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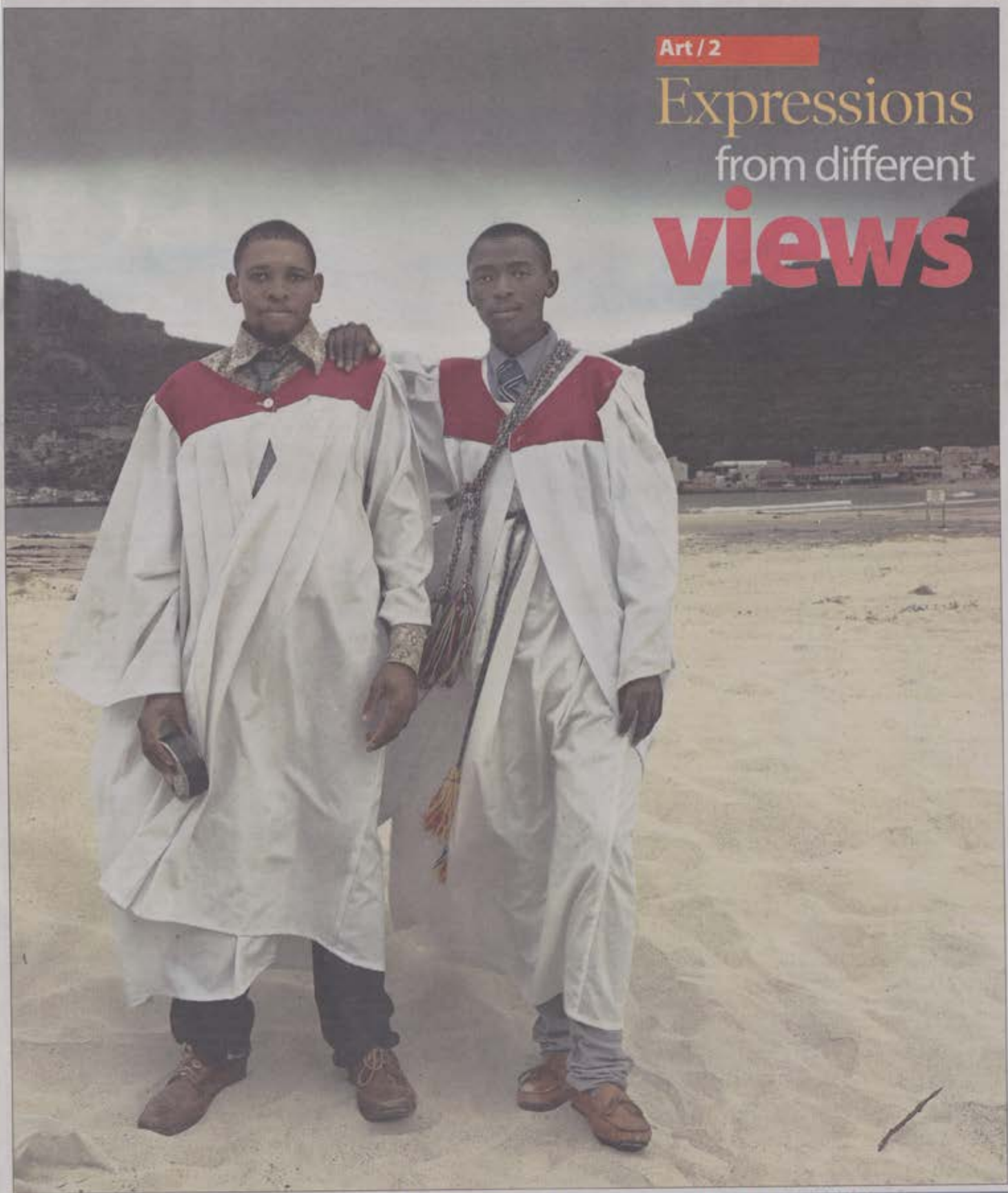
At play in the
city of Dublin



OCTOBER 12, 2014

Art / 2

Expressions from different **views**



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Above: Hout Bay harbour, Cape Town, Hangberg is in the background. Diptych 2 by David Lurie
Cover: Members of the 'Ilyse Zion Church of God', Sunday morning, Hout Bay beach, Cape Town by David Lurie



David Lurie
PICTURE: GEORGE HALLETT

"Priest" implies: an authority who cathartes on matters of faith and the unknown. We consult our minds for meaning and understanding in the world, in the same way someone might consult a priest – to elucidate or comfort our unanswerable questions.

"Why is this priest 'false'? I have chosen this adjective to remind the viewer that the 'truths' we tell ourselves are no more real than dreams. This exhibition is in essence a personal tribute to those pleasant fictions and the rich narrative quality of our eggshell minds."

Keck says one of the biggest conclusions she's come to through her work is that the possibilities derived from not knowing are far more interesting to her than the inevitabilities of being "a certainty freak."

"I like that we can tell ourselves and others stories about life, death and meaning or simply embrace chaos in the gesture of loving someone else's story. I like that I can attempt to do that, not with words, but with pictures."

One of *False Priest's* centrepieces is *Bless You*, a traditional style hand-knitted quilt comprised of a collection of old handkerchiefs that she printed using Bromine (brown print) and Cyanotype (blue print) photographic exposure processes – each done in a similar way to the manual developing technique used in darkroom printing.

"The printed pictures are of all the things I own, all my possessions. It's a commentary on how humans use things to give their life meaning, how they tell themselves stories around the identity of objects – particularly in our domestic lives."

Another large scale piece, titled *The Big Sleep* (chain-stitched hand embroidery on linen cloth), invokes the narrative quality of being asleep and of dreaming.

"I find these states really interesting and endless as sources of mystery and storytelling. The science of sleep as an 'in between' state that orders the world in our mind's eye is a conversation that has always fascinated me."

"In *The Big Sleep*, the horizontal form exists peacefully and at complete ease with her surroundings – alluding to an accepted state of Humanness. A profound serenity in just briefly existing."

● *False Priest*, as well as *Morning After Dark* can be seen at the *Commune.1 Gallery*, 64 Wale Street, Cape Town until October 23. See www.commune1.com.

PICTURES: DAVID LURIE AND THE COMMUNE.1

Steyn du Toit talks to artists David Lurie and Olivie Keck, who have exhibitions currently showing – titled *Morning After Dark* and *False Priest*, respectively – at the *Commune.1 Gallery* in Cape Town.

David Lurie's latest exhibition, *Morning After Dark*, sees the documentary photographer capture various scenes from Cape Town's topography around daybreak. Consisting of 29 images printed on fibre based archival paper, it can be seen at Commune.1's Gallery One.

Forming part of an ongoing book project to be published next year, titled *The Right to the City*, the majority of these images lack any human figures in them. Instead, the viewer is asked to consider who those individuals might be who'll soon start populating the visible landmarks and scenes of infrastructure.

Says Lurie: "The exhibition title refers to the first light of day. That unique moment when the city emerges from the dark. Each morning is totally different from the previous one – an ephemeral, unique and unrepeatable occurrence." He describes the deliberate isolation of moments where the protagonists of his photographs are absent as an artistic departure for him.

"While in my previous work almost all the pictures had people in them, my interest for this series was focused towards urban and city landscapes. But then it occurred to me that the residents of Cape Town, my fellow co-inhabitants, were still nonetheless at the centre of my images.

"I became acutely aware of the importance of (the poles of) presence and absence in photography and that the true content of a photograph is invisible, is alluded

to, and is not necessarily inside the frame of the picture."

Referring to Dr Camaren Peter – who wrote in *Morning After Dark's* catalogue that urban structures "hold more power over interactions between people, and between people and the city, than is commonly recognised – Lurie goes on to say that he witnessed this trend firsthand when capturing Cape Town.

"The structures and infrastructure of the city centre are built for those who have cars, money and jobs. They commute into town, head straight for parking areas (mostly underground) and disappear into modern, air-conditioned office blocks or shopping centres. This is very different from the streets and dwellings of townships.

"The city's structures articulately proclaim who is included and who is excluded from the main activities of the city centre and what these activities are focused around (banking, financial services, etc).

"It becomes clear very quickly that the city has not been designed for most of its inhabitants. As a result, the majority of Capetonians are being excluded. The city is failing the majority of its citizens. In that sense it's a city in crisis, if one is willing to look closely enough and attend to the detail."

When making their way through the exhibition, Lurie hopes that visitors will engage in an intense, active interrogation of all the visible information and fine detail that is there in the photographs to be discovered



Close-up of *Bless You* by Olivie Keck

PICTURE: JENNA BASS



The Big Sleep by Olivie Keck
PICTURE: JENNA BASS



Artist Olivie Keck
PICTURE: ASHELY WAITERS

and revealed.

"I'd like viewers to try and become aware of the categories and beliefs that were already in their minds, that they brought with them to the show, and to ask themselves if any of these have been challenged by what they are seeing in the images. Secondly, I'd like them to consider if this work helps, or encourages, people to know, claim or understand their social rights."

Running alongside Lurie's *Morning After Dark* and on display at Commune.1's Gallery Two, is Olivie Keck's *False Priest*. Featuring various handmade

pieces meticulously crafted from linen, cotton, embroidery, handkerchiefs and porcelain, together they present "a quiet and personal enquiry" into the phenomenology of sleep and dying, as well as the related subjects of loss, fear, memory and dreams.

"With *False Priest* I wanted to put across the layered narrative of being human," explains Keck. The show's title refers to the personified title she has given to the "voice" of our human consciousness, which gradually navigates us through the encompassing ambiguity of existing.

"It is not intended to be read as a religious title, but rather the embodiment of what the word