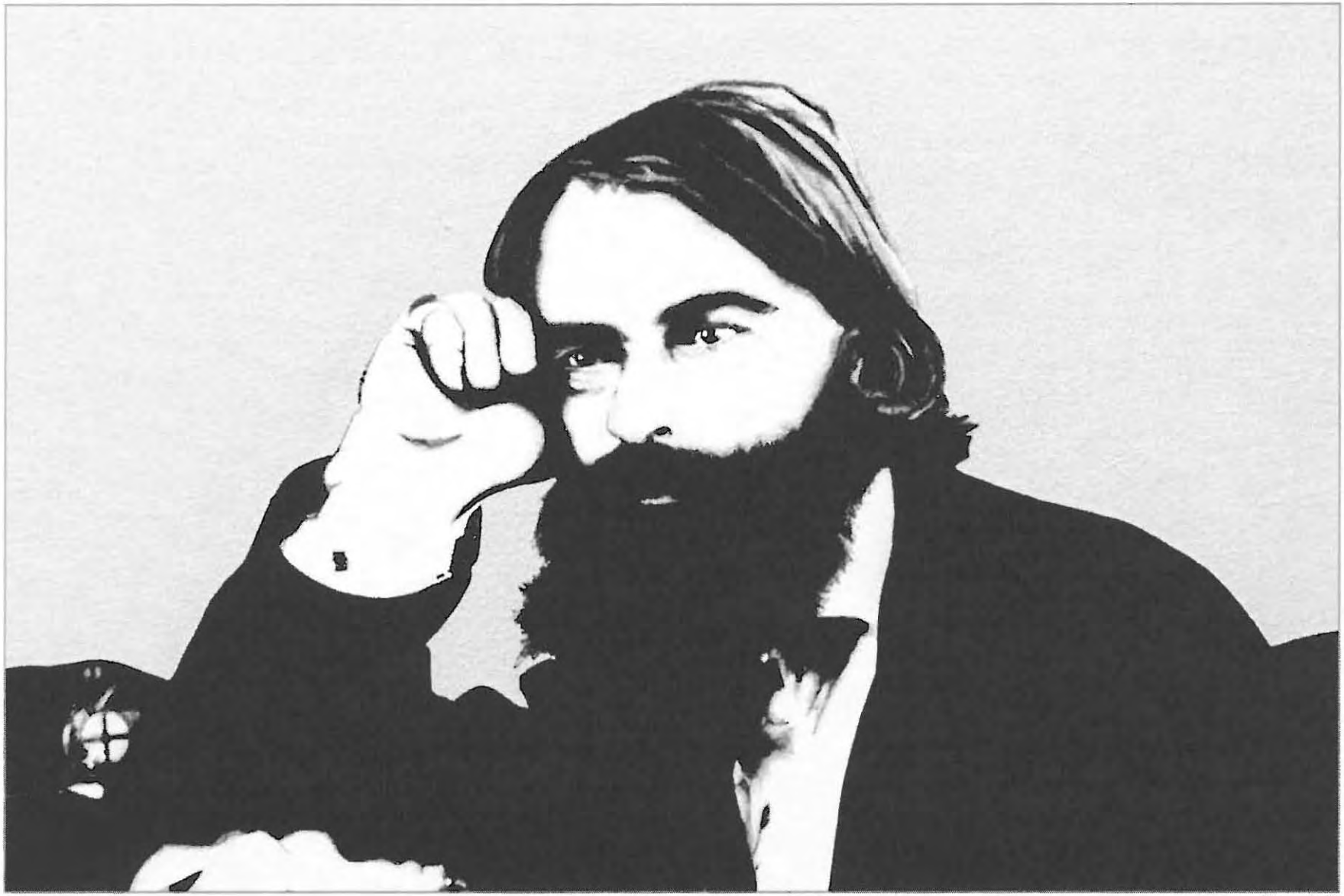


Figure 1. 10
Tableau (2010)
Panel 3: Detail

Figure 2. 1
Pablo Picasso
Guernica (1937)

Figure 2. 2
Pablo Picasso
Las Meninas (After Velazquez) (1957)

Figure 2. 3
Diego Velazquez
Las Meninas (1658)

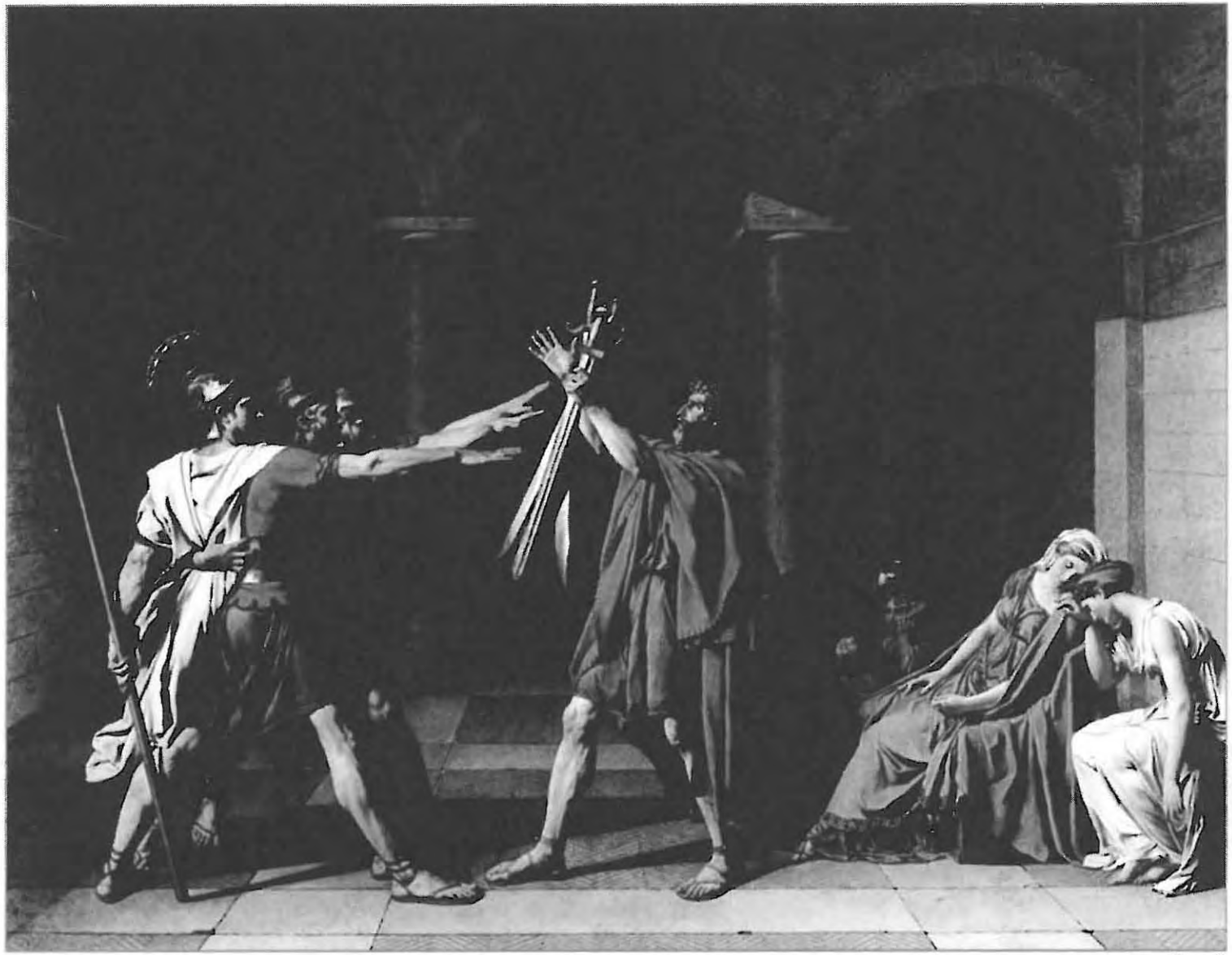


Figure 3
Jacques-Louis David
The Oath of the Horatii (1784)

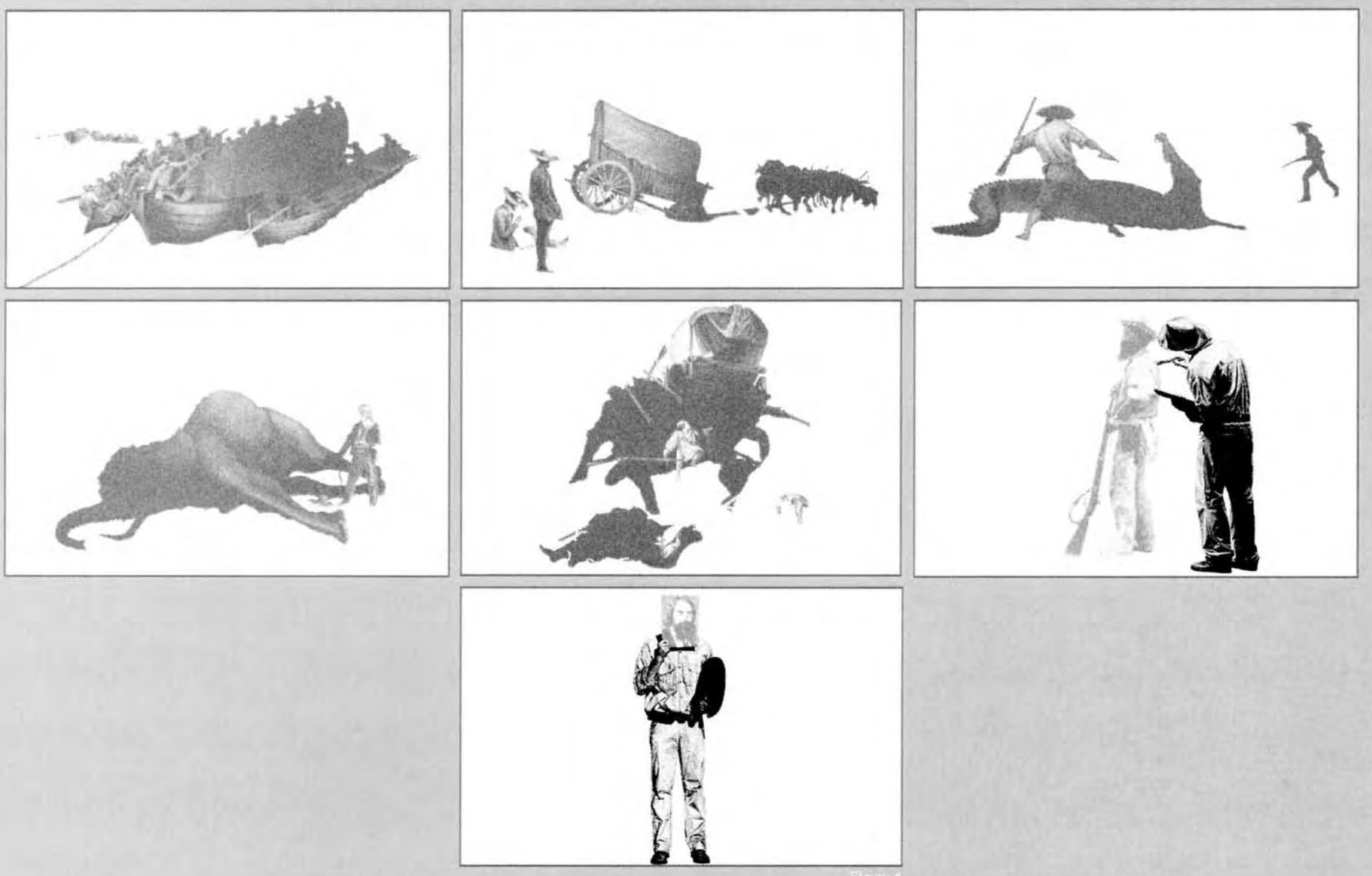


Figure 4.
Genesis (2010)

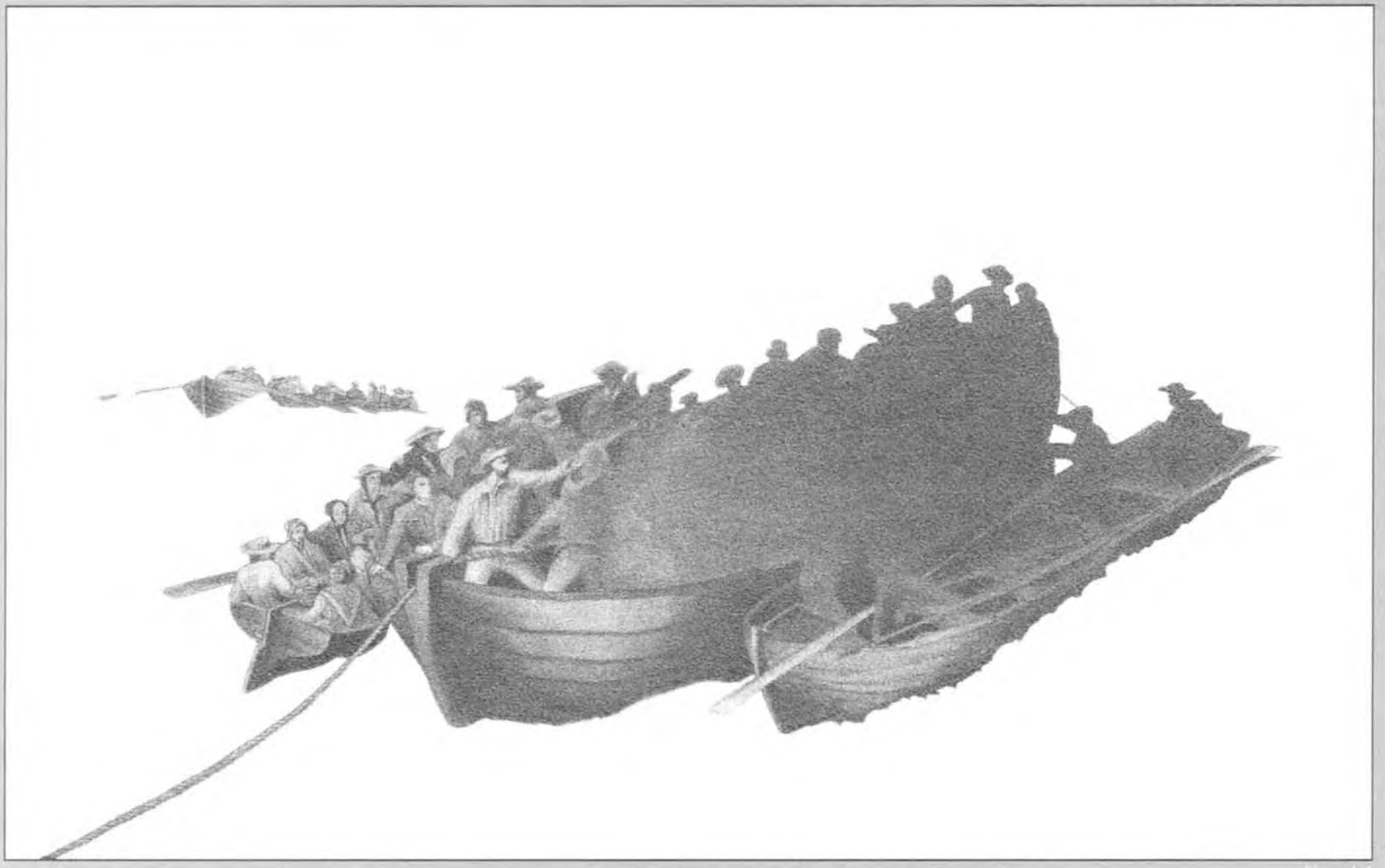


Figure 4. 1
Genesis (2010)
Panel 1

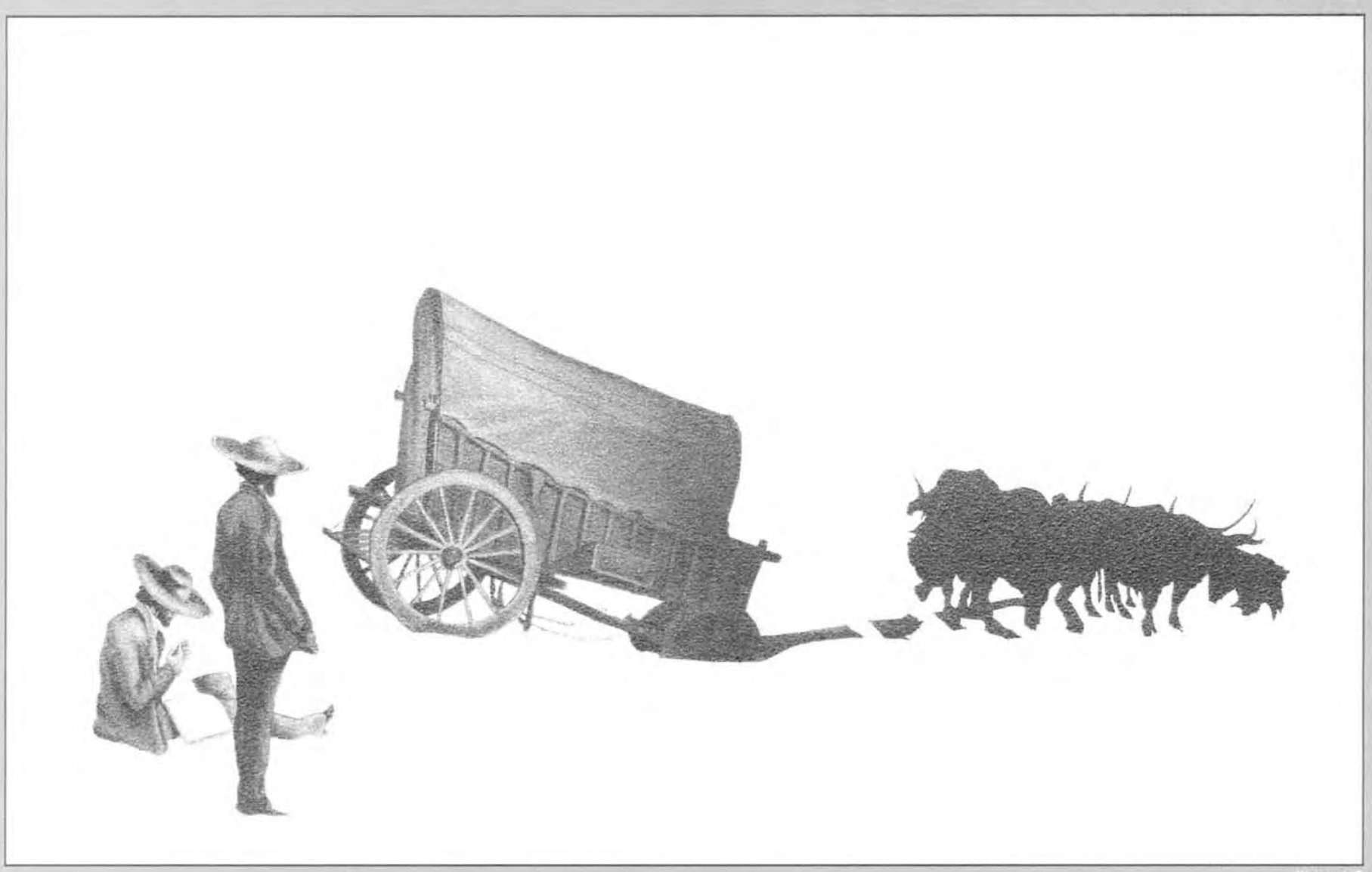


Figure 2.2
Genesis (2010)
Panel 2

Figure 4.3
Genesis (2010)
Panel 3

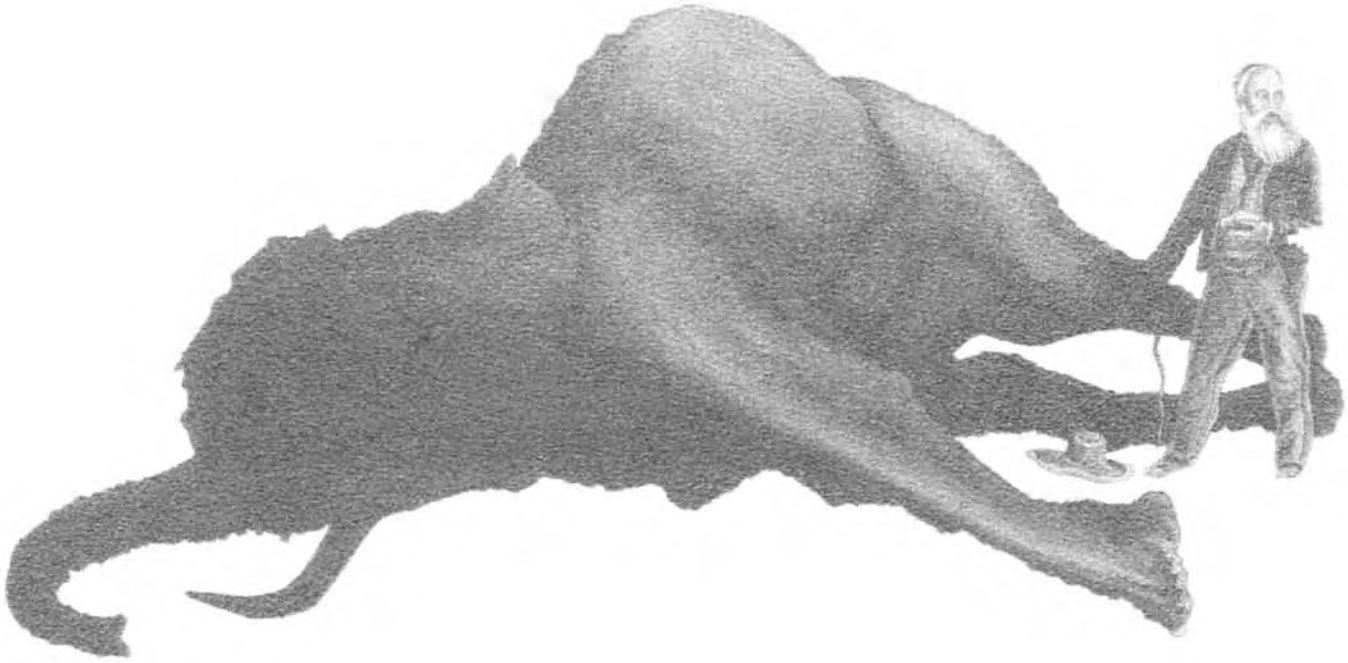


Figure 4.4
Genesis (2010)
Panel 6

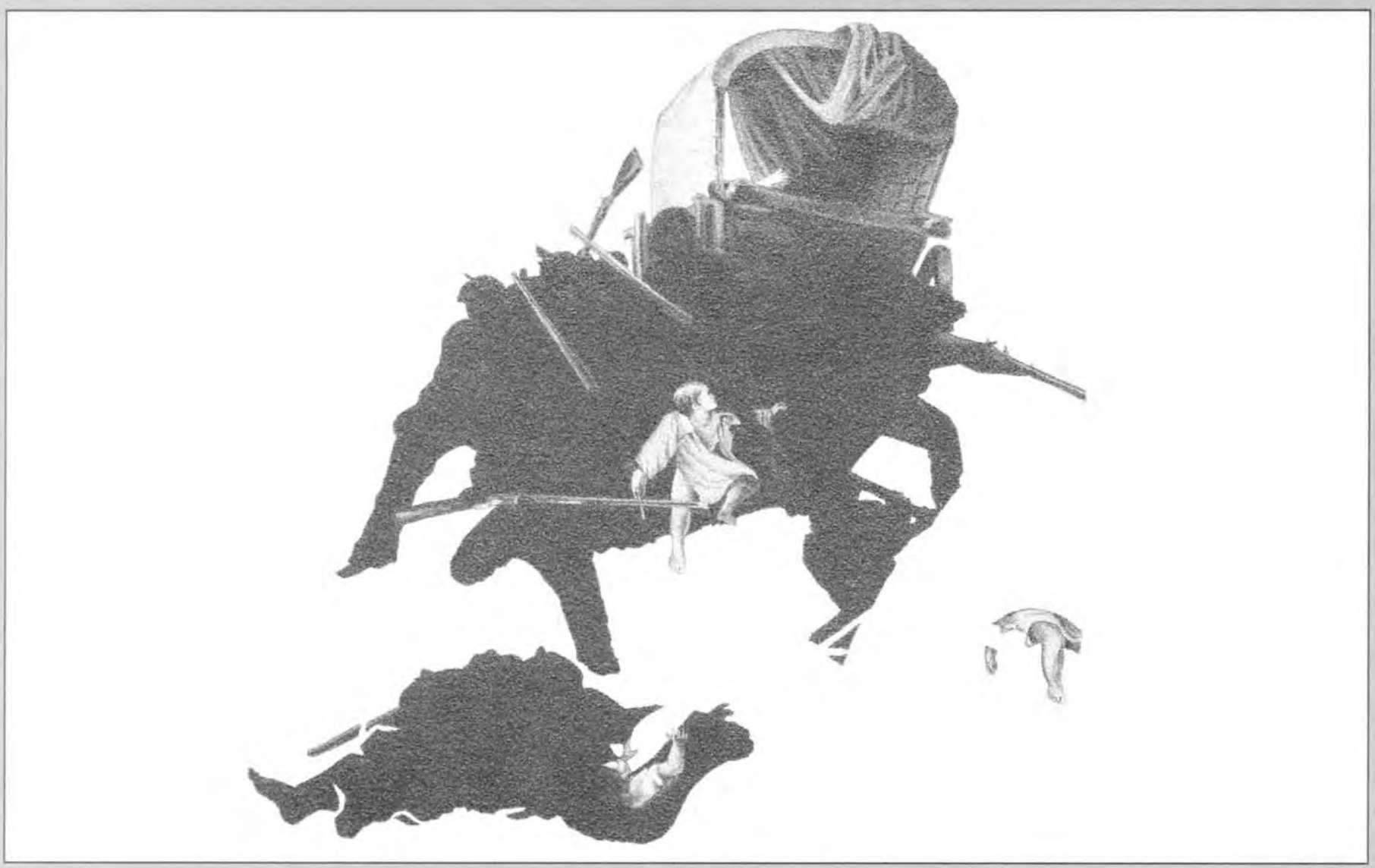


Figure 4.5
Genesis (2010)
Panel 5

Figure 4. 6
Genesis (2010)
Panel 6

Figure 4. 7
Genesis (2010)
Panel 7

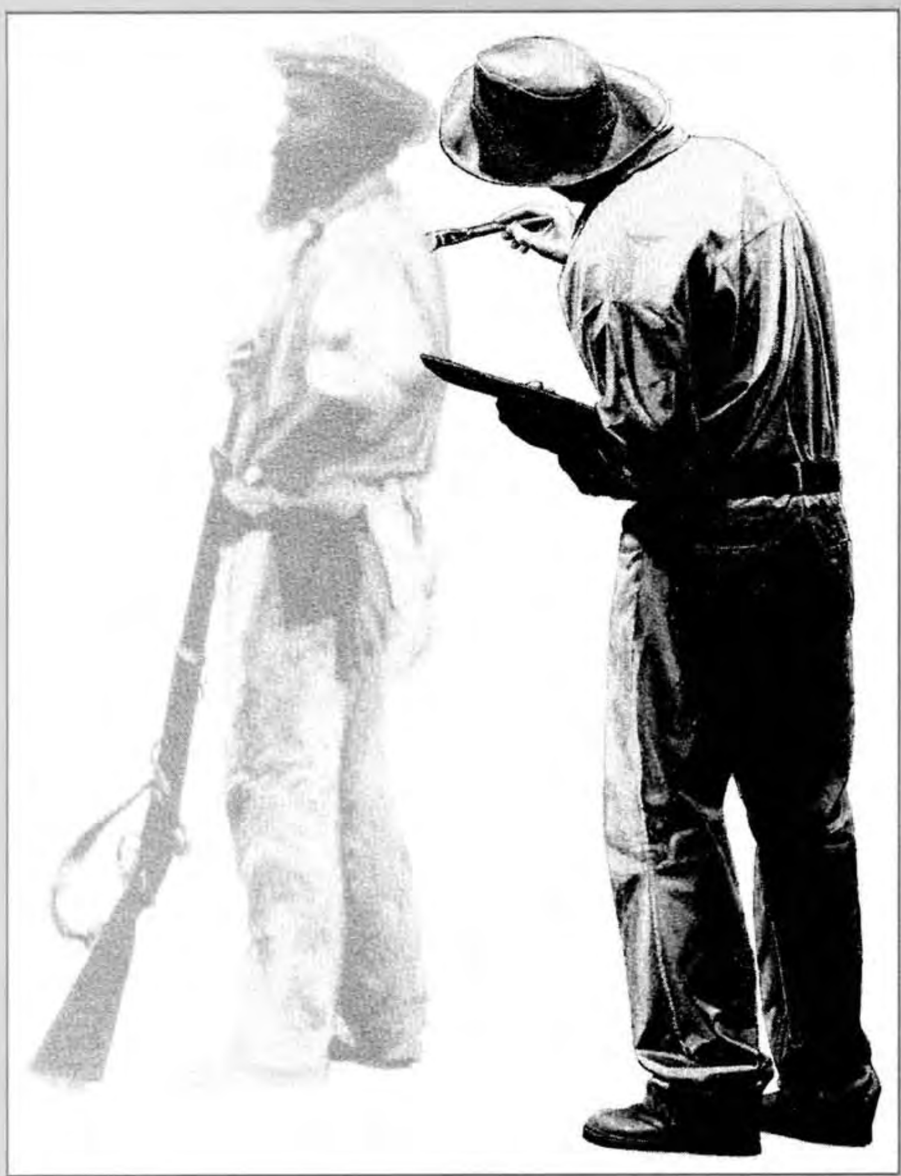


Figure 4. 8
Genesis (2010)
Panel 6: Detail

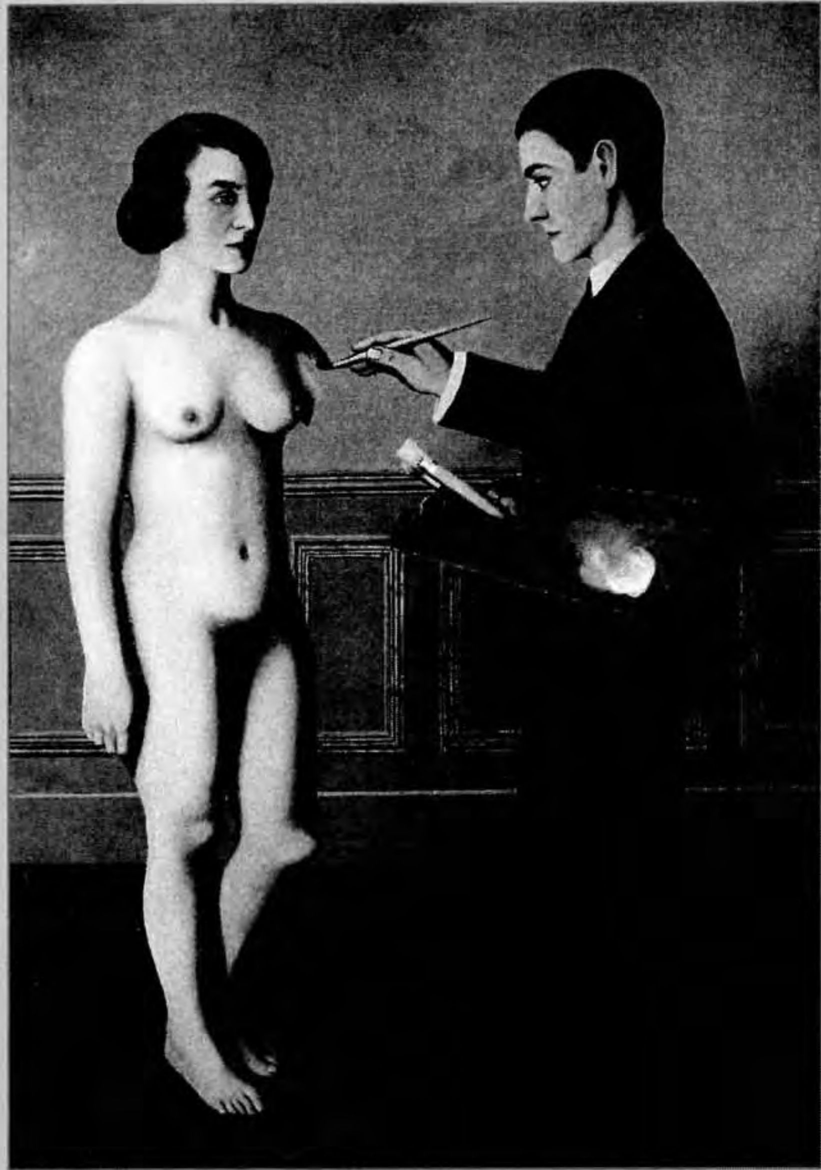


Figure 5
René Magritte
Attempting the Impossible (1928)

Figure 6
Before (2016)

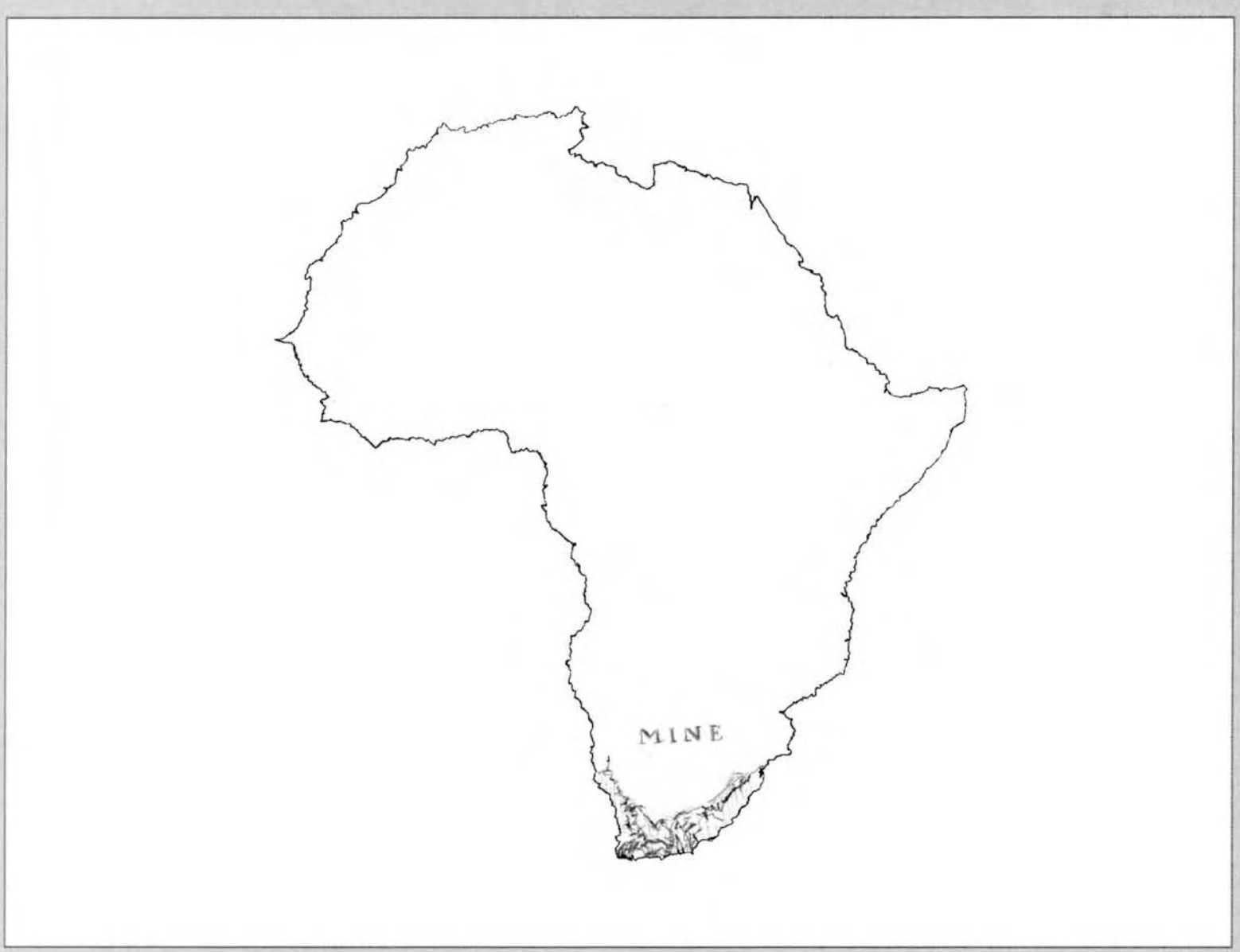


Figure 6.1
Before (2010)
Panel 1

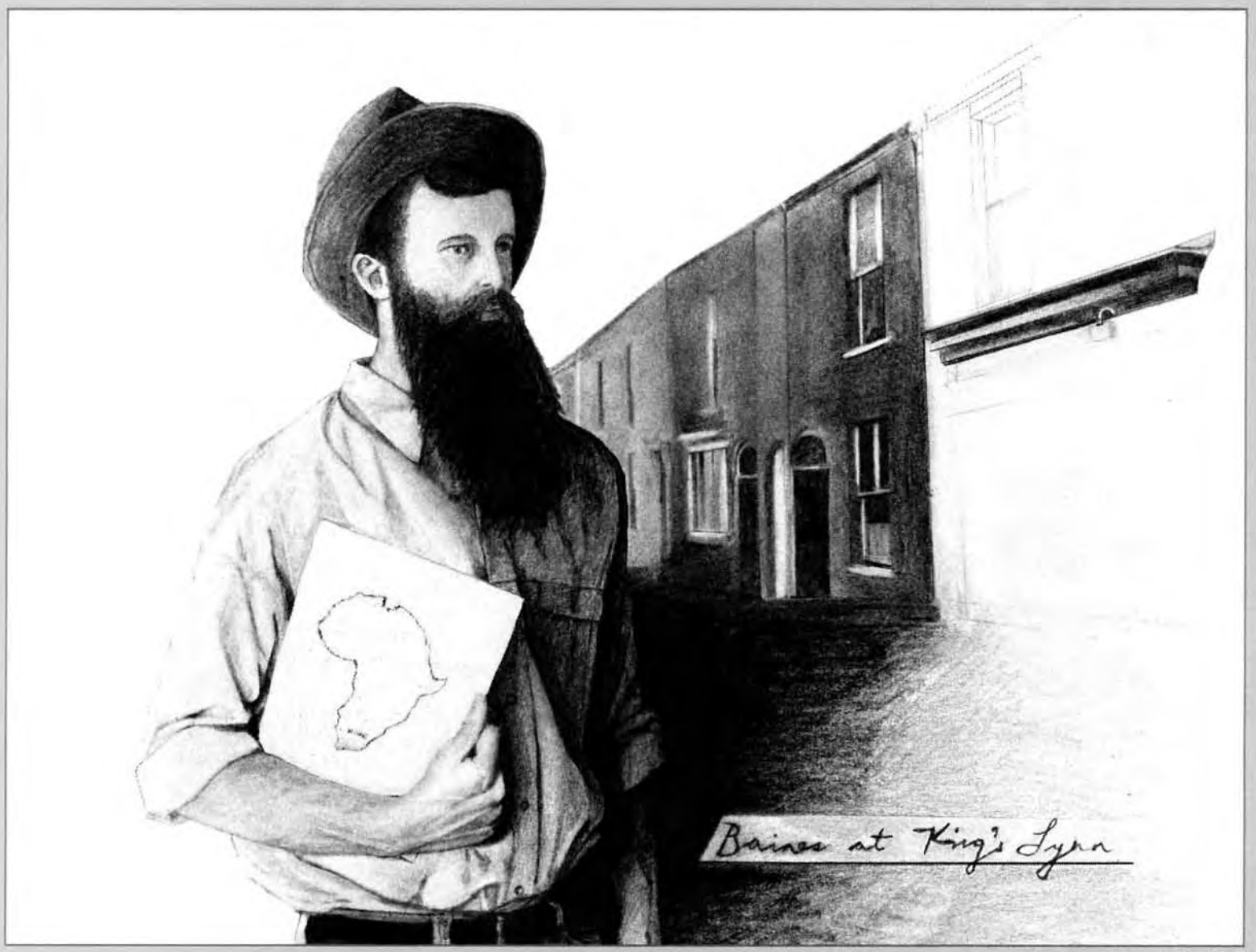


Figure 6.2
Before (2010)
Panel 2

Figure 6.3
Before I2010:
Panel 3

Figura n. 3
Before (2018)
Panel 4

Figure 6. 5
Before (2018)
Panel 5

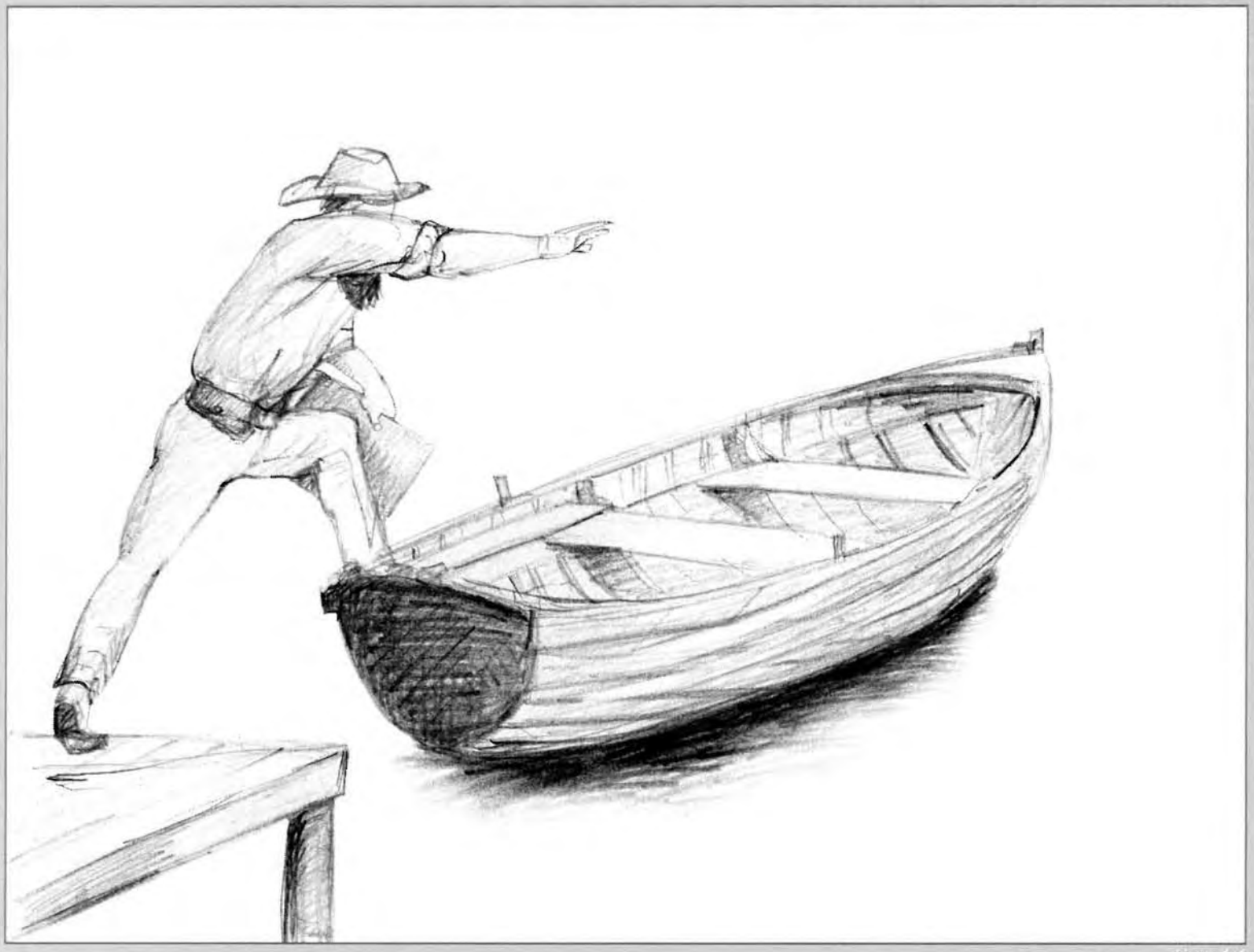


Figure 6.6
Before (2010)
Panel 6

Figure 6. 7
Before (2010)
Panel 7

Figure 6. 8
Before (2010)
Panel 8

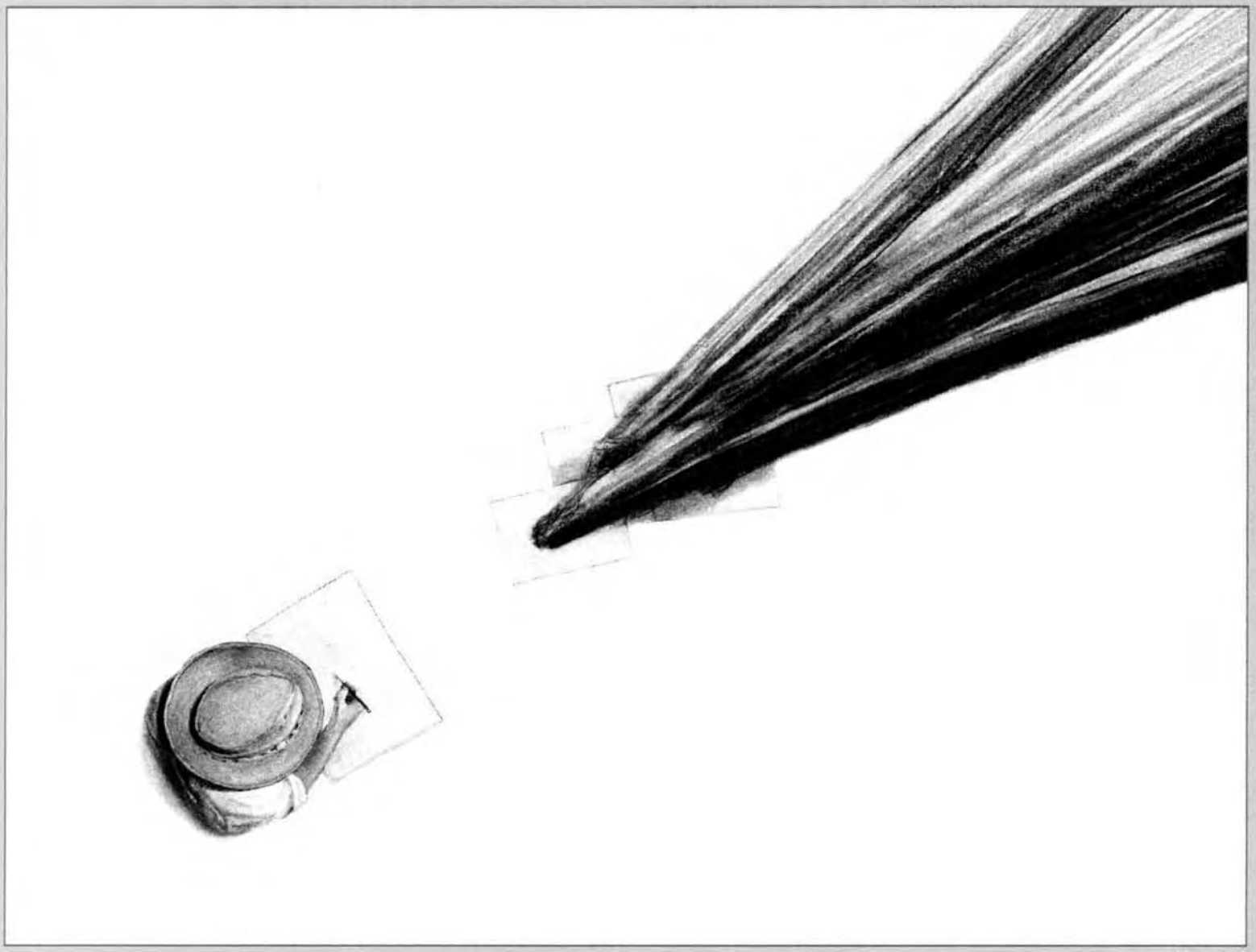


Figure 6. 9
Before (2019)
Panel 9

Figure 6.10
Before (2010)
Panel 10

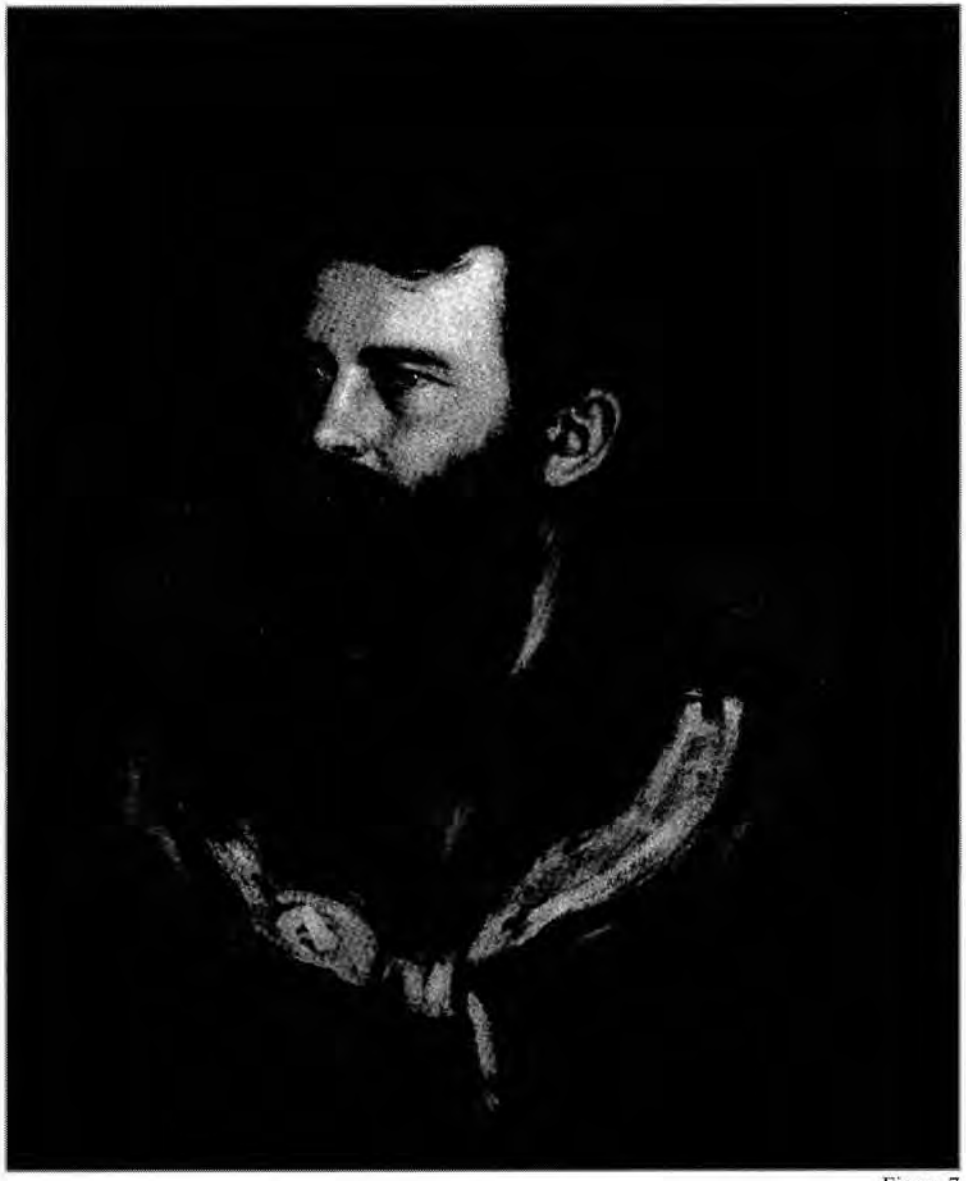


Figure 7
Thomas Baines
Self-portrait at the age of 38 (1858)

Figure 8
Thomas Baines
'Table Mountain, Bearing S by W, Distant 3 miles, Saturday 5' (No date)

Figure 9
William Kentridge
Colonial Landscapes (1995-96)

Figure 10
Thomas Baines
Herd of Buffalo, opposite Garden Island, Victoria Falls (ca. 1862-65)

Figure 11
Avant Car Guard
Poor man's Picasso (2009)

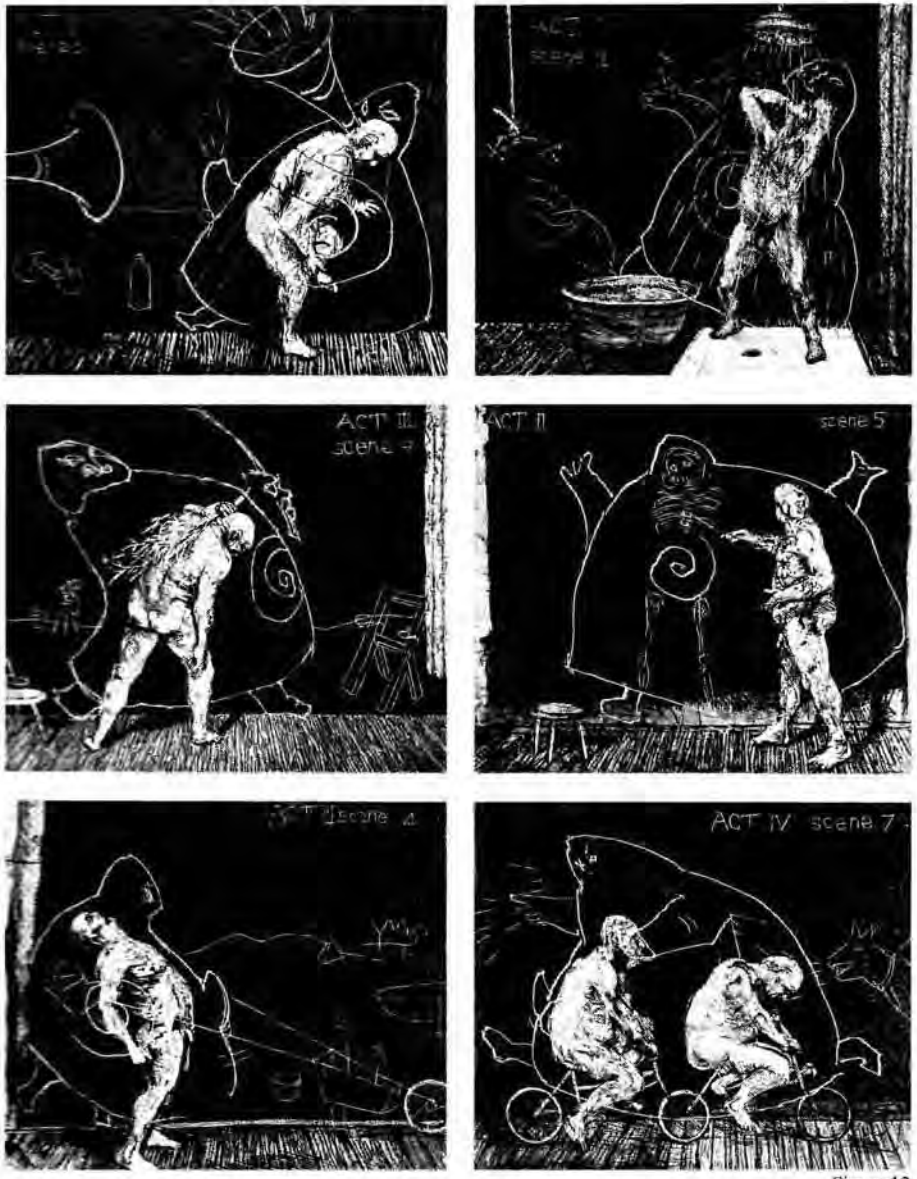


Figure 12
William Kentridge
Ubu Tells the Truth (1996-97)

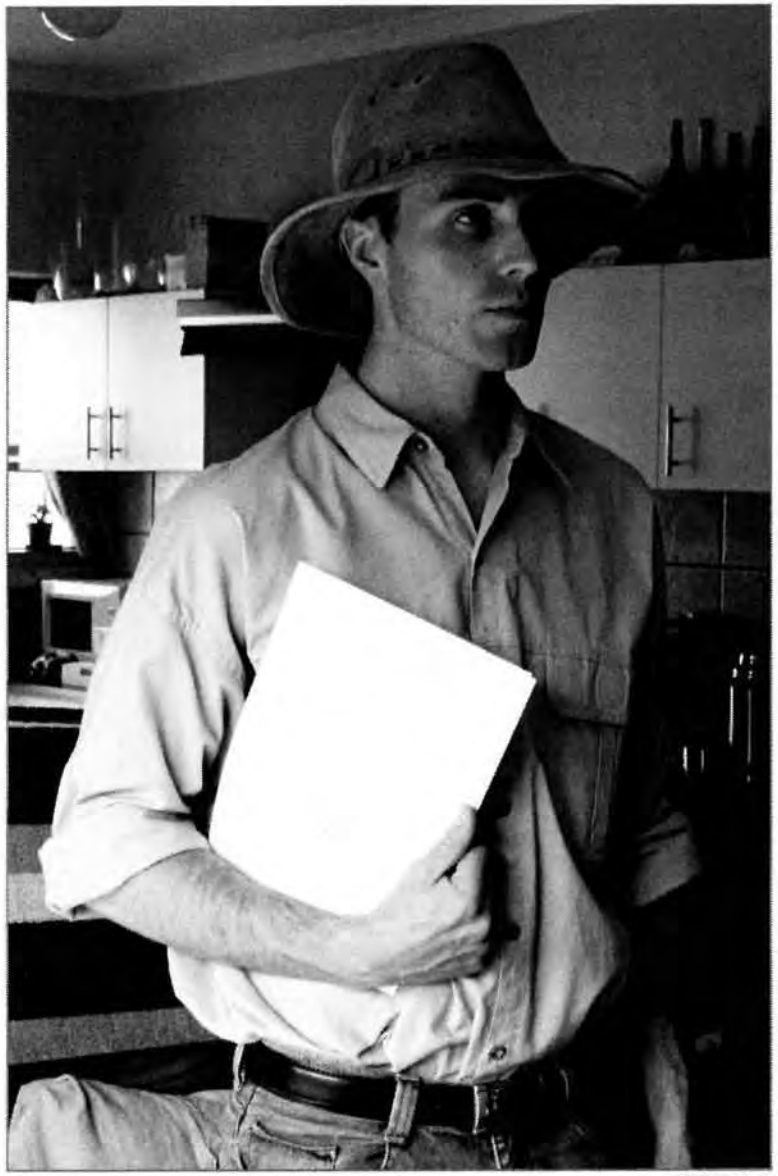


Figure 13. 1
Photograph of the artist as Thomas Baines
Reference for Panel 2 of *Before* (2010)

Figure 13. 2
Photograph of the artist as Thomas Baines
Reference for Panel 9 of *Before* (2010)

Figure 14
William Kentridge
Drawing from *Mine* (1991)

Figure 15
William Kentridge
Drawing from *Felix in Exile* (1996)

Figure 16
William Gilpin
Scene with Picturesque Adornment (ca. 1792)

Figure 17
Photograph of Thomas Baines (ca. 1865)

Figure 18
Photograph of Thomas Baines (No date)

Figure 19
Photograph of Thomas Baines (ca. 1865)

Figure 20
Sketch for *Tableau*, Panel 2 (2009)

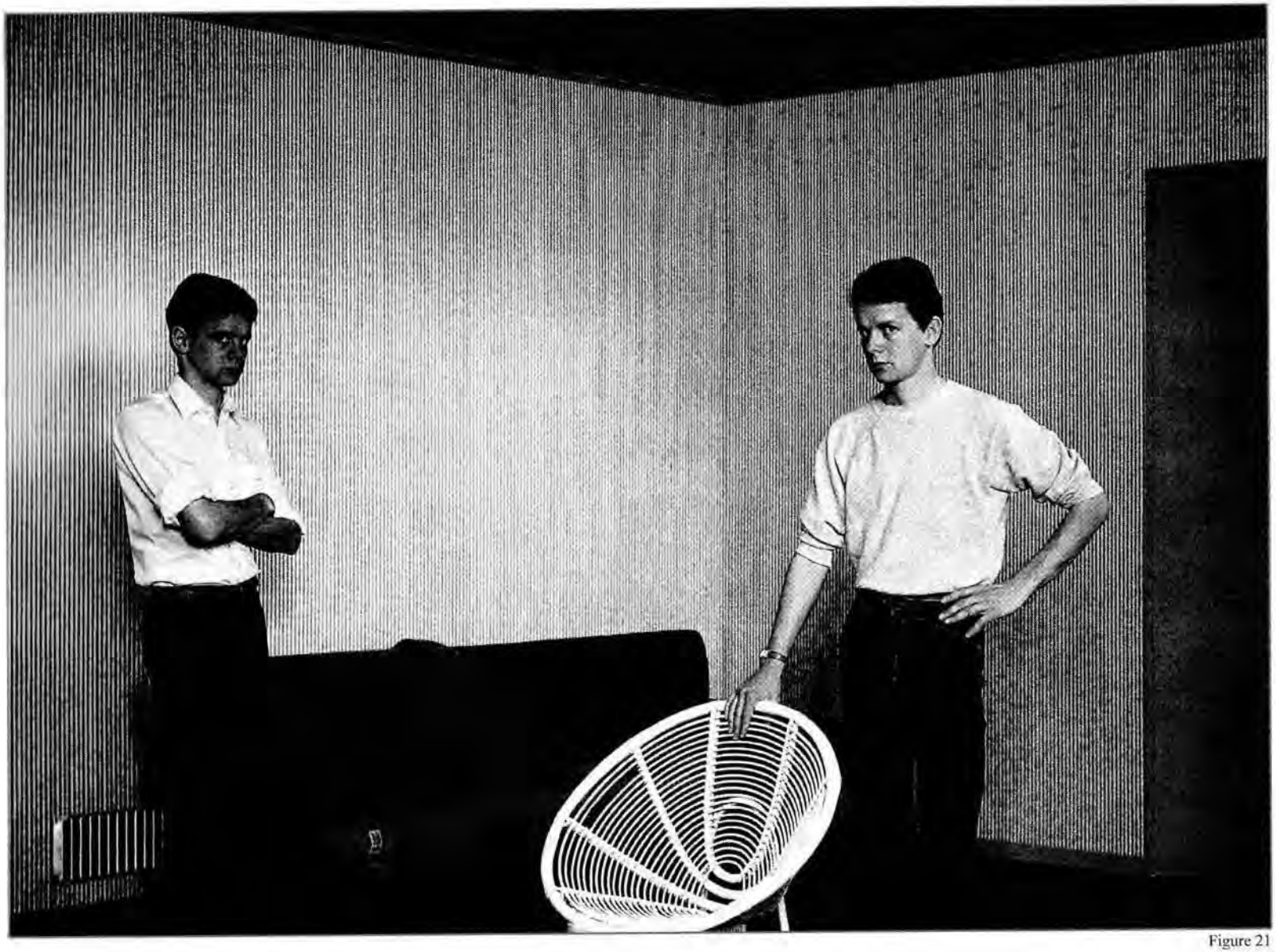


Figure 21
Jeff Wall
Double Self-Portrait (1979)

Figure 22
Jeff Wall
Restoration (1993)

Figure 23
Jeff Wall
Dead Troops Talk [...] (1992)

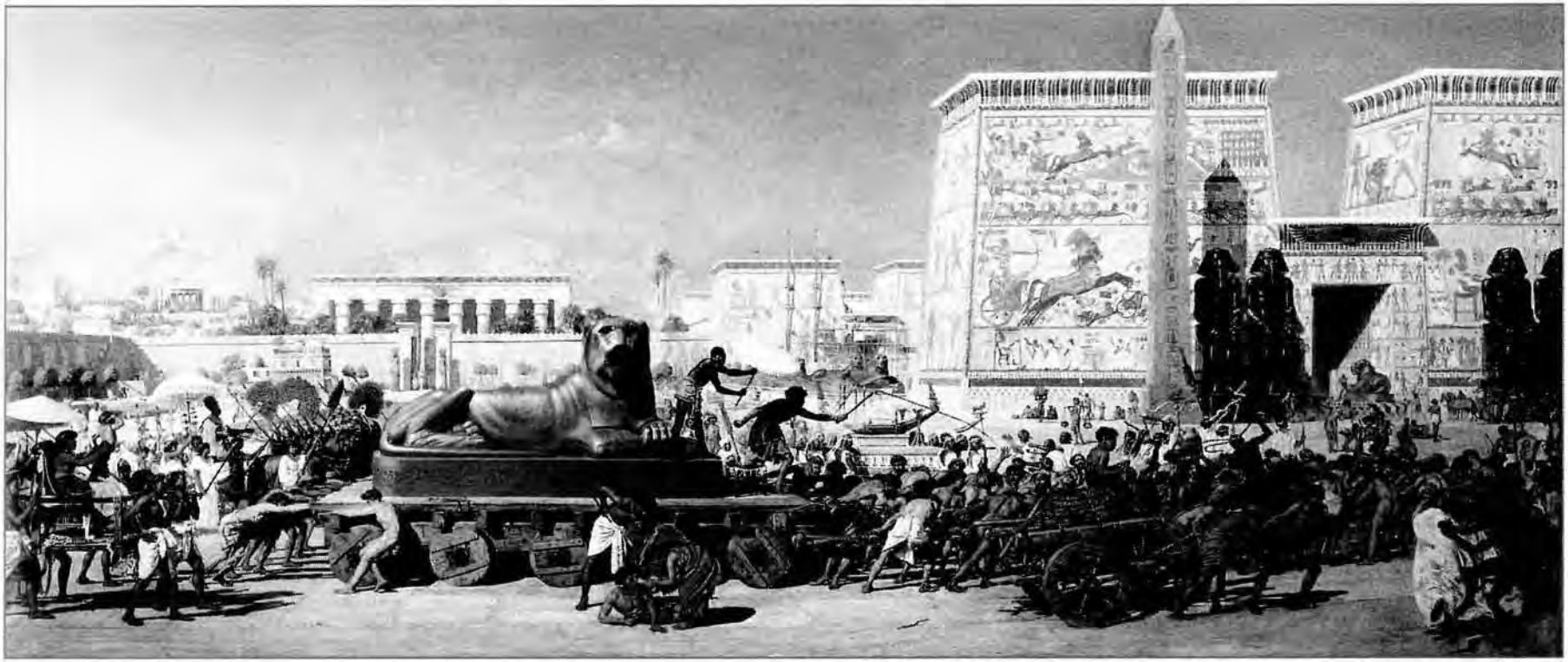


Figure 24
Edward Poynter
Israel in Egypt (1867)

Figure 25
Thomas Baines
Grahamstown 1850

Figure 26
Thomas Baines
Wagons on Market Square, Grahamstown (1850)

Figure 27
Thomas Baines
Potter's Row, Hill Street, Grahamstown (1848)

Figure 28
Tableau (2009)
Panel 1: Work in progress

Figure 29
Tableau (2009)
Panel 2: Work in progress

Figure 30
Tableau (2009)
Panel 3: Work in progress

Figure 3) 1
Digital scan of artist's palette (2009)

Figure 3) 2
Digital scan of artist's palette (2009)

Figure 32
Digital scan of test canvas (2010)

Figure 33
Thomas Baines
The landing of the British Settlers in Algoa Bay in the Year 1820 (1852)

Figure 34
Thomas Baines
Klaas Smit's River [...] (1852)

Figure 35
Thomas Baines
Baines and Humphrey killing an alligator [...] (1857)

Figure 36
Thomas Baines
The discovery of gold (1874)

Figure 37
Thomas Baines
The Battle of Blauwkrantz 1838 (1854)

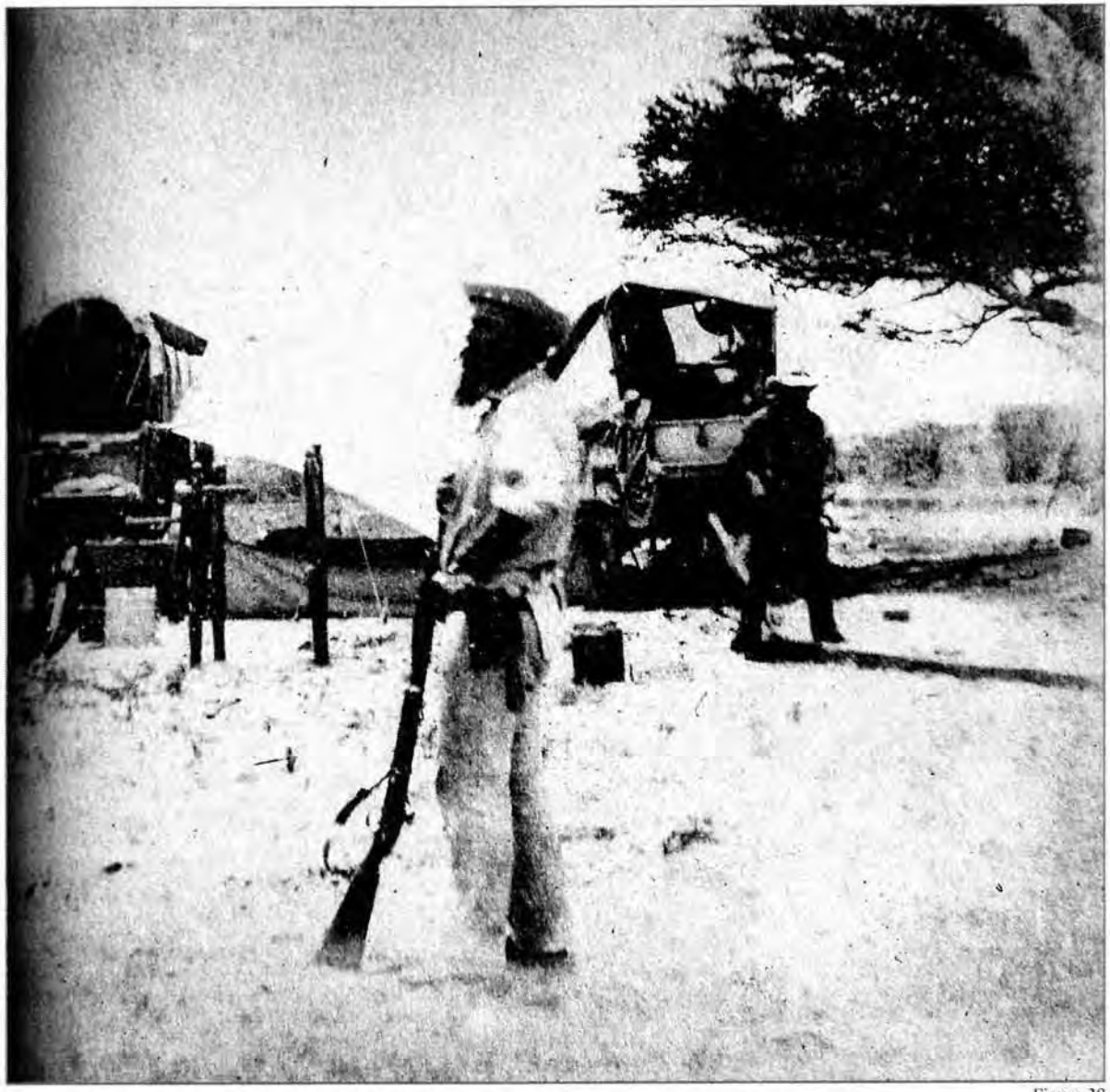


Figure 38
James Chapman
The Vertical Sun or *The Shadowless Man [...]* (1861)

Figure 39
Johannes Phokela
T-Bone (2005)

Figure 40
Johannes Phokela
Tender Loving Care, Panel 2 (2005)

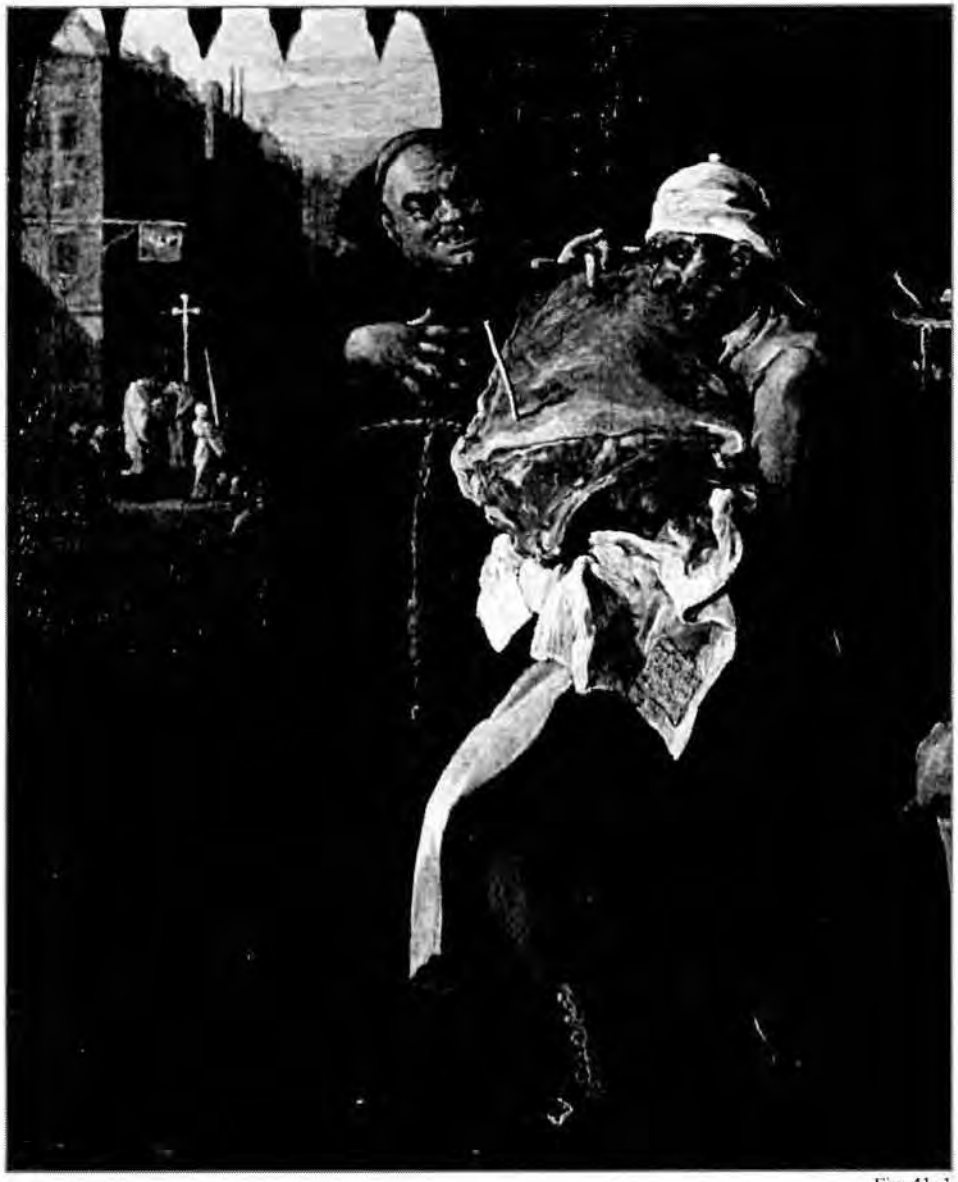


Fig. 41. 1
William Hogarth
O the Roast Beef of England [...]: Detail (1748)

Figure 41. 2
William Hogarth
O the Roast Beef of England [...] (1748)

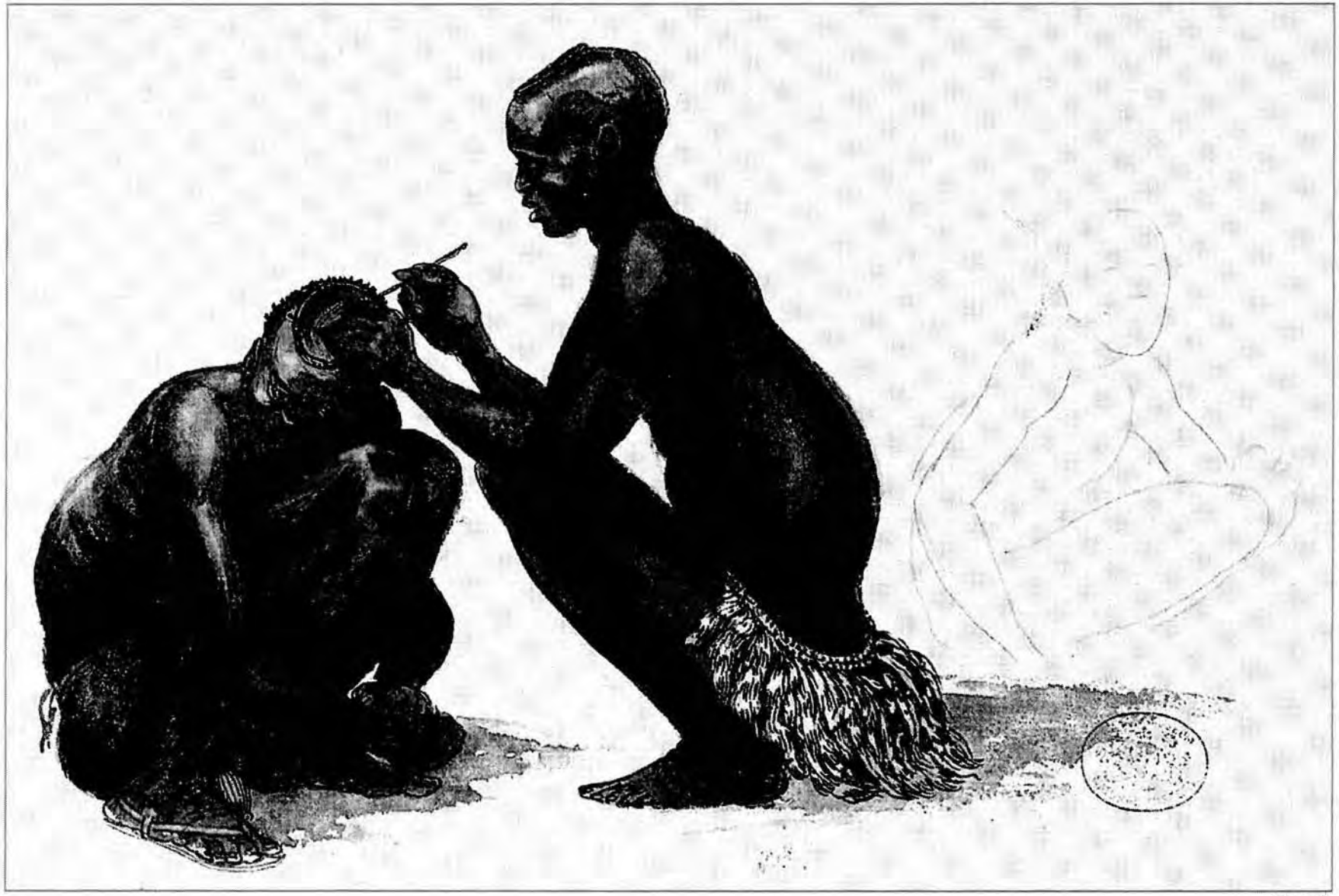


Figure 42
Thomas Baines
Dressing the Issiyoko [...] (1869)

Figure 43
Glenn Brown
Dali-Christ (1992)

Figure 44
Salvador Dali
Soft Construction with Boiled Beans [...] (1936)