

Mat Dargher  
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## THE DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT

### INTRODUCTION

Up until the late 1970s the practice of documentary photography in South Africa was confined to a very small group of mainly white photographers. But by the 'eighties, a new generation of photographers had begun to emerge out of the caldron of mass resistance and their influence on photography and on the way people have come to perceive the unfolding of the South African drama, both within and outside the country has been quite extraordinary. The influence of photography, through the alternative newspapers, on the mass resistance movement and on cultural developments, became so strong that as Nadine Gordimer put it the 1980s was the 'decade of the photograph'.

The small but influential school of activist photographers who emerged in the '80s was concerned with more than just documenting the lives of their countrymen and women, and was active in the struggle for the restoration of the right to know, to be informed and the right of free expression. At the same time the photographers like the writers and artists know that while they have to grapple with these questions they have to establish their own independence within the broad democratic movement. It is the debate for answers to these and other fundamental questions regarding the role of cultural workers in our society that has established such a lively and dynamic dimension to what is today acknowledged and known as the 'culture of resistance' against apartheid.

It was the level of commitment to their art and social change that led this school of activist photographers to establish a number of important photography projects and organisations based in the community, such as the Photographic Working Group of the Carnegie Inquiry, Afrapix, Dynamic Images, the Johannesburg and Western Cape Photo-Workshops and the Documentary Photographic Project.

It was in 1982 with the formation of the Photographic Working Group of the Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development that the opportunity to bring together photographers from around the country, to pool their talents and to lay the basis for ongoing collaboration amongst photographers and their communities was realised. From the outset it was recognised that photography was going to play an important part in the work of the Inquiry. It soon became clear that the work commissioned for the Inquiry needed to be collected and safely housed in an institution. It was during the course of the Inquiry that the idea of forming a centre, which would serve as a library/archive, and which would also develop a community based photographic education programme, was mooted. It was in 1987 that the Documentary Photography Project (DPP) was established as a project of the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (Saldru) at the University of Cape Town.

The DPP like other alternative educational and cultural projects is faced with the fundamental fact that the development of a progressive photographic practice in South Africa is not possible without due recognition of the fact that because black people have been denied access to resources and skills no real development in photography, or any other field, is possible until this is redressed. To date there are no African schools which have a photographic course or facilities, nor the trained personnel to run them. To date, the universities and technical colleges have produced no more than a handful of African graduates in the fine arts and only one with a degree in photography.

The DPP is one of three other non-commercial community-based photographic educational programmes in the country. The DPP unlike the other projects is based at a university and has established a photographic workshop project, an overseas scholarship programme, an exhibition and publishing programme and a library archive. The establishment of the DPP at the University of Cape Town was made possible by a generous four year grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The Documentary Photography Project has also established a close working relationship with institutions and organisations in South Africa and abroad. The DPP has links with the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University, North Carolina, The International Center of Photography in New York, the Media Trainers' Forum in Cape Town and the Western Cape Photo-Workshop which is an affiliate of the Cultural Workers' Congress.

While the DPP is based at the University of Cape Town it has established an advisory body made up of photographers, community and trade union leaders. The DPP through its membership of the Western Cape Media Trainees' Forum is working to establish a comprehensive media training programme and a Media Centre for the Western Cape. The advisory board is made up of David Goldblatt (Photographer), Joyce Ozynski (Art historian and critic), Hassim Seedat (Attorney, Chairman of the Board of M.L. Sultan Technikon, Durban) and Mi Hlatshawayo (Poet and National organiser of COSATU Cultural Unit).

#### PROJECT AIMS

- \* To establish a library/archive of the work of documentary photographers, for use by researchers and community organisations.
- \* To run community based photographic courses to upgrade the photographic skills of young photographers, especially those active in community, youth, women's and trade union organisations.
- \* To encourage young photographers to undertake documentary projects by providing funding and editorial assistance.
- \* To initiate and assist with the production, exhibition and publication of the work of documentary photographers,
- \* To create a greater awareness of the history and development of documentary photography, and popular culture through the holding of seminars and workshops.

#### COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMME

The community education programme that the DPP organises is directed at media offices and members of community, labour, youth, women's and service groups. The courses are held at weekends and run over a period of three months.

One of the most important consequences of the DPP's educational programme has been the establishment of photographic clubs and groups in the black townships in the Western Cape. Many of these clubs are part of the cultural wings of the South African Youth Congress (SAYCO).

#### PHOTO-JOURNALISM TRAINEE PROGRAMME

This course is aimed at training four young photographers from progressive organisations and the alternative media network. The course will run for a period of six months and students will receive training in basic photo-journalism,

the production of audio-visual programmes, the establishment of darkrooms and in running workshops. Students will work closely with organisations to produce an exhibition on pressing social issues in their area. The DPP's photo-journalism course will eventually form part of the Media Trainee Forum's regional programme to develop a comprehensive media training project in the Western Cape.

#### DOCUMENTARY PROJECTS

The DPP is the only institution in the country which has a programme to assist photographers and organisations to document relevant community issues. The DPP's documentary photographic programme is in most cases related to grassroots People's History projects and one of the spin offs from this has been the production of a number of exhibitions of socially relevant photographic essays. These photo-essays are regularly lent out to organisations and shown in community halls and schools as well as published in alternative and mainstream newsletters and magazines. These projects have begun to play an important role in breaking down the wall of ignorance that the apartheid government has deliberately built in our country, especially amongst white South Africans.

#### EXHIBITIONS

In the past three years the DPP has mounted and exhibited ten major exhibitions in collaboration with other photographic organisations. These exhibitions have been shown widely both in South Africa and abroad. The DPP exhibition entitled 'South Africa The Cordoned Heart' has been published in a widely acclaimed book and has toured Germany, the USA and the UK. In 1989 the DPP together with Afrapix and the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University, produced a book and a travelling exhibition entitled 'Beyond the Barricades'.

In July 1988 the DPP hosted one of the largest photographic exhibitions of the work of the 'new' school of South African documentary photography. Ten major exhibitions were shown in three different venues in Cape Town.

The demand for the DPP exhibitions, especially from schools and community organisations, has increased over the past three years and on average the DPP lends out one exhibition every two months. Because of the the State of Emergency and the lack of coverage by the mass media of issues in the black communities, the DPP's photographic exhibitions were an important feature of the alternative information network in South Africa. The DPP exhibition programme is slowly laying the basis for the establishment of one of the most extensive community related photographic collections in the country. This collection will become an invaluable record of life under apartheid since the 'eighties and the demise of white minority rule.

#### THE LIBRARY/ARCHIVE

The library/archive of the work of South African photographers has been established and is housed in UCT Jagger Library, Manuscripts and Archives Department. The collection is known as the 'UCT Carnegie Photographic Collection' and to date it has acquired nearly two thousand photographs representing the work of over thirty photographers, including some of South Africa's foremost documentary photographers. The collection has been built largely through donations and acquisitions as well as through projects funded by the DPP.



CONFERENCE AND SEMINAR PROGRAMME

In July 1988 the first conference and workshop on documentary photography was held at UCT. The two day conference was attended by the country's leading documentary photographers, students and teachers. The conference was followed by a week long skills workshop conducted by Jurgen Schadeberg. The DPP is considering holding a similar conference in 1991.

The DPP is also providing for students at various colleges. The DPP is included in the Southern Trade Union Federation and the South African Workers' History Project who also give training courses.

- 1. The Sheehy History Group
- 2. History Students from Orange College
- 3. The students from George College who were trained to use the camera in document their life in and around Cape Town as part of their oral history project.

OTHER TRAINING WORK

The DPP is a member of the Western Cape Media Training Forum. This forum consists of projects which train journalists to produce news, printing and publishing. The DPP conducted a six week training programme for 12 workers from the Fort Elizabeth community organisations who were trained to establish a news agency in production in the Fort Elizabeth area. All 12 workers have now set up their own news agencies for two weeks and are now producing news items for their own newspapers.

EXHIBITION WORK

The DPP exhibits photographs at various exhibitions and seminars. The DPP exhibits at the following exhibitions:

- Exhibition at University of the Western Cape - titled 'South Africa: A History of Struggle'.
- Conference organised by - Social Workers' Forum.
- Conference organised by - Early Learning Centre.
- Centre for African Studies - Gallery 'Beyond the Barricades', this exhibition was shown at a number of venues in Cape Town and Durban.
- 'Children on the Frontline' - exhibited in Sweden.
- The DPP's travelling exhibition 'South Africa the Unfinished Work' is still being shown after four years in America, Canada and Germany.
- The exhibition of women workers in the Western Cape entitled 'We Will' was shown in America.

MEMBERSHIP

The DPP is affiliated with APTU/IX and the Centre for Documentary Studies at Duke University in the USA in producing the book 'Beyond the Barricades', which was published in November by Aperture Books in New York and Klipfontein Books in London.



### WORKSHOPS

During the year the DPP conducted a number of workshops for photographers seconded by community based, trade union, cultural and educational organisations. The workshop programme caters for beginners and advanced amateur photographers depending on the level of competence over four week-ends or on a fulltime basis for six months. The DPP also, for the second successive year, ran a six months' programme for students at Khanya College. Photographers seconded by the Namibian Trade Union Federation and the Bontehewel People's History Project were also given training courses.

Other workshops were held for:

- (i) The Manenberg History Group
- (ii) History students from Khanya College
- (iii) Ten students from Khanya College who were trained to use the camera to document communities in and around Cape Town as part of their oral history project.

### MEDIA TRAINING FORUM

The DPP is a member of the Western Cape Media Trainers' Forum. This Forum consists of projects which range from journalism to poster making, printing and computers. The MTF conducted a six weeks' training programme for 12 members from the Port Elizabeth community organisations who were trained to establish a media service organisation in the Port Elizabeth region. All 12 trainees underwent a basic photography course for two weeks and one of the participants spent the rest of the four weeks doing photography.

### EXHIBITION PROGRAMME

The DPP exhibition programme continues to be extensively shown. During 1989 the exhibitions were shown at the following centres:

Conference at University of the Western Cape - titled 'Western Cape in the Nineties'.

Conference organised by - Social Workers' Forum.

Conference organised by - Early Learning Centre.

Centre for African Studies - Gallery 'Beyond the Barricades', this exhibition was shown at a number of venues in Cape Town and Durban.

'Children on the Frontline' - exhibited in Sweden.

The DPP's travelling exhibition 'South Africa the Cordoned Heart' is still being shown after four years in America, England and Germany.

The exhibition of migrant workers in the Western Cape entitled 'Kwa Khi' was shown in America.

### PUBLICATIONS

The DPP collaborated with AFRAPIX and the Centre for Documentary Studies at Duke University in the USA in producing the book 'Beyond the Barricade', which was published in November by Aperture Books in New York and Klip Town Books in London.

CONFERENCES

Omar Badsha presented a paper on People's Culture and Documentary Photography at the South African Association of Art Historians' conference held in Durban. He was invited to open the art festival exhibition at the University of Durban-Westville Cultural Festival. He also served on the planning committee of the CASE and CDS conference 'Facing the Challenges of the 1990s: Organising for Democracy in the Western Cape'.

UCT : CARNEGIE PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTION

The following is a list of exhibitions held in the UCT Carnegie Photographic Collection:

South Africa: The Cordoned Heart. This collection of approximately one thousand photographs constitutes the core of the library and is made up of work submitted by twenty photographers for the Carnegie Inquiry. One hundred and thirty five of these photographs were selected for the book and exhibition of the same title, edited by Omar Badsha with text by Francis Wilson. The exhibition (six copies) has been on tour in England, the United States, Germany and South Africa for the past four years.

Beyond the Barricades. A Pictorial Chronical of Popular Resistance to Apartheid in the Eighties. This collection of eighty-three photographs was edited by Omar Badsha, Gideon Mendel and Paul Weinberg from work submitted by nineteen photographers. The exhibition has been prepared in conjunction with Afrapix. Ten copies of the exhibition were made for international distribution and a book of the same title was published early in 1989.

The Staffrider Collection. The library has been given the 1984, 1985 and 1987 Staffrider exhibitions. These exhibitions, which comprise the entire Staffrider collection, constitutes an invaluable record of the work of young photographers in the 'eighties.

Crossroads. Guy Tillum and Dave Hartman's study of the destruction of Crossroads and the KIC squatter communities by right wing vigilantes.

Namaqualand : Our Land. This exhibition by Roger Grendon is a document of the 'coloured' farming communities of Namaqualand. Grendon records the destruction of the fragile social fabric of the area as the result of the state's forced removals of these farming communities.

Children on the Frontline. The work of sixteen photographers on the theme of children, poverty and repression was edited by Omar Badsha. The exhibition was prepared for use by the Free the Children Alliance to draw attention to the question of children in detention.

Atlantis : A Utopian Nightmare. Chris Ledochowski's study focuses attention on unemployment and poverty in the west coast township of Atlantis. The work was carried out in collaboration with Saldru for use by its food buying co-operative in Atlantis.



Paarl. This exhibition by Paul Grendon, Roger Meintjes and Chris Ledochowski was part of a People's History Project undertaken by the black community of Paarl. The exhibition was used by community organisations as part of the alternative programme to counter the official celebration marking the town's tri-centennial celebrations.

Imijondolo. A portfolio of over 100 photographs by Omar Badsha dealing with removals in the squatter community of Inanda in Natal.

Kosi Bay. Joe Alpheu's study of the unique fishing community of Kosi Bay which is under threat of removal.

Living in Yeoville. Gideon Mendel's award winning study on the Johannesburg suburb of Yeoville.

Domestic Workers. This exhibition edited by Paul Weinberg and Gisele Wolfsohn depicts the life of South African domestic workers and their efforts to form trade unions.

Jazz in the 'Sixties. This exhibition by Basil Breakey is one of the most comprehensive studies of South African jazz musicians in the 'sixties.

Kwa-Khi Khi. A brilliant essay by Roger Meintjes on a migrant worker hostel in the Cape Town African township of Gugulethu.

#### THE 1990 PROJECTS

The following is a brief description of projects being undertaken by the DPP in 1990.

#### MANENBERG PEOPLE'S HISTORY PROJECT

Manenberg is a so-called 'Coloured' working-class township in the Cape Peninsula, established in the late 'sixties to house families displaced in terms of the Group Areas Act. The township houses approximately 50 000 people in 4 000 dwellings ranging from high-rise council flats to three-room cottages. Manenberg like other 'Coloured' and African townships in the Cape Peninsula has a very high level of unemployment. The harsh realities of life in this apartheid ghetto, notwithstanding, the Manenberg community has a militant tradition of opposition to Apartheid.

The progressive youth, women's, religious and civic organisations have come together to establish a community centre which will act as a focus for a series of long-term social, educational and cultural projects in the area. The Centre will also provide much needed office and meeting space for community organisations. The building of the Centre is scheduled to be completed by December 1990 but in the interim the organising committee of the Centre have employed people to initiate Community Arts and People's History Projects. The Documentary Photography Project has been approached by the Manenberg Community Centre to assist in the compilation of a history of Manenberg and to run a series of photographic workshops for members of the history project. The history project is seen as part of a long term activity but the immediate goal of the photography group is to organise an exhibition and produce a book on Manenberg to coincide with the opening of the Manenberg Centre. Since the DPP involvement in the Manenberg community, we have been able to build up a photographic club and darkroom in the area.



### BONTEHEUWEL HISTORY PROJECT

Bonteheuwel is also a so-called 'coloured' township, with a similar social, economic and political profile to that of Manenberg. The Bonteheuwel community organisation has established a history group which has been given the task of compiling a popular history of the township and more specifically to collect and record the history of political resistance in the area since the 'eighties. The DPP has been asked to train and supervise one of the members of the history group, Mark Truebody. Like the Manenberg project a series of exhibitions and a booklet is going to be produced from the material collected in the course of the project. Since the beginning of 1990, the DPP has assisted in the establishment of a photographers' group in the area.

### BHALAZI VILLAGE - TRANSKEI

Alfred Gabula a leading poet in the labour movement who comes from the village of Bhalazi outside Flagstaff in the Transkei, and who is the author of an autobiography titled 'Cruel Beyond Belief', has initiated an oral history project on this community. Mr. Gabula has approached the DPP to participate in this project and to assist with a photographic documentation of life in his village.

The photographic component of the project will take between six to eight months to complete and will require at least four to five field trips lasting between one to three weeks. When completed, this project will be one of the few initiatives undertaken by a migrant worker to record life in a rural community.

### SLIDE LIBRARY

The DPP is examining the possibility of collecting and developing a slide library of the work of South African photographers. The slide library will form the basis of a series of slide tape presentations on South African photographers for use in schools and universities.

### PUBLICATION PROJECT

In 1989 the DPP initiated a programme to publish a number of photographic essays and monographs. The exhibition on South African musicians by Basil Breakey which the DPP assisted in organising, is to be published by David Philip in 1990.

The DPP is doing the picture research for the Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa's reports. The first of the reports titled 'Uprooting Poverty - the South African Challenge' was published in 1989 and the report on education will be published in July 1990.

Finally the DPP is compiling for publication a book on the Grey Street area of Durban with photographs by Omar Badsha and text by Mrs. Fatima Meer.

### SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME

The DPP and the Centre for Documentary Studies at Duke University have established a scholarship programme to enable two South African photographers to study in America. The scholarship awards have been named after two of South Africa's leading documentary photographers, Ernest Cole and Eli Weinberg, both of whom died in exile. The DPP has established a selection panel and the successful candidate will leave for America in January 1991.

DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT  
BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR 1991-1993

	<u>1991</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1993</u>
<b>1. <u>SALARIES:</u></b>			
Director/Co-ordinator	49 500	51 200	53 750
Full-time workshop co-ordinator	15 000	17 250	19 750
Total	<u>64 500</u>	<u>68 450</u>	<u>73 500</u>
<b>2. <u>ADMINISTRATION:</u></b>			
Photocopying	300	400	500
Stationery	600	800	900
Telephone	1 800	2 000	2 500
Postage	600	700	900
Total	<u>3 300</u>	<u>3 900</u>	<u>4 800</u>
<b>3. <u>CONFERENCE FEES</u></b>			
Travel	1 800	2 500	3 400
Registration	300	400	500
Total	<u>2 100</u>	<u>2 900</u>	<u>3 900</u>
<b>4. <u>PROJECTS</u></b>			
<u>Workshop Programme</u>			
Six workshops, materials R500 X 6	3 000	4 000	5 000
Transport R100 X 6	600	700	800
Total	<u>3 600</u>	<u>4 700</u>	<u>5 800</u>
<u>Trainee Programme</u>			
Living Allowance			
Transport 4 X 6 X 700	16 800	21 600	26 400
Materials 200 X 4 X 6	4 800	5 200	5 600
Total	<u>21 600</u>	<u>26 800</u>	<u>32 000</u>
<u>Slide Project on South African Photography</u>			
Postage	1 500		
Telephone	1 500		
Interview costs 20 X 100	2 000		
Cost of making original prints 100 X 20 X 10	20 000		
Cost of slides 100 X 20 X 5	10 000		
Travel costs	5 000		
Total	<u>40 000</u>		
	<u>135 100</u>	<u>106 750</u>	<u>120 000</u>



International  
Center of Photography

1130 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10128  
212-860-1778  
FAX 212-360-6490



November 7, 1990

Mr. Francis Wilson  
SALDRU  
School of Economics  
University of Cape Town  
Rondebosch 7700  
Cape Town  
South Africa

21-21-698531

Dear Mr. Sparks:

Alex Harris asked that we forward the enclosed copy of the brochure and text materials for our exhibition SOUTH AFRICA: THE CORDONED HEART.

We are planning to extend the exhibition's tour for another two years but are concerned that portions of the text need to be updated. Alex will contact you in the coming weeks to seek your guidance.

The exhibition has been circulating in the United States with great success since its New York showing in 1986 and we are pleased that the Carnegie Corporation of New York has agreed to support its continuation.

Sincerely,

Willis Hartshorn  
Deputy Director for Programs

cc: Avery Russell  
Alex Harris



International  
Center of Photography

1130 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10128  
212-860-1778  
FAX 212-360-6490



November 8, 1990

Mr. Omar Badsha  
SALDRU  
School of Economics  
Robert Leslie Building  
University of Cape Town  
Private Bag, Rondebosch 7700  
South Africa

Dear Omar,

Alex Harris asked that we forward the enclosed copy of the brochure and text materials for our exhibition SOUTH AFRICA: THE CORDONED HEART.

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Sincerely,

Willis Hartshorn  
Deputy Director for Programs

cc: Avery Russell  
Alex Harris

*Massive*  
*Kia Licha - urbanization*  
*PW - ORANGE FARM -*  
*2 or 3 photos*  
*MASSIVE Marches -*  
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*Sharan*

*Seva? - 43 3916 -*  
*27-31-*

*OMAR update*  
*ADD Few panels*  
*ADD Different*  
*Additional information in panels*  
*OMAR will check with TATU*