DIGITAL TOURIST

Navigating the landscape of memory and self

Karl van Heerden

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Karl van Heerden
UNISA Art Gallery
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INTRODUCTION

I have always been interested in what makes digital artwork and digital image editing so different from their analogue counterparts. Dissatisfied with basic distinctions of technique, technology, or material, through this project this work represents the culmination of three years of research in understanding the relationship between digital and analogue media. I have established that there is a dialogue of remediation between analogue and digital where newer forms of media fracture and multiply older forms while simultaneously being framed by them

A documentary video for *Digital Tourist* has been published on YouTube and is available through this link (van Heerden 2019).

I have also identified the characteristics of new media that contribute to the creation of art, namely, user interactivity, the simulation and remixing of different forms of media, and the overlapping of private and public spaces. In my practical work, titled *Digital Tourist*, I explore how these characteristics interrogate themes such as the personal landscape of the self, memory, past, and nostalgia.

Digital Tourist is an exhibition facilitated by means of an augmented reality (AR) mobile application[*] that triggers digital artworks from a selection of books I own. The application translates different objects, spaces, and people into ephemeral geometry attached to the real-world anchors of book covers or pages. The exhibition also features several prints of the different 'point clouds'[†]

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[*] The application, also titled Digital Tourist, is self-developed through the Unity game engine and runs on the Android operating system.

[†] Point clouds represent three-dimensional geometry by assigning colour values to dots that define an object's surface.

that are present as virtual objects in the AR application. My work engages in a conversation of remediation between physical book, digital work, and print.

As Bolter and Grusin (2000:50) note, remediation is an asynchronous dialogue wherein older and newer forms of media engage with each other to create new forms of meaning. By playing with the remediation of virtual and physical, I reflect on a conflicting need for obscurity and transparency of space and place and invite the viewer into a deeply personal and intimate viewing of these objects, people, and spaces.

This catalogue is a documentation of the final works in the exhibition as well as the process used in their creation. From initial photographs, reconstructed geometry, to the final 'point clouds', this catalogue reflects on my practice and creative method. The theoretical framework I have deployed includes the concepts of remediation, deep remixability, media displacement, and autotopography to explore the themes of identity formation, memory, and nostalgia. I discuss these concepts in relation to the different works in the exhibition further below. *Digital Tourist* investigates these themes by way of the practice of photogrammetry as a means to preserve the private material conditions of an individual and display them in a public space.

In using the books as anchors, the exhibition links the digital component of the different works to a specific place and time. Thus, the relationship between the objects and their environment become structural elements that guide the interaction between user and artwork. This addition of a spatial component introduces notions of the autotopographical, or, the act of writing about oneself through the use of objects and space (Bal 2002:180). González (1995:134) affirms that examining the objects that affect the identity of those who possess them allows for new meanings to be explored in art through self-exploration.

The books in *Digital Tourist* enact this self-exploration and serve as a recurring element that links the works together. The meaning and symbolic connections of the elements in the work are diverse, pluralistic, and inward-facing. The interplay between the physical covers of the books and the digital content overlaid invite the 'outsider' viewer into the private world of the artist. My work also explores the social paradigm of convergence culture, wherein "everyone is a participant" (Jenkins 2006:132) in the lives of other people.

Convergence culture describes the adoption of new forms of media by individual people to remix and rework existing art into novel forms of content (Jenkins 2006:132). *Digital Tourist* echoes Jenkins's (2006) argument by establishing a relationship between artwork and viewer. The use of mobile devices in the hands of individual viewers allows them to remix and participate in the creation of their own interpretation of the works in the exhibition.

3.   Karl van Heerden, 2019, *My Kitchen Reminds me of Vermeer* (detail).
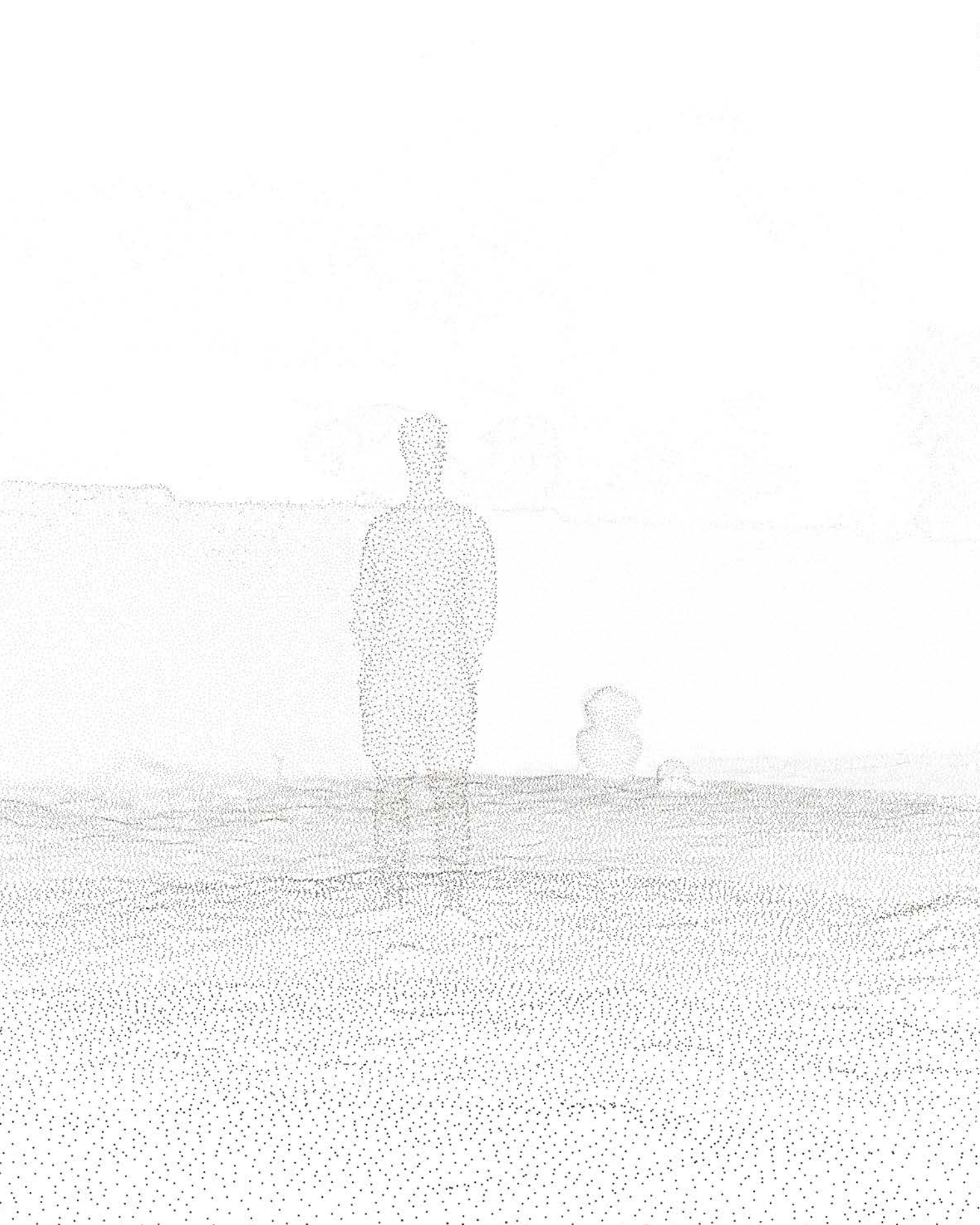
THE WORK OF JOHN CRAIG FREEMAN AND ODDVIZ

The case studies chosen for my research are the collected works of John Craig Freeman and the Turkish new media collective Oddviz. Both artists were chosen due to the different ways in which they utilise augmented reality and photogrammetry in their art. Figure 1, *Virtual US/Mexico Border* (2018) by Freeman, uses augmented reality and photogrammetry to collapse geographic distances. Figure 2, *Fiat 124 - Murat 124 - Seat 124 - VAZ 2101* (2018) by Oddviz, uses photogrammetry as a means to preserve the shared cultural heritage of street art in Turkey (Oddviz, in Sierzputowski 2018).

Figure 1, which was originally exhibited in Stavanger, documents the experiences of South American immigrants at the American border. Freeman's work requires a level of physicality and interactivity from the viewer in a public space. As Freeman and Gregory Ulmer (2018:97) themselves note, new media has the capacity to augment, and in some cases materialise through embodiment, the viewer's "capacity to be affected by place and event.". Freeman underscores the plight of South American immigrants in *Virtual US/Mexico Border* for the viewer by asking them to make the same journey. Knight and Senie (2016:337) outline that Freeman's work in AR obscures the division between virtual and physical spaces, allowing the user to move beyond the limits of "time, geography, or politics". *Digital Tourist* embraces this aspect of 'transcendental embodiment' through the displacement of the personal spaces of the artist into the public environment of the gallery.
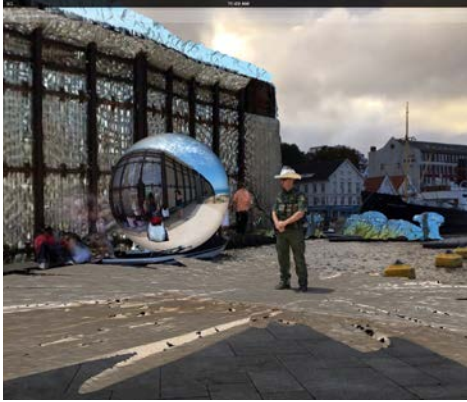
To the Oddviz collective (İnci, in Raab 2017), the streets of different cities in Turkey posses ephemeral and transient street culture that often disappear without any recording or attempt at preservation. Oddviz understands the importance of these mundane and everyday markings that show traces of human interaction with the physical world around them. Photogrammetry, a process commonly used in topographical surveys (Kraus 2007:2) and archaeology (Addison 2000:23), is used to document but also explore the shared cultural identity of the members of Oddviz.

Digital Tourist also deploys the technique of documentation via photogrammetry. In the sections below I discuss each of the works that make up the *Digital Tourist* exhibition. The works are described from an anecdotal perspective to contextualise the personal meanings embedded within the contents of each piece. How these meanings are remediated through the dialog between the virtual and physical components is also explored within the context of my research.

4.   Left. John Craig Freeman, 2017, *Virtual US/Mexico Border* (screenshot).
5.   Right. Oddviz, 2018, *Fiat 124 - Murat 124 - Seat 124 - VAZ 2101* (screenshot).

MY FRIEND,
MY MODEL, MY MUSE

A young man's face and torso float in a small grey box displayed on the screen of a tablet device. The 'room' he occupies replaces the figures who inhabit the cover of the book *On Photography* (1977) by acclaimed critic Susan Sontag . The man, Stephan Potgieter, appears solid from a distance, but as the viewer brings the tablet closer the figure begins to dissolve into thousands of tiny dots of colour, reminiscent of both a painterly expression of colour and a data archive. Stephan's pose and expression are reminiscent of a 'headshot', a photograph often taken of models to document their appearance for prospective clients. The figure can be viewed from multiple angles, inviting the viewer to compose the scene as they choose.

Stephan Potgieter and I have been friends for about seven years; we met in a coffee shop to discuss an upcoming photoshoot. From that initial conversation, a long-lasting and deeply fruitful friendship has grown. Stephan would always make himself available for portraits and my portfolio disproportionately features the many photoshoots we have done together. More so, Stephan has always unconditionally supported me throughout my career, my personal life, and my artistic growth, validating his presence in this exhibition as a landscape of myself.

Photographs have proven resilient and adaptable to the changes underwent with the development of digital cameras. Lev Manovich (2006:28) argues that this resilience is so because although the internal construction of a photograph has changed, it's "skin", or representational strategy has not. *My Friend, My Model, My Muse* removes this 'skin', not just by replacing the traditional photograph on the cover of the book, but also by confronting assumptions of what constitutes a photograph.
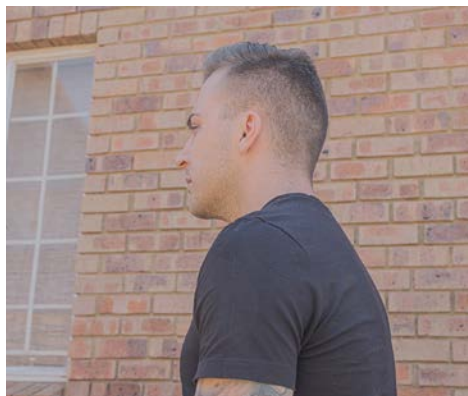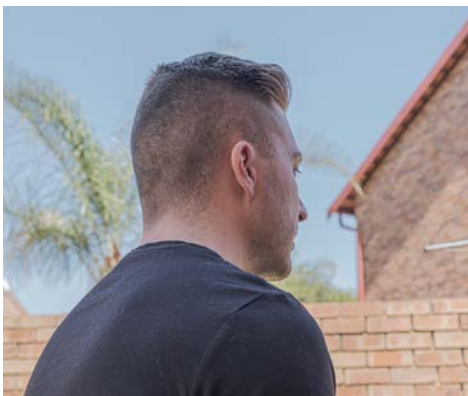
The subject was documented with a digital mirrorless interchangeable-lense camera by taking roughly one hundred photographs and the resulting digital files were processed using typical photo-editing software (*Adobe Camera RAW*). These files were later recombined into a digital interpretation of the subject by photogrammetric software. As the viewer assumes this is what Stephan Potgieter looks like, so did the computer software used in the reconstruction process extrapolate what a three-dimensional representation of the subject should be from the constituent photographs. The discursive quality of the relationship between software, the artist, and the viewer underlines the constructive nature, the "code", (Manovich 2006:28) of photography.

My Friend, My Model, My Muse mixes the languages of portrait painting, still life photography, and new media in a conversation around a particular individual. Lev Manovich (2013:117) describes deep remixability in terms of the "metamedium" of computer technology. Digital art, Manovich (2013:117) argues, is based on a simulation of a particular medium's "artistic language". Because a computer can simulate all media, it does so freely. *My Friend, My Model, My Muse* recognises the subject in portraiture as one of many themes in different forms of art. In new media the portrait can become an expression of software information rather than appearance. All the works in *Digital Tourist* choose to express this information through the use of the point cloud - an assemblage of data points that delineate the forms of objects, spaces, and people.
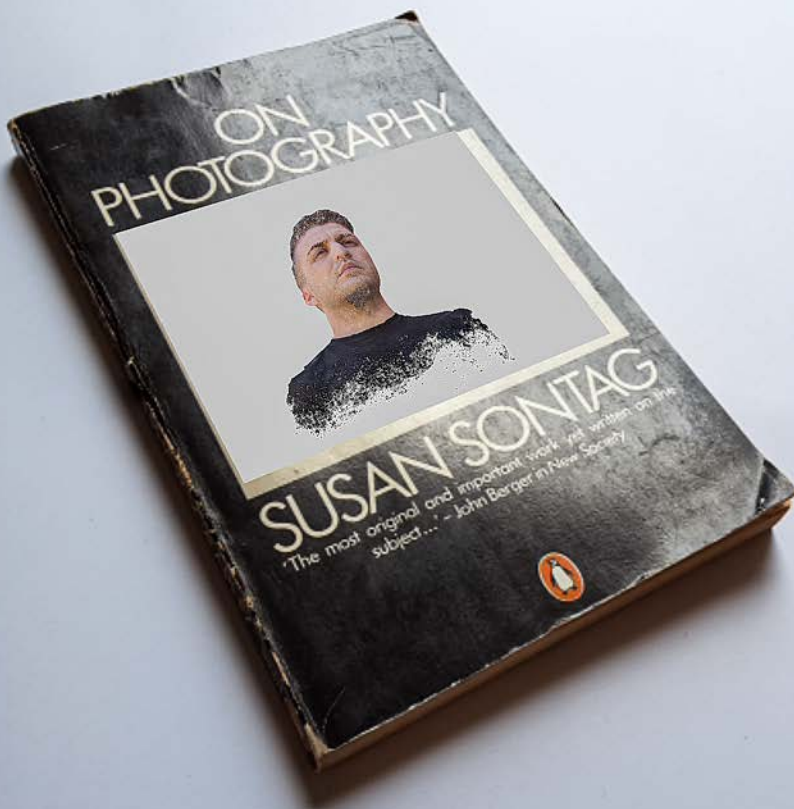
6.   Karl van Heerden, 2019, *My Friend, My Model, My Muse* (detail).

7. Karl van Heerden, 2019, *My Friend, My Model, My Muse* (input images).

8.   Karl van Heerden, 2019, *My Friend, My Model, My Muse* (reconstructed geometry).

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10. Karl van Heerden, 2019, *My Friend, My Model, My Muse* (image target and AR).

PHOTOGRAPHY

SUSAN SONTAG

MY KITCHEN REMINDS ME OF VERMEER

The artist is depicted as standing in the middle of a small kitchen. His stance is relaxed and contemplative as he gazes out of the window. Around him is the usual collection of things to expect in such a domestic scene: a refrigerator, a washing machine, and recently-washed dishes. The figure of the artist appears more solid than the surrounding suburban landscape that manifest as minute points against the dark grey of the virtual room. Early-morning light spills into the kitchen and pools on the floor, although the figure alone seems to be more evenly lit. It is as if the figure should be part of the space but does not quite belong.

The work of Jan Vermeer holds a particular fascination for me. The way the Dutch master was able to render the way in which light entered a room held a captivating beauty. Light, not the camera, is the reason I studied photography. I have always been entranced by different qualities and behaviours of the medium. The kitchen is my favourite room in the house, but not for what it contains. In my kitchen, I see the same light painters and portrait photographers have used for generations; a beautiful, soft, cascading light that is so often evoked in the work of Vermeer. However, my work reflects on the constructed nature of digital media and highlights the artificiality of digital image editing. *My Kitchen* remediates the role of light in the painting of Dutch masters, like Vermeer, by incorporating such a 'natural' element into the virtuality of digital media and cyberspace to establish an internal dialogue between the analog of painting and the digital of photogrammetry.

Karl Kraus (2007:2) mentions briefly in his book on photogrammetry that the technique "provides information about both the natural landscape and the cultural landscape". Although Kraus does not reflect more on the implications of his statement, it was a significant insight for me. Photogrammetry captures not just the form or shape of objects in the way that other surveying methods do but also captures the way light interacts with these objects. Bolter and Grusin (2000:67) note that a medium cannot be separated from the socio-economic context in which it appears. As Vermeer used painting to capture idyllic scenes of seventeenth century life for his wealthy clients, I use photogrammetry to document the everyday conditions of my life – a contemporary, fragmented, and stressful life.

A frequent concern when documenting an object using photogrammetry is the avoidance of direct sunlight or other similar light sources that may introduce unwanted shadows. The presence of shadows in a work embeds traces of the object's environments into its reconstruction and prevents accurate use of pre-rendered or real-time lighting effects later. *My Kitchen Reminds me of Vermeer* rejects this methodological concern and asserts that the object/environment's lighting is equally important in documenting the subject's 'character'. Vermeer used light to contextualise the quiet scene of domesticity in the painting *The Kitchen-maid* (1658-1660); the very painting used by the AR application to trigger my own work. Vermeer's use of light to evoke mood and atmosphere is remediated in My Kitchen towards a similar intention, but with a built-in tensional relationship by calling attention to the artificiality of the work's construction.
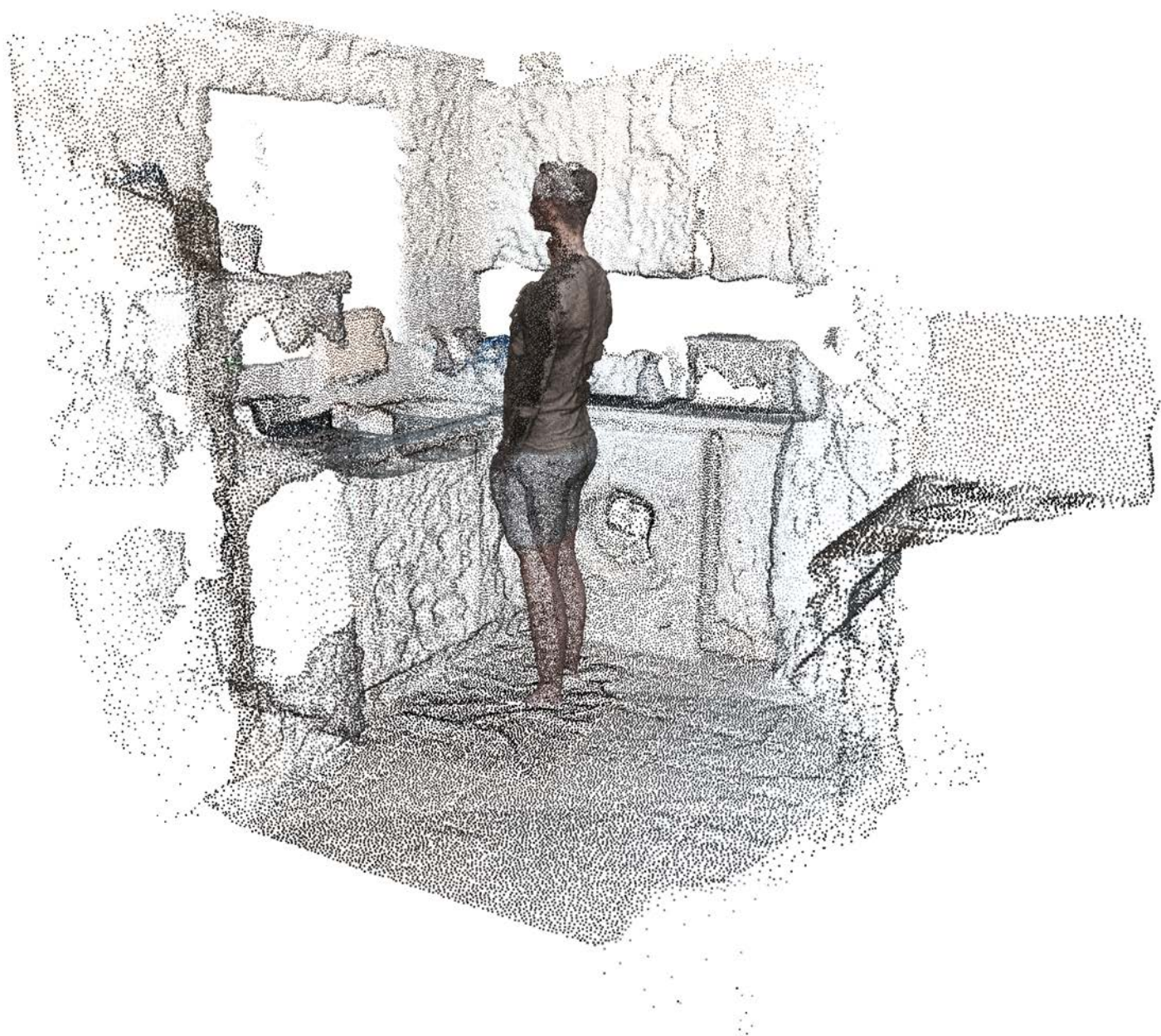
This kitchen appears in two places in the exhibition: the first, as the titular subject in this work and also as a standalone print. Bolter and Grusin (2000:31-35) describe hypermediated spaces as a collage that invites the viewer to explore a digital space. Multiplying a space consequently proliferates possible meanings obtainable brought to the work by the viewer. It is memory that opens up this plurality and transient quality in the meaning of the space (González 1995:147). The viewer is forced to construct what understanding of the space they can from the different print and digital work which immediates through light and linear perspective (Bolter & Grusin 2000:11).

11.   Karl van Heerden, 2019, *My Kitchen Reminds me of Vermeer* (detail).

12.   Karl van Heerden, 2019, *My Kitchen Reminds me of Vermeer* (input images).

13. Karl van Heerden, 2019, *My Kitchen Reminds me of Vermeer* (reconstructed geometry).

The Kitchen-Maid. *c. 1658- 1660.*
... canvas, 45.5 × 41 cm.
...museum, Amsterdam

*... Blankert has noted that when Vermeer paints a living subject he generally
... clear of representing movement, most of the time giving his figures an
... ation that obliges them to remain motionless. Thus, even when he depicts a
... quietly reading a letter, the inclination of the face towards the letter being
... saves him from having to capture the only possible movement of the subject:
... of the eyes. He does the same thing here with this maidservant, absorbed in
... olling the execution of her task. The picture is a triumph of concentration
... simplicity. Vermeer represents with equally candid colours the corner of the
... room in which we see the Girl Reading a Letter at an Open Window. He is
... working from close to his model, a unique example of a model of humble
... in the painting of the time. Traditionally, servants were portrayed standing
... le their master or mistress, who by virtue of their rank would dominate the
... e of the picture space.*

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15. Karl van Heerden, 2019, *My Kitchen Reminds me of Vermeer* (image target and AR).

THINGS FROM MY CHILDHOOD I DIDN'T KNOW I STILL HAD

A good way to gain insight into a person's character is to look at the mementos from their past they have kept with them. Two teddy bears, a small pile of smoothed sandstone, a wooden puzzle egg, and several books hover above the words "the disappearance of objects". The objects are in varying states of solidity. The wooden puzzle is solid-looking and dominant while the books seem to almost fade out completely. The books vary in genre, from epic fantasy, autobiographical works, an English-Japanese dictionary, to a book devoted to facts about chocolate. The teddy bears look old, crumpling in on themselves as the stuffing inside has slowly condensed over the years. These objects represent a selection of formative memories and experiences of the earlier years of my life.

What is notable about this process is that in making these works I relived the experiences connected with the objects for the first time in years. The old yellow teddy bear was purchased by my parents on the day of my birth and has been in my possession since, the books are gifts from my mother, and the wooden puzzle egg is from friends long gone. Books, especially, hold a lot of significance for me. Robert Jordan's *Wheel of Time* series immersed me in a world far removed from the troubled years of my childhood - a coping mechanism that I know some people may be familiar with. What strikes me is how many of these objects I still have in my possession, the collected detritus of a past I had thought safely tucked away into a corner of my mind.

Kirk and Sellen (2010:5) noted during their study on how digital technology can help preserve the past that objects contain memories of people known to us, forming a deeply personal landscape of meaning embedded in the material condition of our lives. Digital technology has the potential to preserve these objects that would otherwise "become damaged, get lost or simply become too much of a burden to keep" (Kirk & Sellen 2010:4). In preserving these objects that "personal landscape" is also preserved and the material foundation of my early life is thus presented in *Things from My Childhood I didn't know I had*. The embedded materiality of the artist's identity (González 1995:147) is triggered by an external force, namely, specific objects (González 1995:136), that act as a form of mediation of the memories of our past - both real and articulated (Kirk & Sellen 2010:1).

The yellow teddy bear is also present in the exhibition as a large-format print. The work plays with scale in an intermedial dialogue between the digital and physical representations of the subject. The bear appears small in *Things from my Childhood*, lending it an intimate and private quality, suggesting the tactile comfort of a cuddle toy. However, the bear in the print is large, almost monolithic, made strange as a result of the 'point cloud' image rendering from the AR application.

The print exposes the art-making process on a large scale while simultaneously preventing close examination because of the abstraction of the subject into tiny dots. This invariably makes the work strange through an accurate measurement of real data. It is this distance-through-proximity that evokes Benjamin's (2010) aura in art and lends spatiality to virtual work, exposing the inter-tensional contradiction of striving towards immediacy through a plurality of mediation. The bear print is accompanied by a square grid of sixty-four photographs that were used in the reconstruction of the bear. These three elements, component images, digital artwork, and print together remediate each other within the gallery space by playing with the physical/virtual duality of the work; to wit, the prints are simultaneously the basis and the result of the digital work.

16.   Karl van Heerden, 2019, *Things from my Childhood I didn't know I had* (detail).
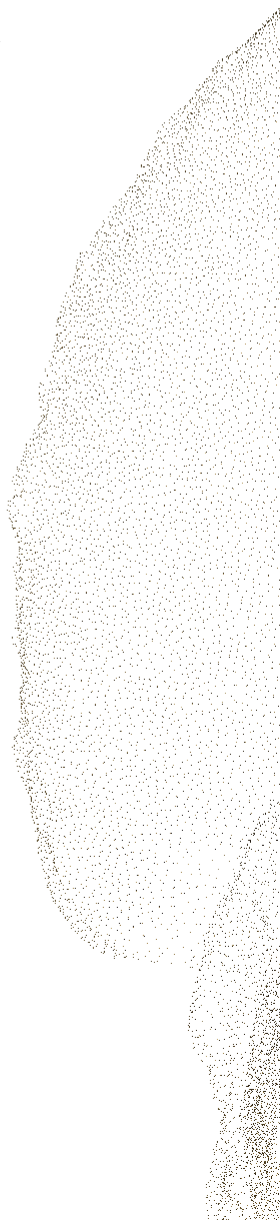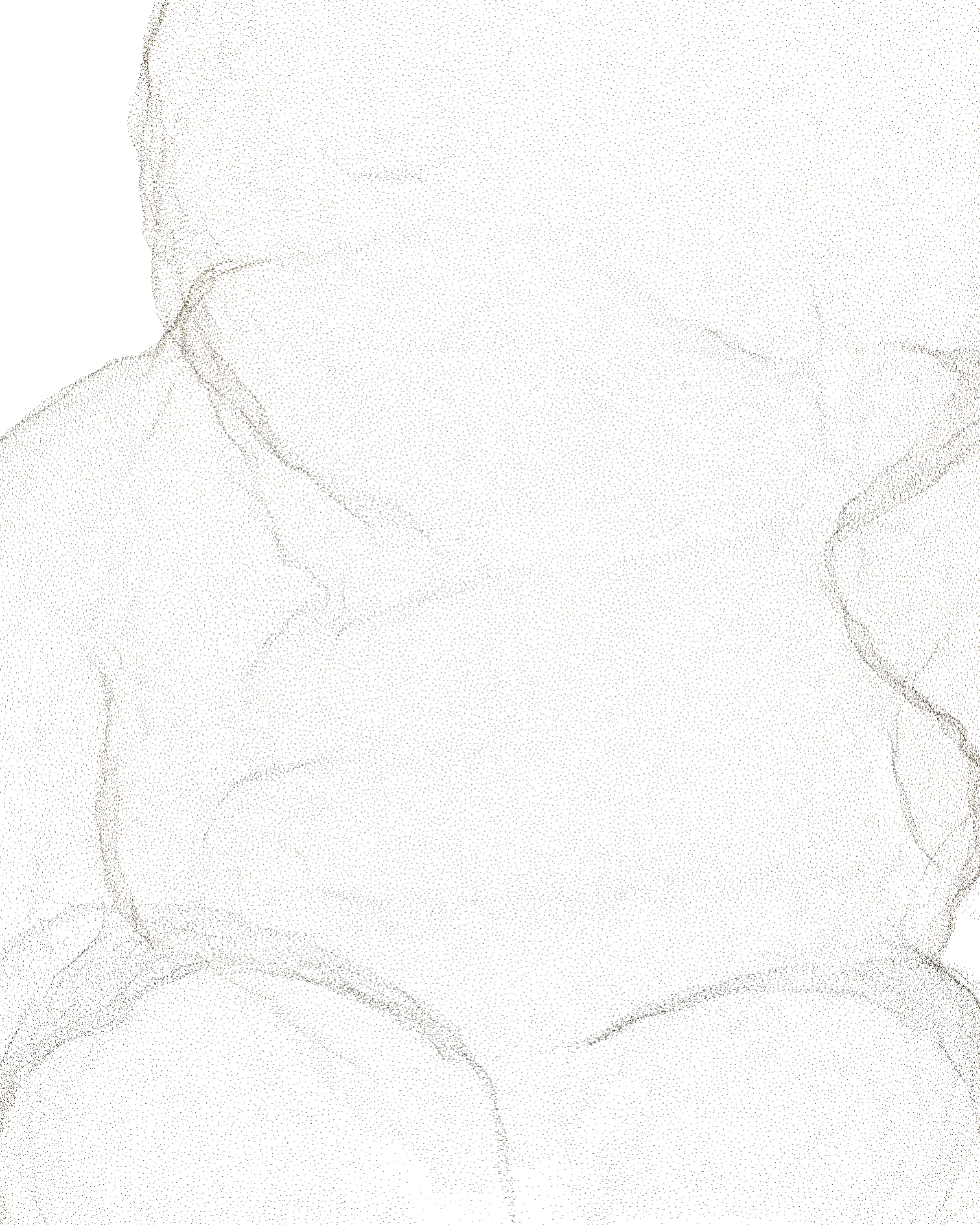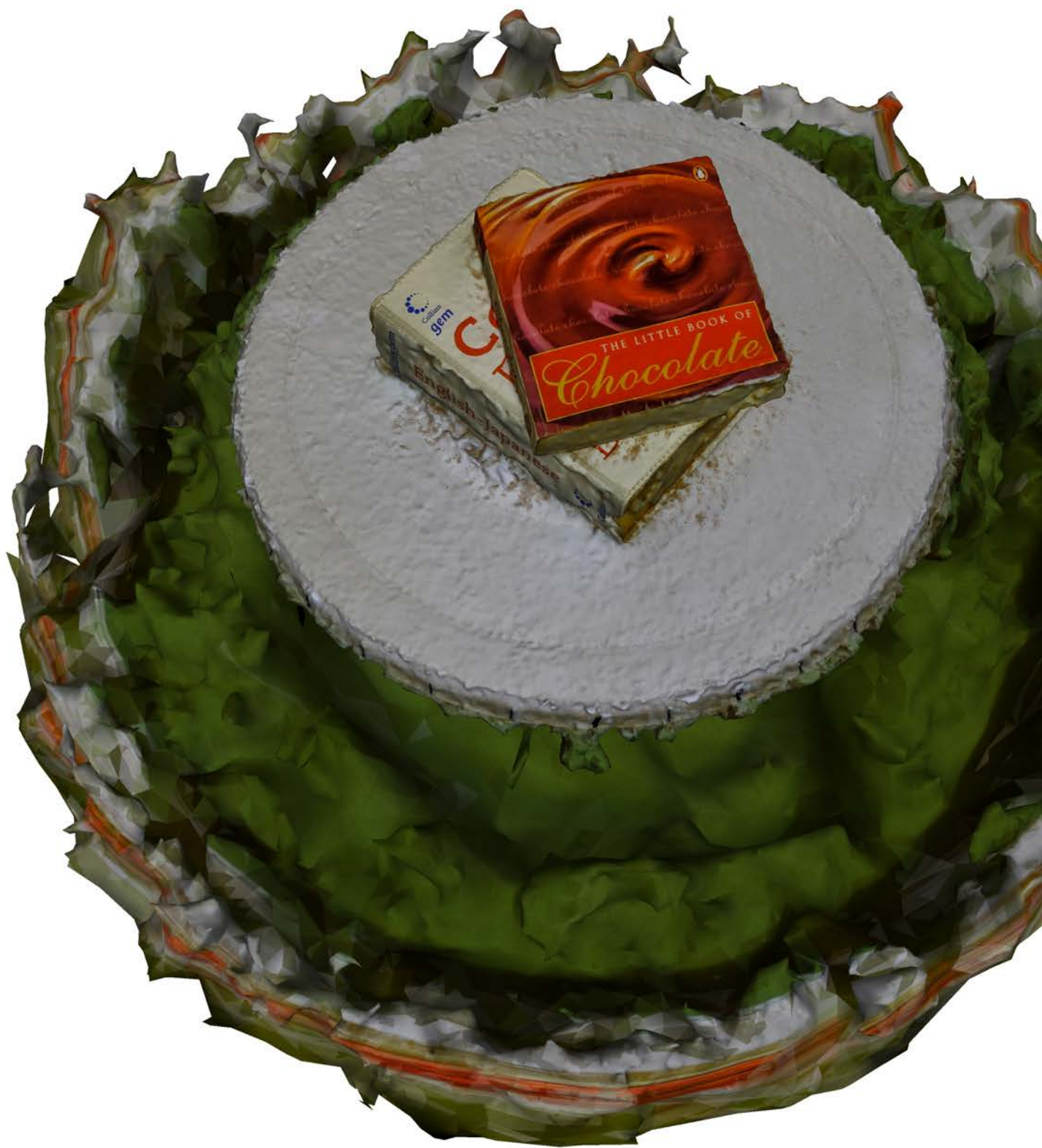
17. Karl van Heerden, 2019, *Things from my Childhood I didn't know I had* (input images).

18. Karl van Heerden, 2019, *Things from my Childhood I didn't know I had* (input images).
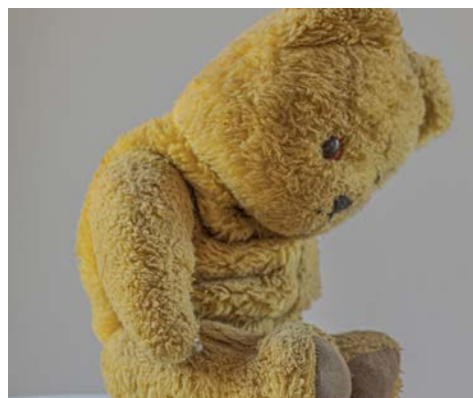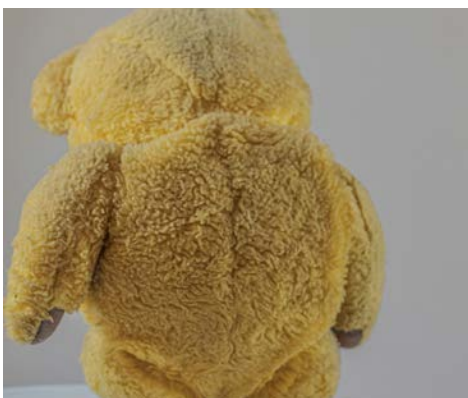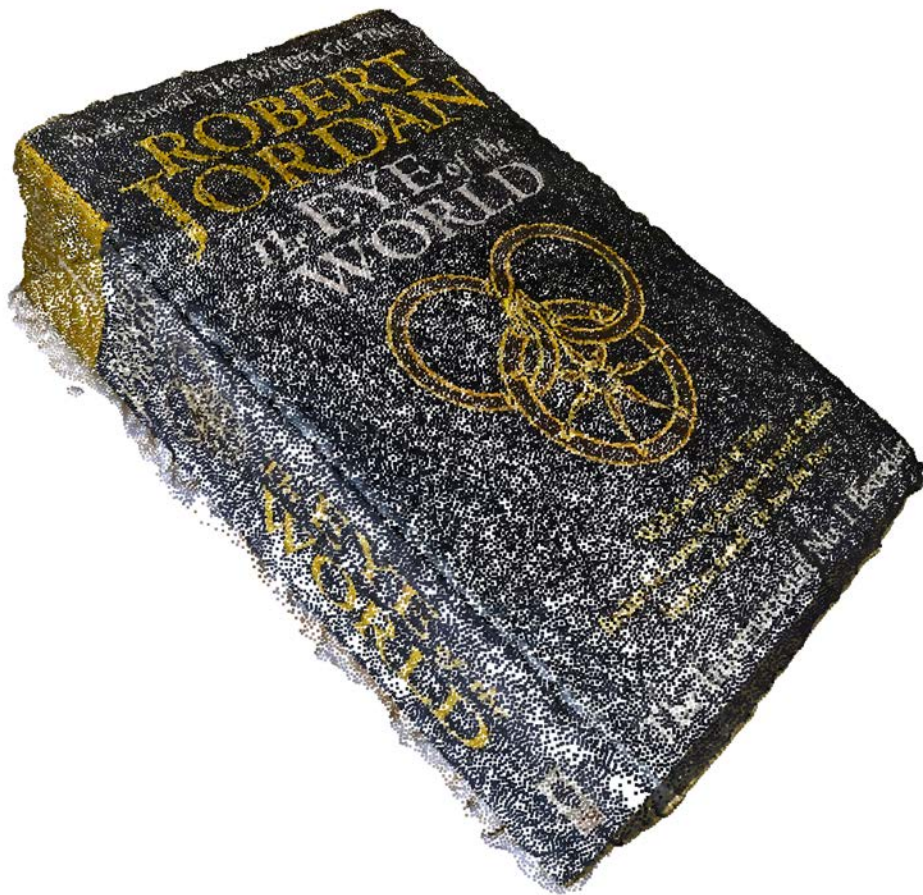
19. Karl van Heerden, 2019, ***Things from my Childhood I didn't know I had*** (input images).
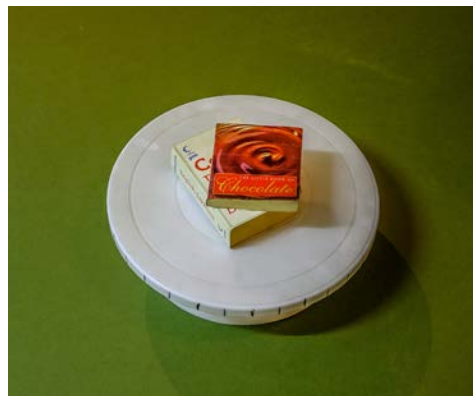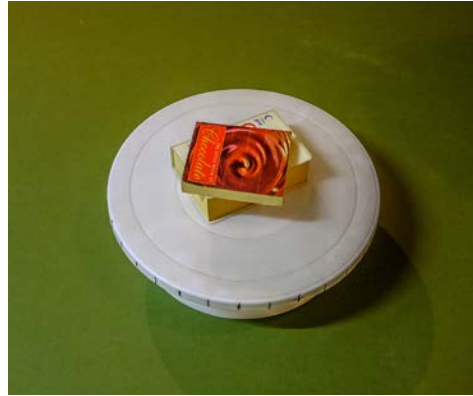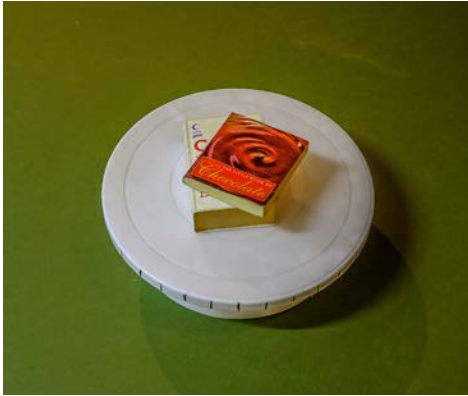
THE LITTLE BOOK OF
Chocolate

20. Karl van Heerden, 2019, *Things from my Childhood I didn't know I had* (reconstructed geometry). *42*

21.   Karl van Heerden, 2019, ***Things from my Childhood I didn't know I had*** (detail).

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22. Karl van Heerden, 2019, *Things from my Childhood I didn't know I had* (detail).

23.   Karl van Heerden, 2019, ***Things from my Childhood I didn't know I had*** (image target and AR).

The Disappearance of Objects

NEW YORK ART AND THE RISE OF THE POSTMODERN CITY

PHOTOGRAPHER, GIPSY, SAGE, MOTHER

A woman in her late fifties is posed for a portrait. As if the software used in the reconstruction of the subject intuitively understood the importance of the face, hers is rendered in minute detail, with wrinkles apparent around the corners of her eyes and mouth. The voluminous hair she wears is presented as a mere suggestion, with only a few points outlining its form. Her clothing is a vibrant blue patterned with a leaf motif. The light grey room in which she resides breaks through her form to lend the figure a ghostly quality, a reminder of the fleeting time we have with our parents. .

The book which my mother has come to occupy is titled *Wisdom* (2008), a collection of portraits and advice from an older generation. The manner in which she is posed, framed, and lit is similar to the other individuals photographed within the book and the space which she occupies fills the entirety of the cover. This integration, layering, and juxtaposition creates an intermedial link to the collected wisdom of all the individuals within Zuckerman's *Wisdom*. It takes a special kind of woman to raise four boys by herself. Popular culture is peppered with tropes of the 'strong single mother', saint, breadwinner, disciplinarian, and caretaker. What I find discordant with the cultural myth of the Single Mother archetype and my own mother is her childlike humour, wit, and love-affair with whimsey. My mother is no saint, but she is a sage. My mother is no breadwinner, but a self-styled gypsy woman. She studied photography before me and inspired me to become one without ever claiming my accomplishments as the product of her own.

Barthes' (1982) celebrated book *Camera Lucida* illustrates the power a photograph has to absorb and affect memory. In the text, Barthes (1982:67-70) reflects on the author's relationship with his own mother through a photograph. Barthes (1982:69) "rediscovers" his mother through the image he refers to as the *Winter Garden Photograph* (Barthes 1982:70) and notes a certain "innocence" she exhibited in life. *Photographer, Gypsy, Sage, Mother* reflects on the role of my mother as the Mother archetype in much the same way Barthes' image of his own did. My work also interrogates the immediacy of the photographic image in 'inserting' itself between the viewer and some underlying material truth*.

Bolter and Grusin (2000:110) echo Barthes' (1982:80) argument about the immediate nature of photography. The photograph creates a link between the subject and the viewer through the light rays that emanate "from a real body which was there… which ultimately touch me" (Barthes 1982:80). New media allows for strategies to disrupt this light-link, if only temporarily. Painterly abstraction in *Photographer, Gypsy, Sage, Mother*, the medial displacement of a virtual object into the physical world, and the juxtaposition of a fragmented subject against the contiguous photographs in the book *Wisdom*, serve to establish a dialogue of remediation that begins to interrogate this link.

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* It is worth noting that Barthes (1982:76) also acknowledges this point.

By building anti-environments, digital works can be 'simulations' of another place that allow the viewer to see in from the outside (Pais 2012:46). This temporary inversion of perspective creates the critical distance that is needed to question the link a photograph establishes between viewer and subject. *Photographer, Gypsy, Sage, Mother* remediates the medial forms of the portrait photograph: lighting, composition, and framing. However, the work uses the strategies of new media: abstraction-through-data, virtuality, and interactivity to establish a critical distance from which photographic immediacy can be explored.

24. Karl van Heerden, 2019, **Photographer, Gipsy, Sage, Mother** (detail).

25. Karl van Heerden, 2019, ***Photographer, Gipsy, Sage, Mother*** (input images).

26. Karl van Heerden, 2019, ***Photographer, Gipsy, Sage, Mother*** (reconstructed geometry).

27. Karl van Heerden, 2019, *Photographer, Gipsy, Sage, Mother* (detail). *56*

28. Karl van Heerden, 2019, ***Photographer, Gipsy, Sage, Mother*** (image target and AR).
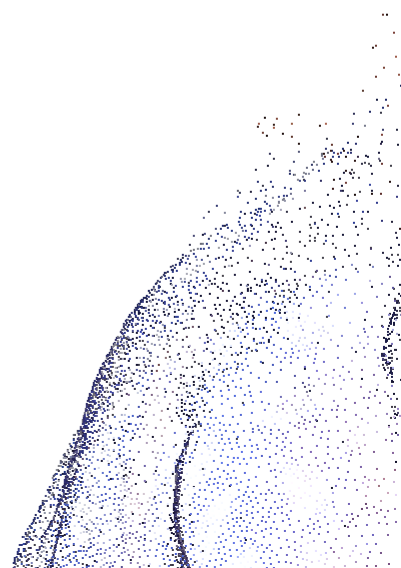
Wisdom

Andrew Zuckerman

I GO TO PLACES
IN THESE BOOKS

A number of bookshelves are arranged around an old upright piano. The shelves are lined with books on art, photography, cooking, fantasy, science fiction, and cats. They are placed at odd angles that defy any attempt at consistency in perspective or geography. The shelves are constructed from old planks and wine crates; the piano is against a wall adorned with posters. The book is *Raconteur Road* (2000) by Obie Oberholzer, a photo book of the photographer's travels across South Africa. The image that dominated the cover of the book has been removed and replaced with the contents of my own work, *I go to Places in These Books*. The raconteur in *Raconteur Road* refers to someone who tells stories in an amusing way, alluding to the visual humour inside. I aim to tell own story through the work in *Digital Tourist*. By incorporating a spatial dimension through *Topos*, *I go to Places in These Books* tells its own story through the different spaces it depicts. My books deserved their own piece, even at the risk of overstating to the viewer how central they are to my life. My bookshelves, and all the places they contain, serve as a faceted window into my personality.

The *Digital Tourist* exhibition incorporates the word "tourist" as a modern adaptation of the ancient Greek notion of *Theoria*, of travelling to distant lands to seek knowledge. Ulmer and Freeman (2018:99) compare new media to the story of these ancient Greek philosophers. With augmented reality, as well as other forms of new media, the geographic distances that separate different spaces are collapsed. The knowledge embedded within these places become subsequently combined.

Places as vastly different as the inside of my living room and the gallery space become interwoven via new media (Knight & Senie 2016:337). The 'places' referred to in the title of this work are not real, they are imagined and fantastical, but are oriented within the physical and the knowledge they contain is made present through augmented reality (Knight & Senie 2016:337). However, as Ulmer and Freeman (2018:99) also note, from this act of digital tourism a synthesis of knowledge emerges. In the case of *I go to Places in These Books*, both I and the viewer are the tourists. The work collides two epistemic domains into a symbolic landscape of the private and the public, and from the resulting dialectic new understanding of the artist emerges.

The application that drives the various works has little by way of user interface. There are no 'buttons' with which to interact, no user-driven input can alter the work inside the application. These elements of digital technology are not required and thus have been removed. Bolter and Grusin (2000) famously outlined two aspects of new media: hypermediacy and immediacy. These two aspects are not separate but are interconnected expressions of the same underlying digital language. The hypermediacy, discussed in previous sections, and the immediacy of digital technology creates a tension in the viewer. In the collected works of *Digital Tourist*, the interface has been minimised to move the works towards a more immediate state. This immediacy invites the viewer into a virtual world of the artist's own making, one whose component parts speak to the collected interests of a single individual.

29. Karl van Heerden, 2019, *I go to Places in These Books* (detail).

30. Karl van Heerden, 2019, *I go to Places in These Books* (input images).

31.   Karl van Heerden, 2019, *I go to Places in These Books* (image target and AR).
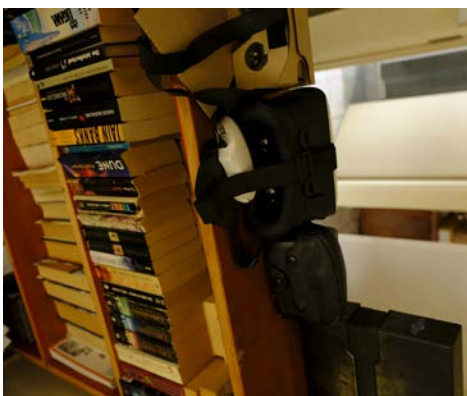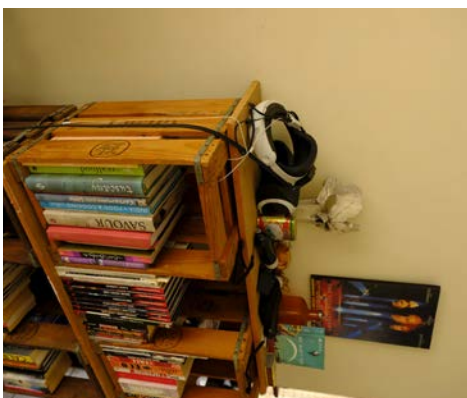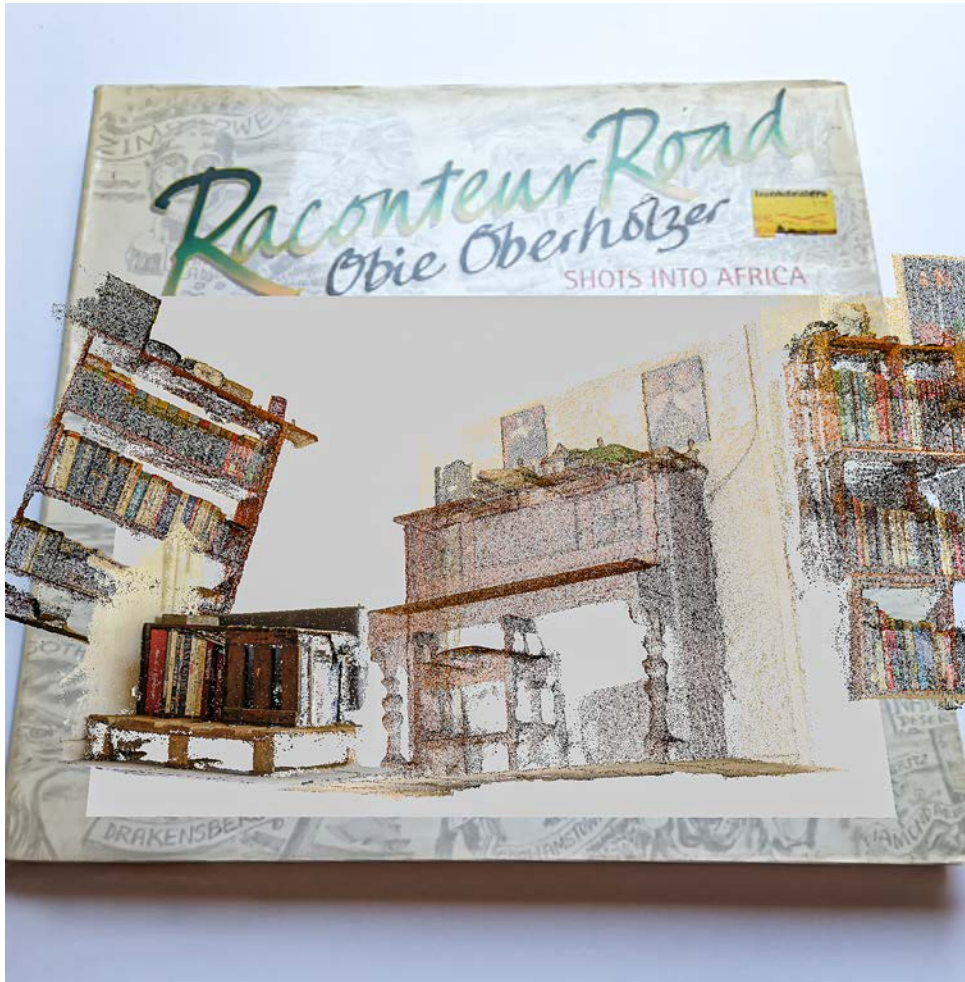
RaconteurRoad

## Obie Oberholzer

SHOTS INTO AFRICA
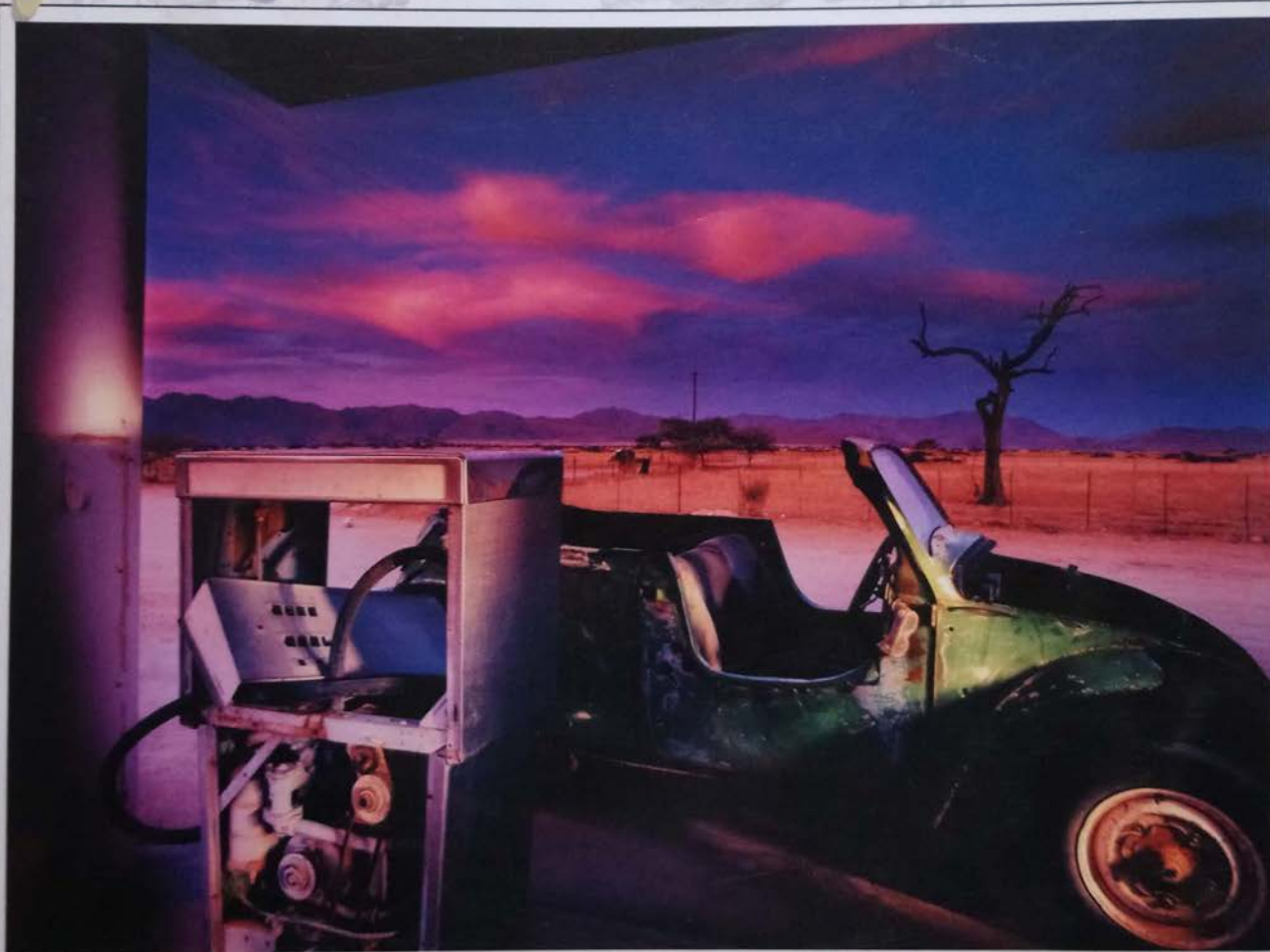
32. Karl van Heerden, 2019, *I go to Places in These Books* (reconstructed geometry).

33. Karl van Heerden, 2019, ***I go to Places in These Books*** (input images).

34. Karl van Heerden, 2019, *I go to Places in These Books* (reconstructed geometry).

35. Karl van Heerden, 2019, *I go to Places in These Books* (input images).

36. Karl van Heerden, 2019, *I go to Places in These Books* (reconstructed geometry).
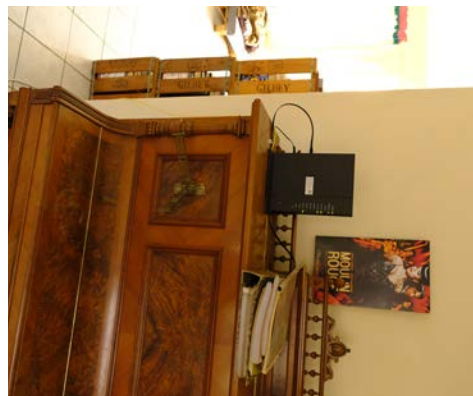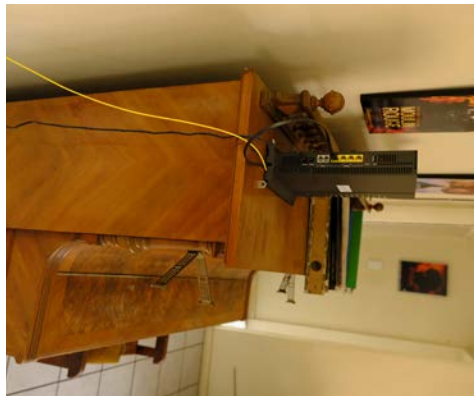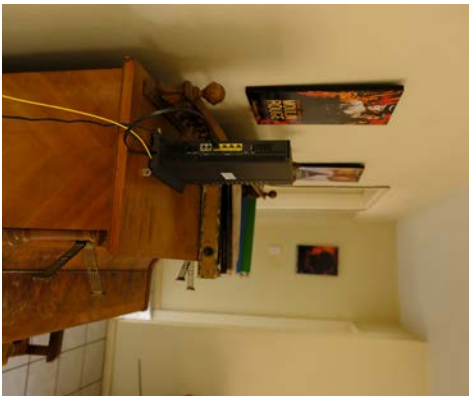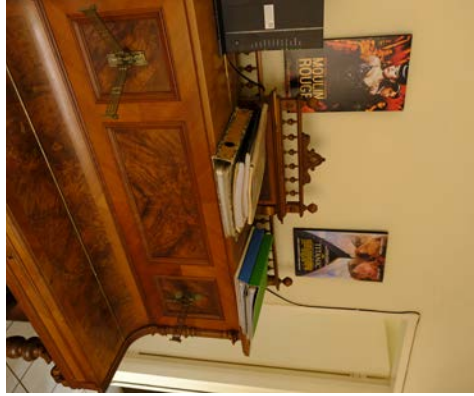
LEARNING TO SEE THE PAST

A dozen objects are meticulously arranged in a grid layout across the cover of the book *Learning to See Creatively* (1988). The objects vary in use, origin, and time. Old cameras are present; from a Yashica twin-lense reflex camera from the nineteen-forties and a Canon 8mm film camera to a Zeiss single-lens reflex camera. Devices from the more recent past are also present with two VR headset adaptors for mobile phones arranged in the grid. A number of old colour filters are piled into the corner that change the way light passes through a lens. The objects align with the compositional grid created by the picture adorning the cover of the book. The book is a manual on photography, complete with rules on composition, lighting, perspective, and the more technical aspects of film photography.

I am a third-generation photographer, my mother and her father were photographers before me. My mother gifted me the tools of her father's trade: light meters, bellows, colour filters, and his old cameras. Taking those objects into my home felt to me like I had been initiated into a secret club whose only members were the three of us. Through those objects, those tools of the now-archaic realm of film photography, I feel that I share some connection with the past inhabited by my grandfather. This project has been about looking towards the past as much as it has been about the future. *Digital Tourist* may use new media technologies to speculate on the influence of deep remixability in the creation of digital art, but it also presents my reflections on my work as a professional photographer and retoucher.

Asta Rowe (2014) looks at the remediation of digital image editing by Mannerist painters. Rowe (2014:71) argues that digital image editors today, much like the Mannerists of sixteenth-century Italy, emphasise style, difficulty, and artificiality. Digital image editing is, in effect, more self-referential as it explores and is inspired by art rather than life (Rowe 2014:74). As Rowe (2014) looked to painting to understand digital image editing, *Learning to See the Past* uses the tools of previous generations of photographers to reflect inwards on the history of my own practice.

The objects in *Learning to See* are mementoes of the past, some recent and some more distant. Rowe's (2014) reading of the intermedial relationship between digital image editing and Mannerist painting serves as an example of remediation as an asynchronous process. Kirk and Sellen's (2010:5) study on personal mementos highlights how personal historical artefacts allow individuals to connect with a shared past. By arranging the personal artefacts of my own past, *Learning to See* reflects on the generations of my family that invested time and effort into the practice of photography. The collection of objects spans almost a century and the use of augmented reality as a framing device establishes an intermedial relationship between the analog film cameras, instructional texts from my studies, and the virtual reality devices of my more recent experiences. Like Mannerism remediates digital image editing into the tradition of painting, these photographic artefacts remediate and reframe augmented reality by contextualising the practice within a photographic tradition.
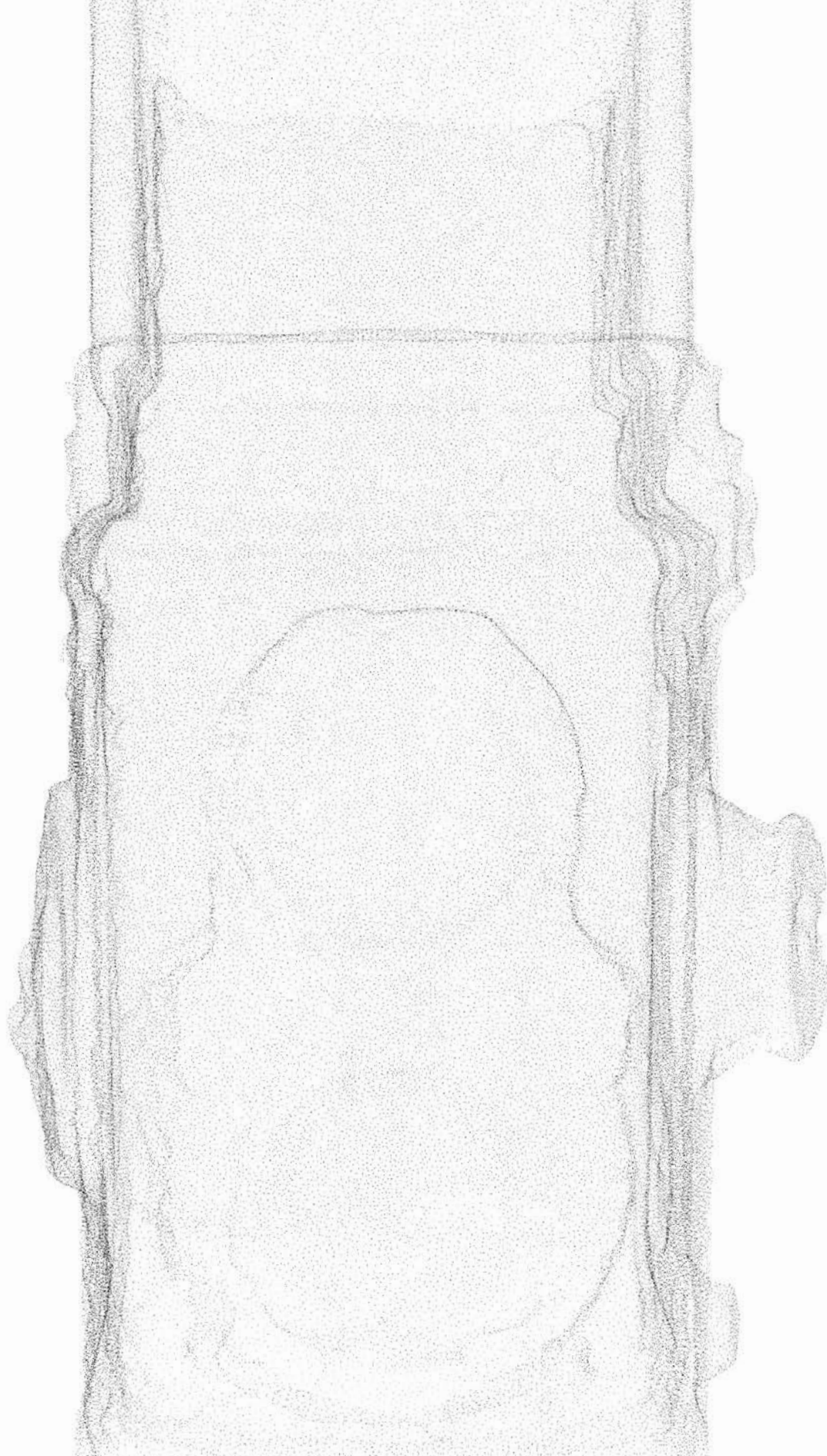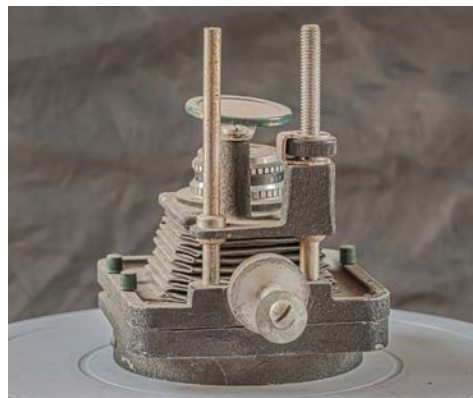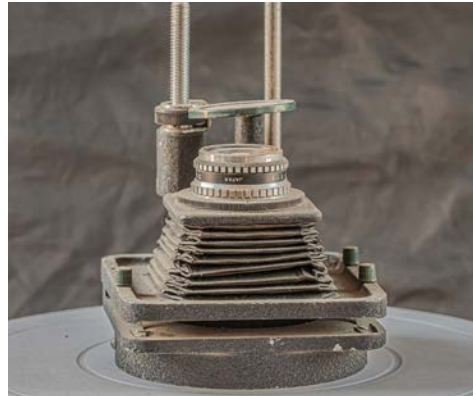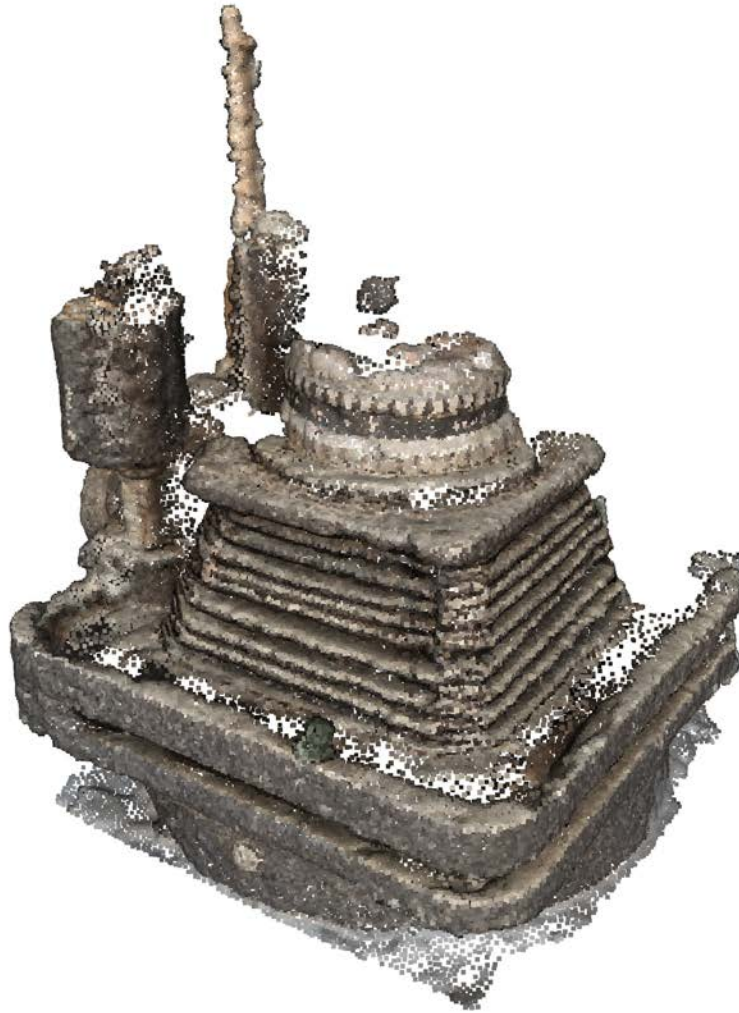
37.   Karl van Heerden, 2019, *Learning to See the Past* (detail).

38. Karl van Heerden, 2019, *Learning to See the Past* (input images).

39. Karl van Heerden, 2019, *Learning to See the Past* (input images).

40. Karl van Heerden, 2019, *Learning to See the Past* (detail).

41.   Karl van Heerden, 2019, ***Learning to See the Past*** (reconstructed geometry).

42. Karl van Heerden, 2019, *Learning to See the Past* (reconstructed geometry).

43. Karl van Heerden, 2019, ***Learning to See the Past*** (image target and AR).

LEARNING
TO SEE
CREATIVELY

REVISED EDITION
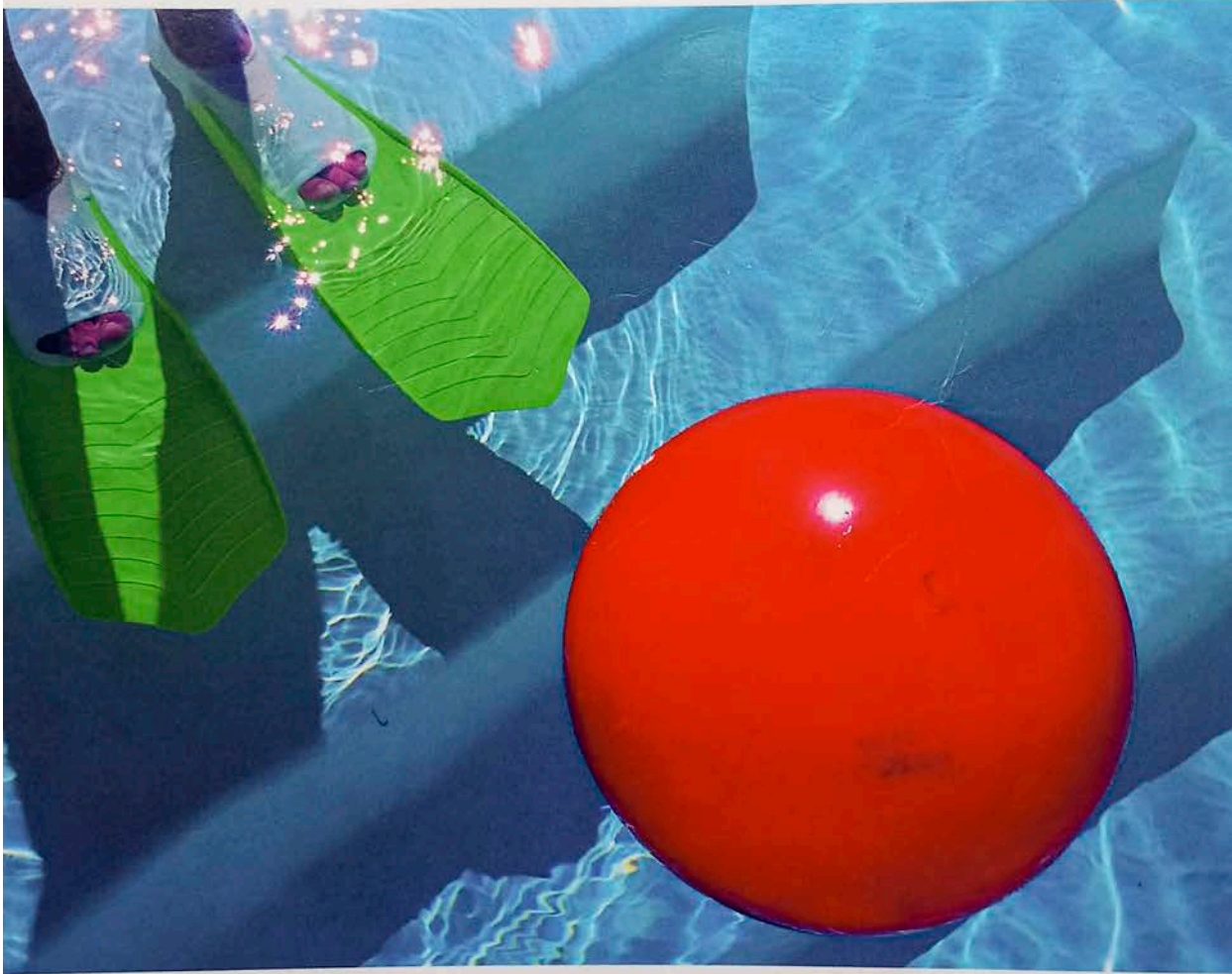
Design, Color & Composition in Photography

BRYAN PETERSON

44. Karl van Heerden, 2019, *Learning to See the Past* (detail).
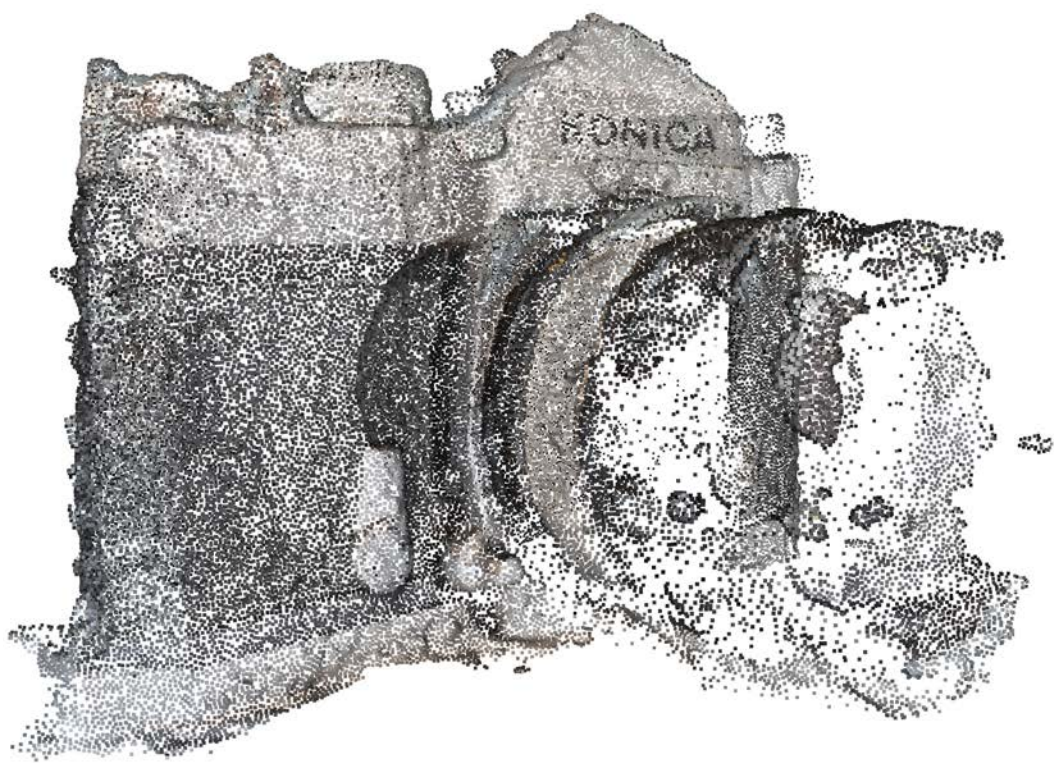
THIS IS WHERE I LEARNED TO LOVE ART

A young man sits on a couch against a dark blue backdrop. The man's pose is contemplative as if he is deep in thought. The couches are situated next to a window and covered in a patterned fabric. There is the suggestion of a room around the individual, with books stacked next to him. The scene has replaced the cover of the book *The Great Workshop* (2007), a documentation of the great art of post-medieval Europe. The book speaks to my family's tradition of art appreciation. Growing up I had a keen sense of the influence artists from the past had on my own work.

Bolter and Grusin (2000:48) remind us that older media ontologically frame newer forms of media. *This is Where I Learned to Love Art* acknowledges and embraces the art historical roots of new media. The work establishes a tension between various forms of media by framing new media directly within the context of European art depicted on the cover of *The Great Workshop*. This serves to remind that the strategies of composition, perspective, and lighting were established centuries before the first VR headset was put on. These aesthetic strategies form the underlying artistic language that defined the tradition of Western European oil painting from the fourteen hundreds and later photography (Berger 1972). Berger (1972) in particular notes that linear perspective constrained how Western Europeans engaged with art for centuries after it's reintroduction. The use of linear perspective in Renaissance painting introduces the concept of the Viewer, a single 'eye' from which the scene is depicted, and of a 'window' through which the viewer gazes into the scene (Berger 1972).

In oil painting, the point from which the scene is looked at by the archetypal viewer is fixed. In *Digital Tourist*, the viewer is able to perceive the scene from any angle they wish. Through the artistic language of new media, the Viewer is able to engage and interact with the work.

The cover of *The Great Workshop* is of an artist's studio filled with paintings. Figures can be seen observing and discussing various works in a public space intended for the display and consumption of art. The juxtaposition of the private space of my mother's living room against the public space of a studio, exhibited in the public space of the gallery, evokes the feeling of Giannetti's (in Pais 2012:46) endo-aesthetic, of looking in from the outside to understand the world. With the introduction of interactivity through new media, the viewer is not limited to the context established by the framing of the artist. Instead, the viewer defines their own context for the work by dynamically adjusting the composition and visual hierarchy. While attempting to immerse the viewer in a world filled with personal belongings and mementoes, in *Digital Tourist* I move toward a better understanding of identity formation through an external simulation, or displacement, of the spaces that constitute aspects of my life. I also encourage the viewer to engage with the work on their own terms through the interactive potential of augmented reality. This double-logic of immediacy and hypermediation lies at the core of the remediation of media (Bolter & Grusin 2000:5).
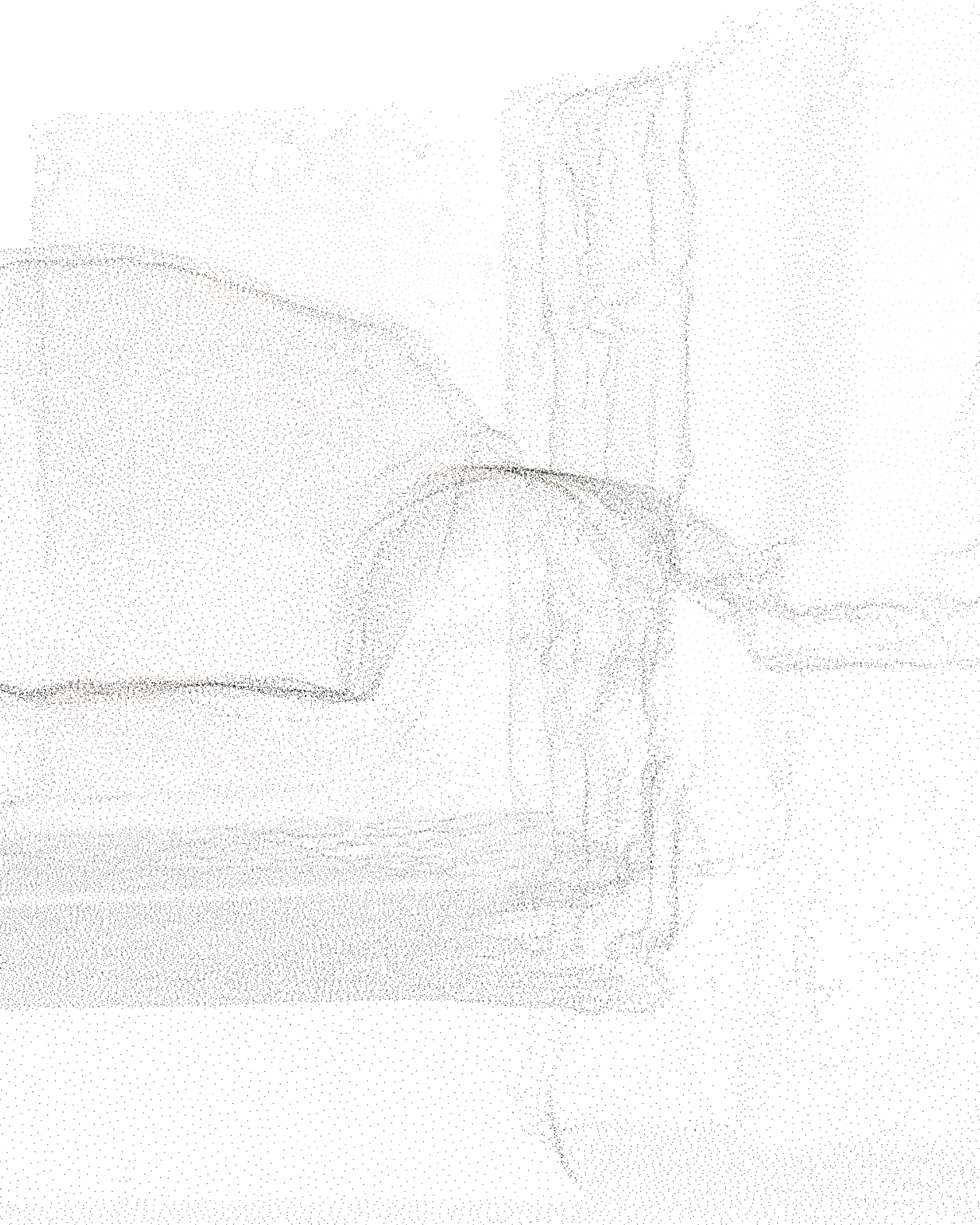
45. Karl van Heerden, 2019; *This is Where I learned to Love Art* (detail).

46. Karl van Heerden, 2019, *This is Where I learned to Love Art* (reconstructed geometry).

47. Karl van Heerden, 2019, *This is Where I learned to Love Art* (input images).

The Great Workshop

Pathways of Art in Europe

5TH-18TH CENTURIES

EDITED BY ROLAND RECHT, CATHELINE PÉRIER-D'IETEREN, AND PASCAL GRIENER

FOREWORD BY PETER BURKE
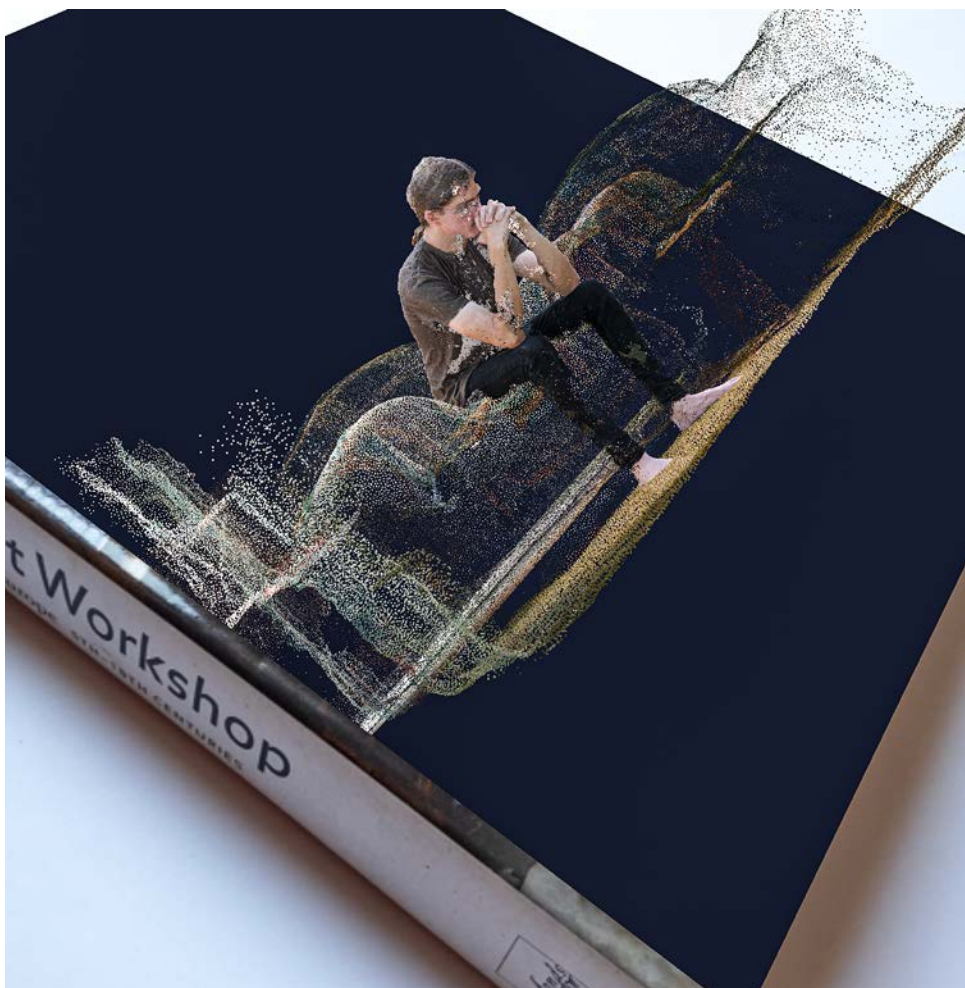
48. Karl van Heerden, 2019, *This is Where I learned to Love Art* (image target and AR).

49. Karl van Heerden, 2019, *This is Where I learned to Love Art* (detail).

CONCLUSION

The works presented in *Digital Tourist* investigate in different ways the themes of identity formation, autotopography, nostalgia, and memory. The works are united through the act of anchoring each piece to a book cover, signifying the importance of these items in the formation of my personal identity. The different pieces in the exhibition feature virtual objects that are displaced into the physical world through the use of augmented reality technology. The use of photogrammetry as a method of documenting the subjects evokes the practice's use of preserving both a physical and cultural landscape while interfering as little as possible with the subjects. The use of virtual and physical space to activate and present the works incorporates the practice of autotopography; of writing about oneself through space and place. Through this project I have also incorporated new methodologies in my own work such as application development, computer programming, photogrammetry, and installation art.

My conceptual and methodological approach to art-making has undergone significant change through the study of the aforementioned theories and the work of my case studies. The research question posed at the onset of this study was to gain a better understanding of the novel contributions made possible by digital media, with a focus on digital image editing, can make to the art-making process. The insight I have gained is that there is a dialogue between different forms of media, both analogue and digital. New media frames, and is framed by, the artistic languages of older forms of analogue media. Digital image editing's conceptual contributions include recontextualising notions of space and place which allow for a intermedial relationship between the virtual and physical and to augment the viewer's experience through physical interactivity.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

25. Karl van Heerden
Photographer, Gipsy, Sage, Mother
(input images)
2019
Digital photographs
17cm x 11.5cm

26. Karl van Heerden
Photographer, Gipsy, Sage, Mother
(reconstructed geometry)
2019
Computer-generated model
Dimensions variable

27. Karl van Heerden
Photographer, Gipsy, Sage, Mother
(detail)
2019
Photogrammetry-based point cloud
Dimensions variable

28. Karl van Heerden
Photographer, Gipsy, Sage, Mother
(image target and AR)
2019
Scanned book cover
11.5cm x 17cm

29. Karl van Heerden
I Go to Places in These Books (detail)
2019
Photogrammetry-based point cloud
Dimensions variable

30. Karl van Heerden
I Go to Places in These Books (input
images)
2019
Digital photographs
17cm x 11.5cm

31. Karl van Heerden
I Go to Places in These Books (image
target and AR)
2019
Scanned book cover
11.5cm x 17cm

32. Karl van Heerden
I Go to Places in These Books
(reconstructed geometry)
2019
Computer-generated model
Dimensions variable

33. Karl van Heerden
I Go to Places in These Books (input images)
2019
Digital photographs
17cm x 11.5cm

34. Karl van Heerden
I Go to Places in These Books
(reconstructed geometry)
2019
Computer-generated model
Dimensions variable

35. Karl van Heerden
I Go to Places in These Books (input images)
2019
Digital photographs
17cm x 11.5cm

36. Karl van Heerden
I Go to Places in These Books
(reconstructed geometry)
2019
Computer-generated model
Dimensions variable

37. Karl van Heerden
Learning to See the Past (detail)
2019
Photogrammetry-based point cloud
Dimensions variable

38. Karl van Heerden
Learning to See the Past (input images)
2019
Digital photographs
17cm x 11.5cm

39. Karl van Heerden
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Digital photographs
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40. Karl van Heerden
Learning to See the Past (detail)
2019
Photogrammetry-based point cloud
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41. Karl van Heerden
Learning to See the Past
(reconstructed geometry)
2019
Computer-generated model
Dimensions variable

42. Karl van Heerden
Learning to See the Past
(reconstructed geometry)
2019
Computer-generated model
Dimensions variable

43. Karl van Heerden
Learning to See the Past (image
target and AR)
2019
Scanned book cover
11.5cm x 17cm

44. Karl van Heerden
Learning to See the Past (detail)
2019
Photogrammetry-based point cloud
Dimensions variable

45. Karl van Heerden
This is where I Learned to Love Art
(detail)
2019
Photogrammetry-based point cloud
Dimensions variable

46. Karl van Heerden
This is where I Learned to Love Art
(reconstructed geometry)
2019
Computer-generated model
Dimensions variable

47. Karl van Heerden
This is where I Learned to Love Art
input images)
2019
Digital photographs
17cm x 11.5cm

48. Karl van Heerden
This is where I Learned to Love Art
(image target and AR)
2019
Scanned book cover
11.5cm x 17cm

49. Karl van Heerden
This is where I Learned to Love Art
(detail)
2019
Photogrammetry-based point cloud
Dimensions variable

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CURRICULUM VITAE

Born in 1989 in the town of Tzaneen, Karl van Heerden earned his
A levels through the British International Distance College as a
homeschooled student. In 2011, Karl earned his Bachelor's Degree in Visual
Communication at the Open Window where he earned commendations
for top theoretical dissertation, top photography student, and second-
highest overall student. In 2012, he completed his BA Hons. in Visual
Communication at the Open Window, becoming the first photography
student to do so.

During that same year, Karl began working part-time for the Open
Window, where he developed over twenty-one new short courses for the
institution.

Since 2013, Karl has lectured full-time for the Open Window in Visual
Culture studies, Academic Practice, Research Practice, Art History,
Photography, and Post-Production.

The artist has also spoken at a number of public events such as the Fujifilm Festival, Photo and Film Expo, Photo+ Africa, and the Behance Portfolio Day.

Karl freelances as a photographer, with notable clients such as Mr. South Africa, Mrs. South Africa, Maxidor, and Bean Bag the Brand, Niku Underwear, and various modelling agencies.

Furthermore, he has taken part in a number of exhibitions, such as an Audio/Visual performance for iMPAC, *The Third Dimension* exhibition, Art Lover's *Spot* exhibition, and *Sway*.