



CIRCA

Paula Louw  
redeconstructivist

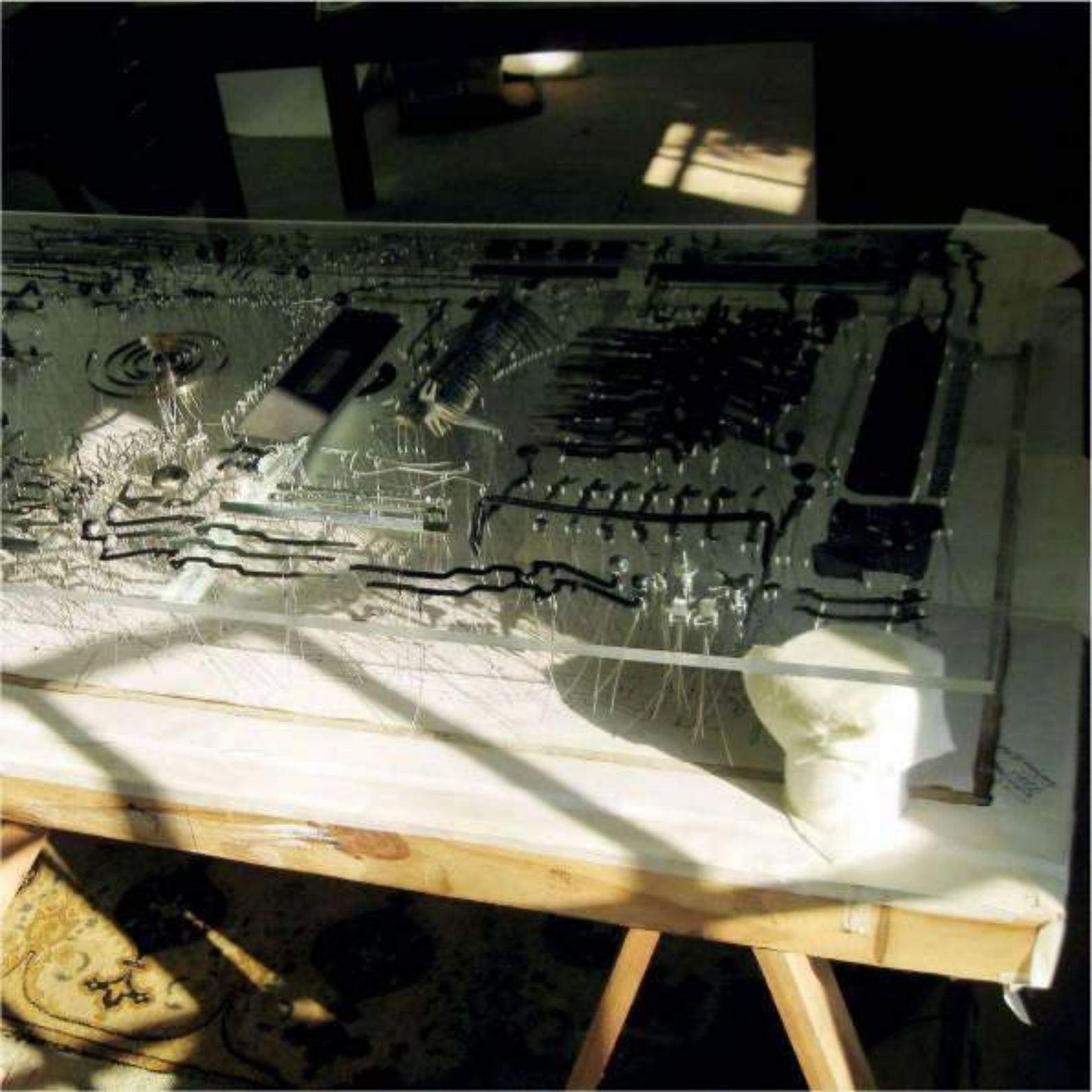


An art installation by Paula Louw, featuring a complex structure of dark wood and metal. The structure includes a large, dark wooden pillar, a metal frame with a large 'X' shape, and a long, low wooden structure with a keyboard-like top. Thin wires and small yellow flowers are suspended from the ceiling, creating a delicate, ethereal atmosphere. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

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3 NOVEMBER – 4 DECEMBER 2011



## Redeconstructivist

In taking things apart in their entirety, Paula Louw leaves very little unsaid. The works of art, these objects of meticulous, excruciating detail, seem to embody their own meaning. The meaning of Paula's work lies inextricably linked to the experience of being fascinated by it, caught up in the act of witnessing it in all its complexity.

When looking at her work, I find myself drawn into it; compelled by it; in awe. And the nature of the experience is fascination. I cannot help but be aware of the huge amount of work – intensive, physical labour – that has gone into the work. Her labour is an act of revelation, of simultaneously discovering and imbuing meaning. This is the nature of creating art from existing objects; the end result refers both to existing (historic) meanings, and yet-to-be-discovered, new meanings.

Art, here, is the practice of bestowing upon an ordinary thing the gift of beauty. Of turning it into a source of admiration; of reviving our fascination for a dead object. Art, here, gives new life. The dismantled pieces are now objects of veneration, ready to be regarded in new and different ways.

As we look at the work now, we are confronted with something new and profoundly different from that thing we previously presumed to know and understand. We experience the sensation of being drawn into the moment – an act of meditation, perhaps; a freeze-frame opportunity that allows us to concentrate on the object and observe its difference from the thing it once was, the thing which it resembles now in only abstract ways, requiring complex intellectual processes of which we are not even aware. It's an act of contemplation resulting from the studiousness of the project; the opportunity to witness a moment in time, and – thanks to the physical form of her work – witness this moment from multiple angles.

Continuing this metaphor, it is apt to point out that this is precisely what Paula does with her deconstructed/reconstructed artworks: she stops time in order to get to (or expose) the meaning embedded in banal, everyday, ordinary objects. I experience this as a bit of a trick, though, because when she takes them apart and transforms them, they cease to be banal. I say 'trick' in the sense of being an act of magic, rather than an illusion. She transforms objects into artworks

84 86

87 88 89

often included up  
till tomorrow. of

77

78

79

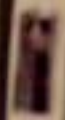
80

81

Arnold had a  
Confounding cabinet

secretary below

table around



that are fascinating in and of themselves. So, whereas the piano might previously have been fascinating because of what could be done with it (producing music when played by an artist), it is now an object of fascination in its own right. It has attained multiple new meanings, repeatedly refigured by everyone who views it. Transformed in this way, it refers, necessarily, to its former life (as a piano), but draws us into an altogether different discourse around its present state. Now we look at the piano in a reverential way, as if it were a disembodied, spectral version of its former self.

Or perhaps, rather than seeing the ghost (of a piano), we are seeing its corpse ...

Perhaps it's because there is so much to look at. Minutiae and intricacies revealed within the objects she dismantles seem to suggest the presence of the sublime in even the most banal objects. If you look around this gallery, it is really nothing more than a vexingly-shaped room with vast walls and a magnificent approach. But insert Paula's dismantled piano, and suddenly this space becomes a surgery for the practice of visual dissection. And the piano is suddenly not merely a dysfunctional instrument that has been put out to pasture, but is now hallowed; revered. As watchful eyes gaze upon it, its nature is transformed, and as light falls upon it, the shadows on the walls become objects too; and sources of intrigue. Paula says that in pulling apart old things she is breaking apart an established order, but I think she is also paying tribute to that order, she is reminding us (and no doubt herself in the process) of the value of that order. After all, in order for the piano to produce music the way it does, it

must necessarily be put together in a certain way. By taking it apart, she reminds us of the genius of human creativity, just as dissecting a human body reveals the brilliance of nature. To come up with a piano is to have produced something magical. There is magic in order. Yet, when she restages the piano in a new and unexpected way, we are forced to consider the piano in all its parts, a bit like the way in which a person is considered differently after they die. The way you look at the re-imagined piano might echo the experience of the reading or hearing of an obituary. You will grapple with the piano in profound ways that may not have been possible – or permissible – when the piano was 'alive'. In its original form the piano perhaps loses meaning, fades into the realm of the ordinary, gathers dust, and is potentially forgotten. Paula has bestowed new life on this object, and this act of resurrection fascinates and enthrals.

Her work may suggest to us something like a disembowelment or an autopsy, but I find Paula's work life-affirming, a reminder of the human potential to create, to imagine, and re-imagine. And, by displaying the many parts or components of an act of creation, her work becomes a meditation on the creative process itself. 'Don't just see a piano,' this piece seems to be saying.

As we look at the piano, we are reminded of the human potential for fascination. It becomes an invitation to contemplate the afterlife of an ordinary object.

**Keith Bain**

left: **Relics 1** (2011)

Piano keys, plexiglass, tace wire, sleeves, ink, wood, paint.

80x105mm





Piano (installation) (2011)  
Piano components, cable, metal bars, frames, paint  
300 x 200 x 450 mm





Piano (installation) (2011)  
Piano components, fabric, metal bars, femules, paint  
3000 x 2000 x 4500 mm





Relics I (2011)

Piano keys, plexiglass, trace wire, sleeves, ink, wood, paint  
625x625 mm



Relics 2 (2011)

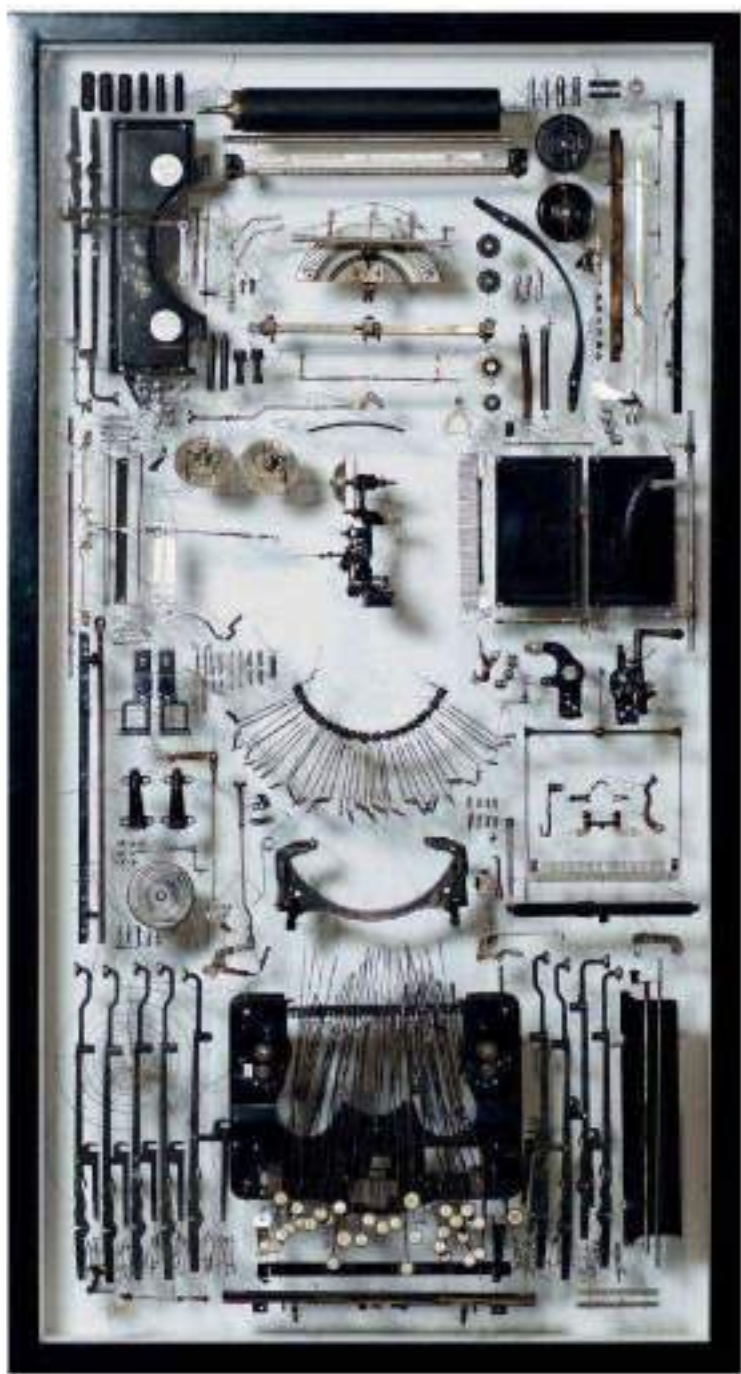
Piano keys, Plexiglas, face wire, screws, ink, wood, paint  
65x55cm





**Harmony and Dischord** - (2009)

Piano components, plexiglass, trace wire, sleeves, ink, paper, wood, paint  
133 x 200 x 111 cm

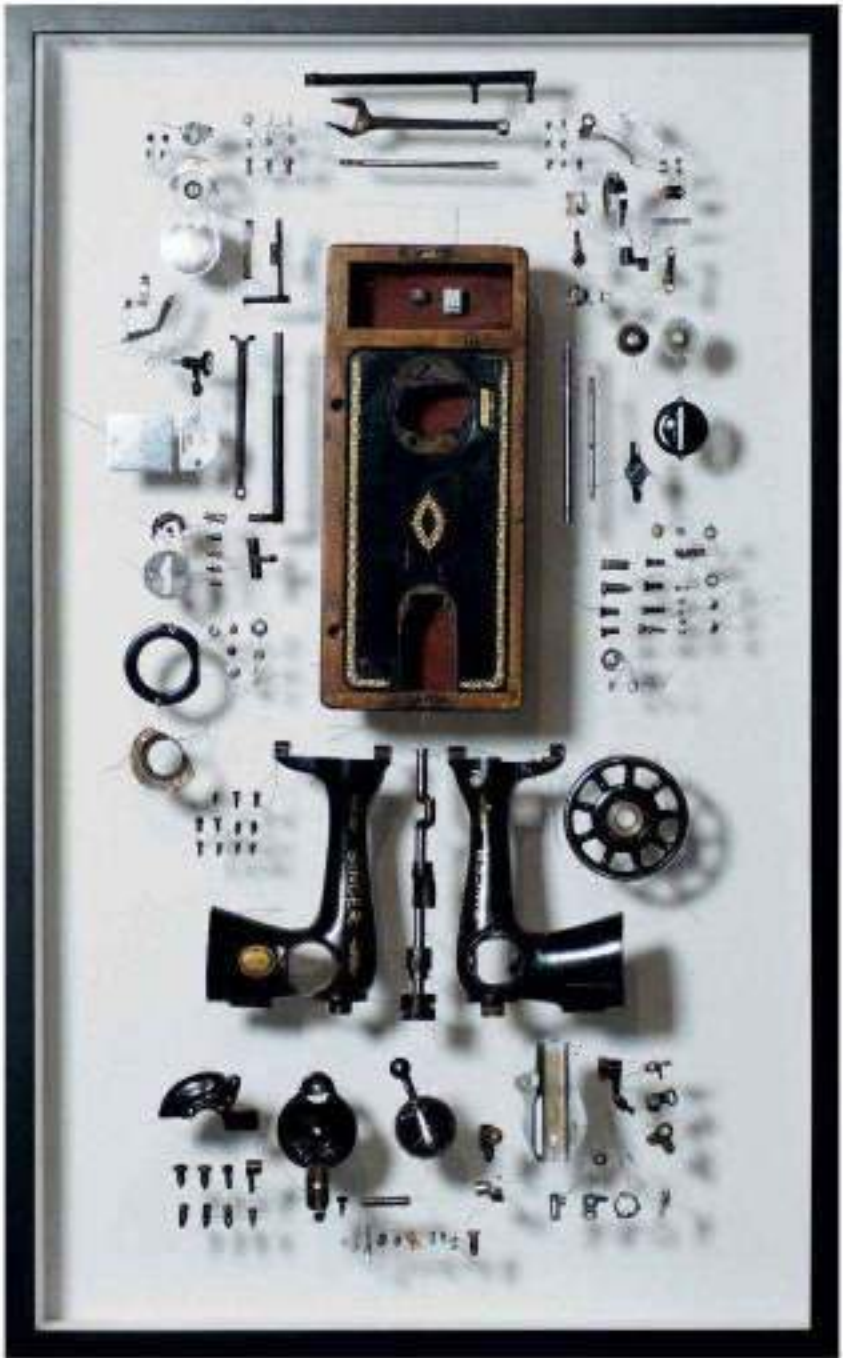






**String back** (2018)

typewriter components, 1800 w/c sleeves, plexiglass, wood, felt  
1400 x 750 x 150 mm





Singer (2011)  
Sewing machine components, trace wire, plexiglass, sleeves  
1900 x 856 mm



Wizard (2011)

Sewing machine components, trace wire, plexiglass, sleeves  
142 x 180 mm





Page fragment 1 (20x30)  
Etching  
68x90mm



Page fragment 2 (2010)  
Etching  
65x45mm



Page 100 of 100





Page fragment 3 (2010)

Etching  
100x100mm



100

Page fragment 4

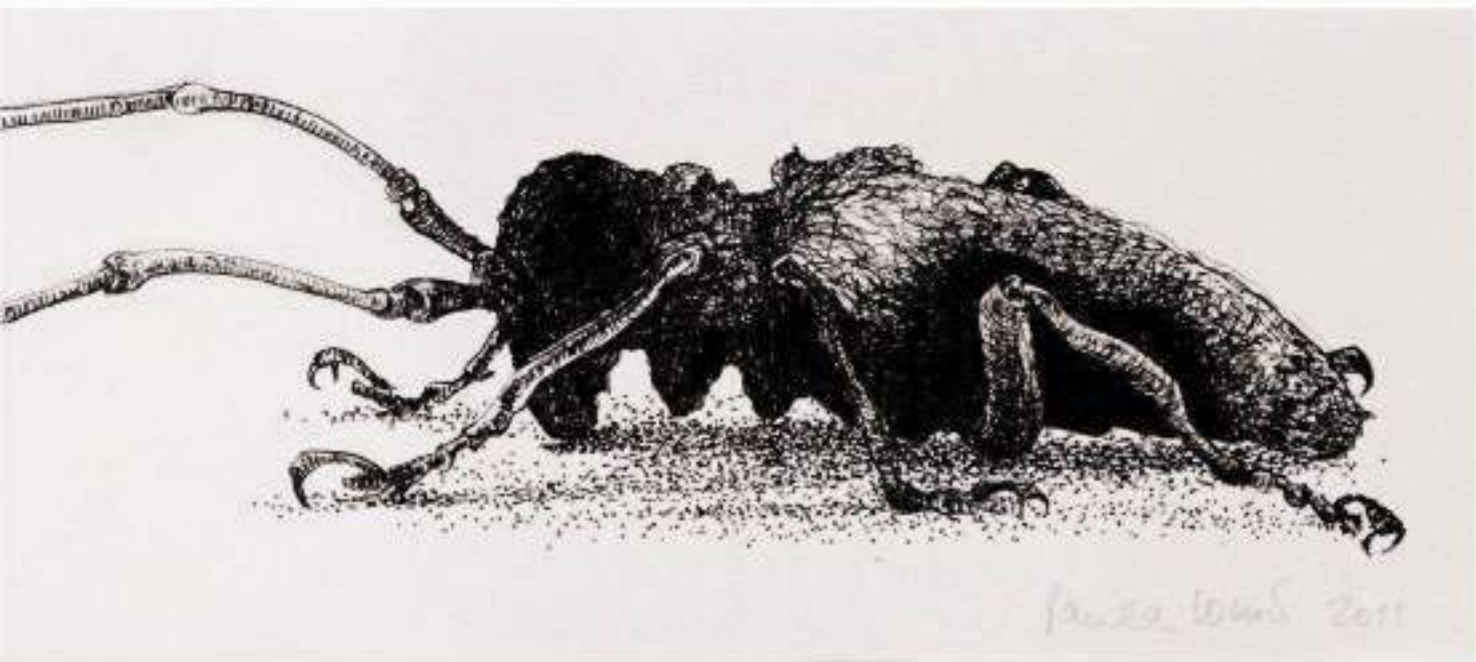
July 2010

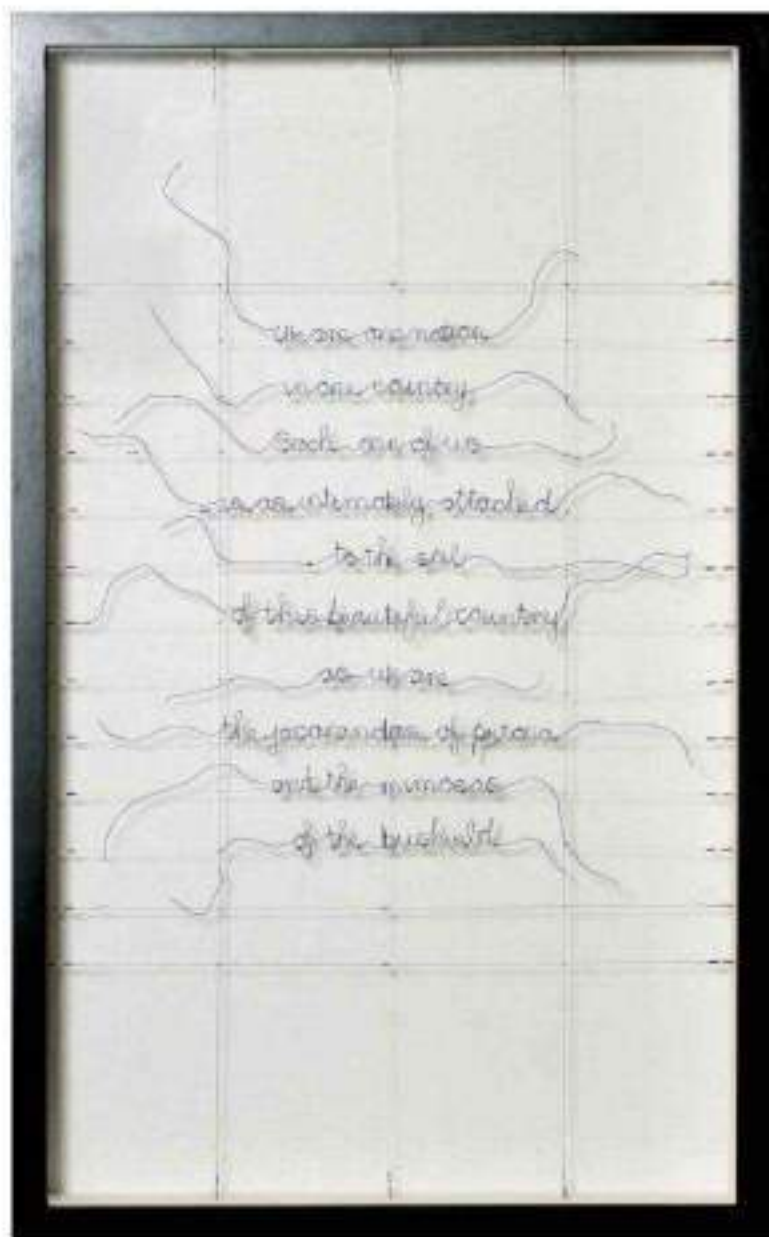
Page fragment 4 (2010)  
Etching  
50 x 60 cm





Longhorn (2011)  
Ink on paper  
50 x 120 mm





Peace series 'We are one nation' (Nelson Mandela) (2011)  
Wire, trace wire, sieves, fishing line, wood, paint, eye hooks  
110 x 25 cm

We are one nation

in one country

Each one of us

is as intimately attached

to the soil

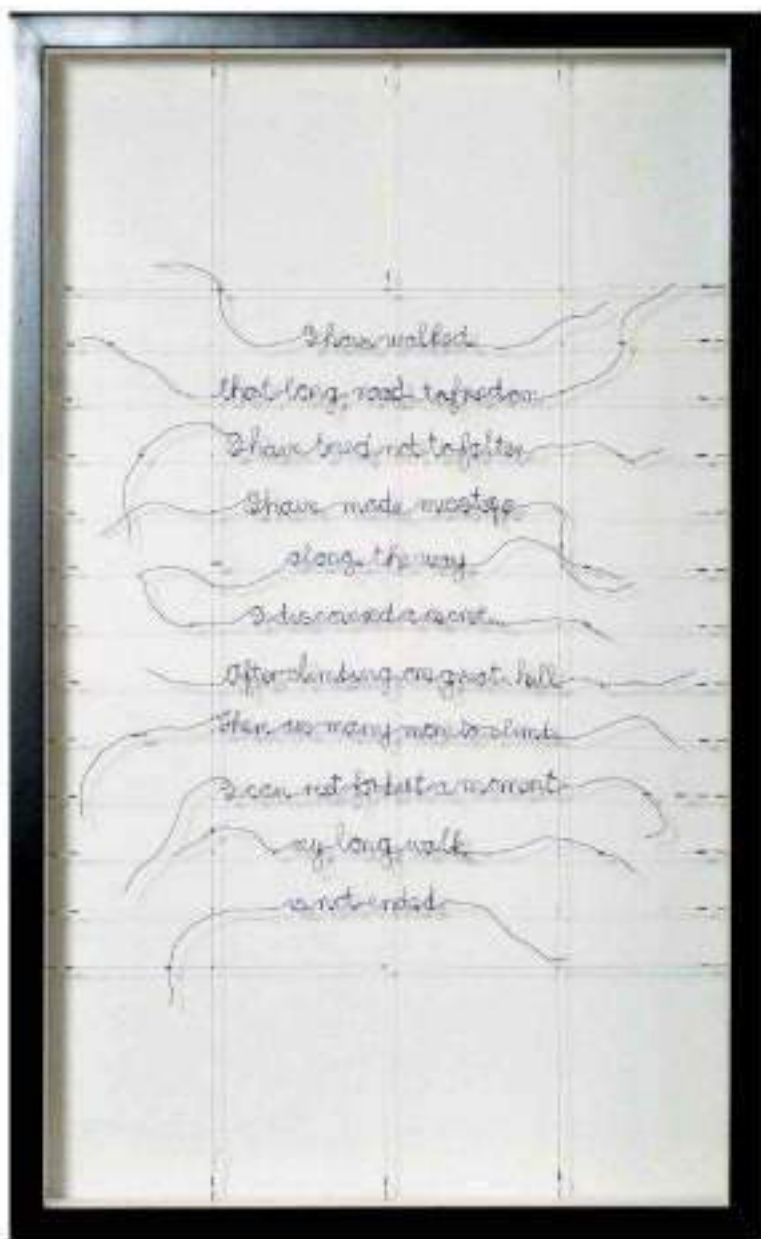
of this beautiful country

as we are

the jacarandas of pretoria

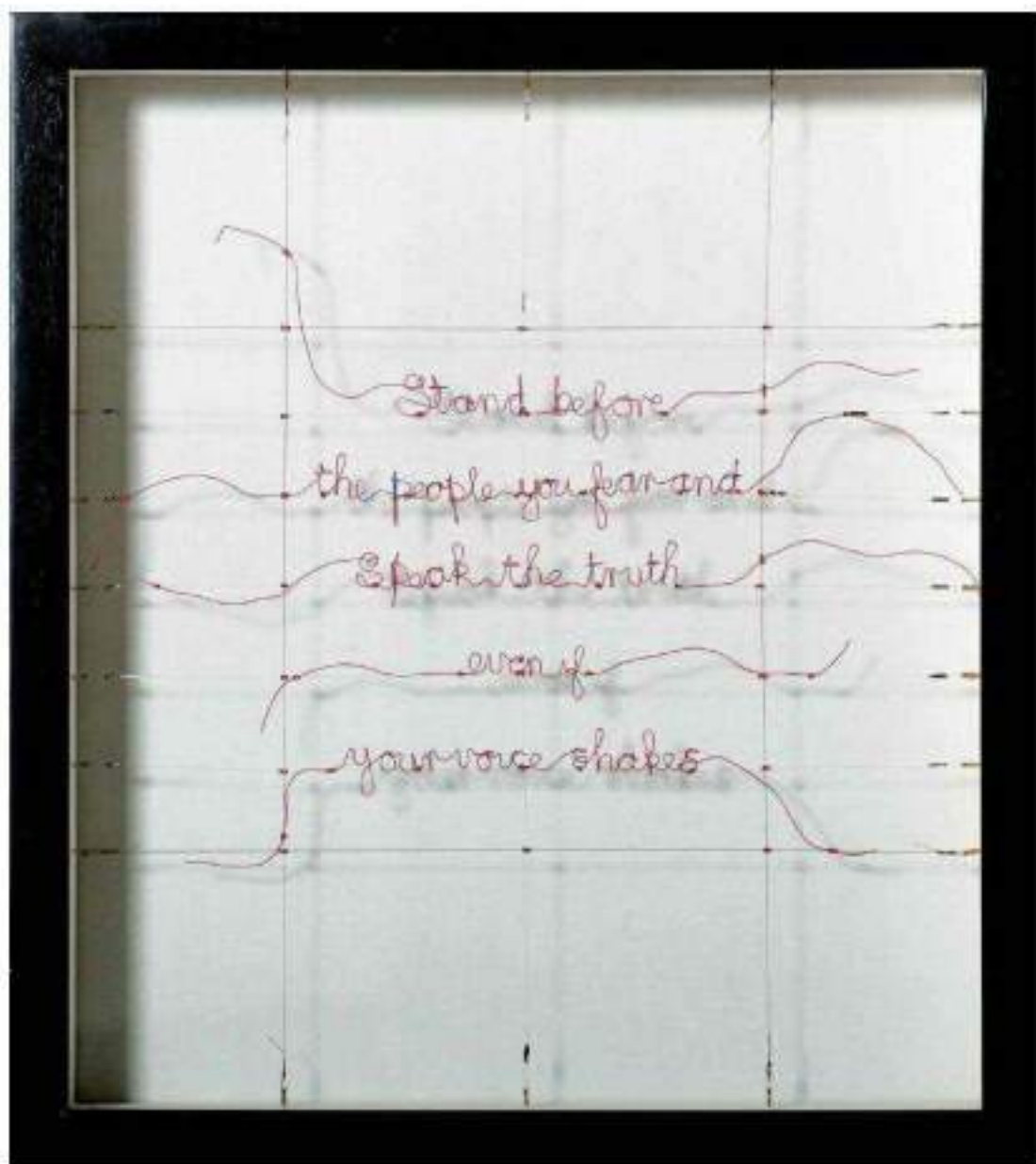
and the mimosas

of the bushveld



Peace series 'I have walked' (Nelson Mandela) 12010  
Wire, trace wire, sieves, fishing line, wood, paint, eye hooks  
1192 x 735 mm



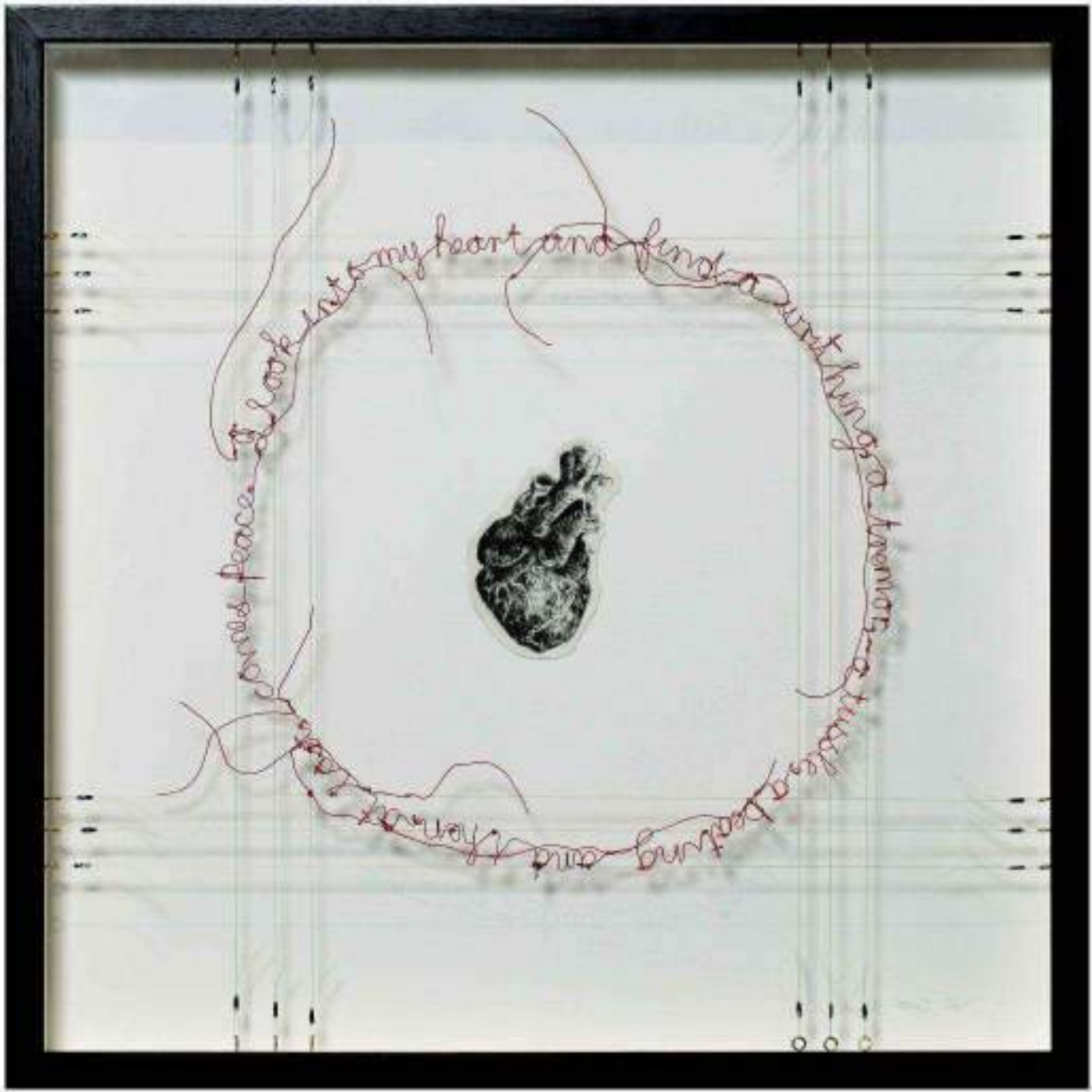


'Even if your voice shakes' (Maggie Kalho) (2010)  
Wire, trace wire, sleeves, fishing line, wood, paint, eye hooks  
60 x 180 cm

As we are liberated from our own fear,  
ourselves automatically liberates others  
in presence of our presence

sted from our own  
ally liberates  
at the  
our

Peace series 'As we are liberated' (Nelson Mandela) (2010)  
Wire, trace wire, sleeves, foiling line, wood, paint, eye-hooks  
300 x 150 cm



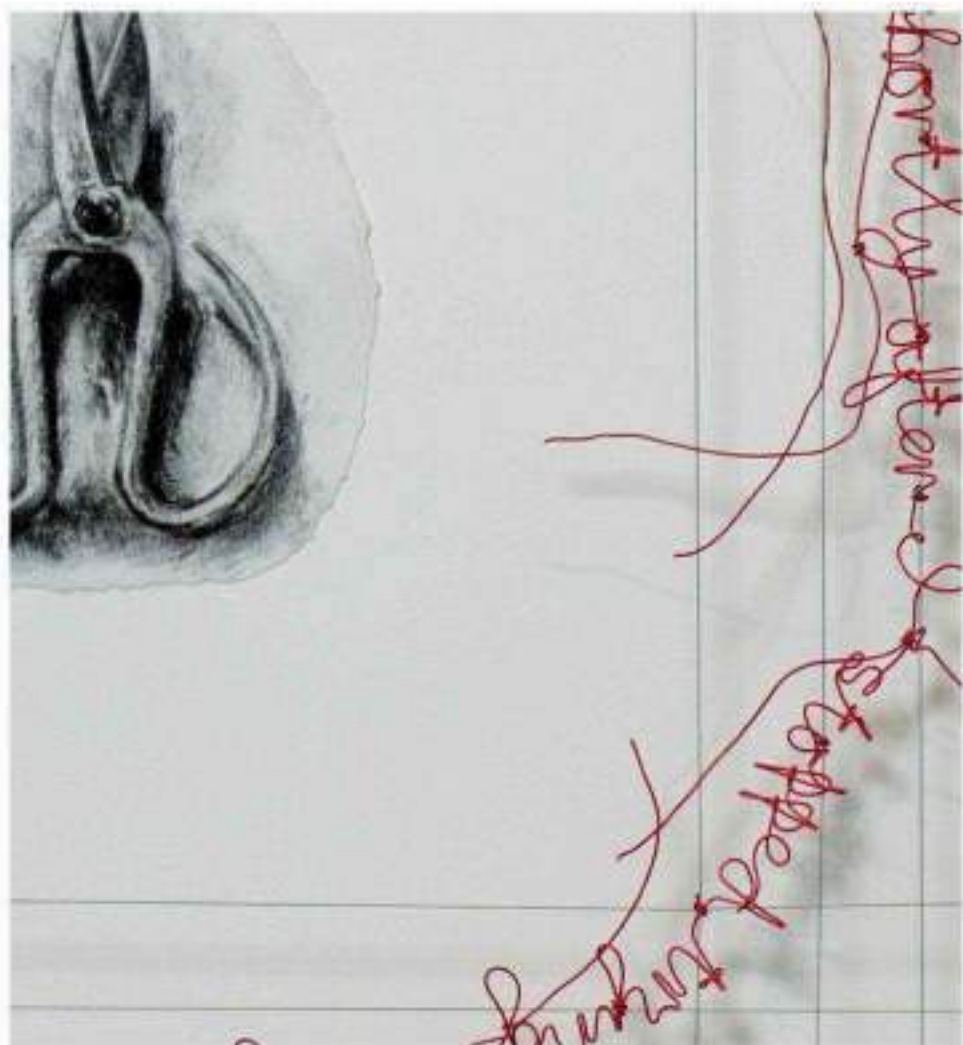
I found peace. I look into my heart and find a surging a tremor a rustle a beating and then it is there



Heart (2011)  
Charcoal on paper, wire, fishing line, sleeves, eye hooks  
660 x 660 mm

don't know exactly when I changed into a kite perhaps it was shortly after I stopped trying to fly and simply drifted.





Shears (2011)  
Charcoal on paper, wire, fishing line, sleeves, eye hooks  
660 x 660 mm



Peace series 1 (2010)

Revolver firearm components, trout wire, plexiglass, fishing line, wood, paint  
230 x 230 mm





Peace series 2 (2010)

Pistol frame-components, face wire, pinless, fishing line, wood, paint  
60 x 60 cm





Peace series 3 (2017)

Revolver firearm components, face white, plexiglass, fishing line, wood, paint  
208 x 228 mm



Peace series 4 (2017)

Revolver firearm components, trace wire, plexiglass, fishing line, wood, paint  
50 x 45 cm







Czech Browning (2011)  
Pistol firearm components, plexiglass, trace wire, sleeves, wood, paint.  
98 x 55 mm



**Baby Browning** (2017)

Pistol firearm components, plexiglass, trace wire, sleeves, wood, paint.  
99 x 99 cm







**Rove beetle** (2011)  
Etching, found objects, ink, trace wire, sleeves  
380 x 790 mm



**Dragonfly** (2011)  
Etching, found objects, ink, trace wire, sleeves  
380 x 790 mm



**Spider** (2011)  
Etching, found objects, ink, trace wire, sleeves  
380 x 790 mm



**What do you suppose?** (2011)  
Etching, found objects, ink, trace wire, sleeves  
380 x 790 mm



**Crane flies don't bite** (2011)  
Etching, found objects, ink, trace wire, sleeves  
380 x 790 mm

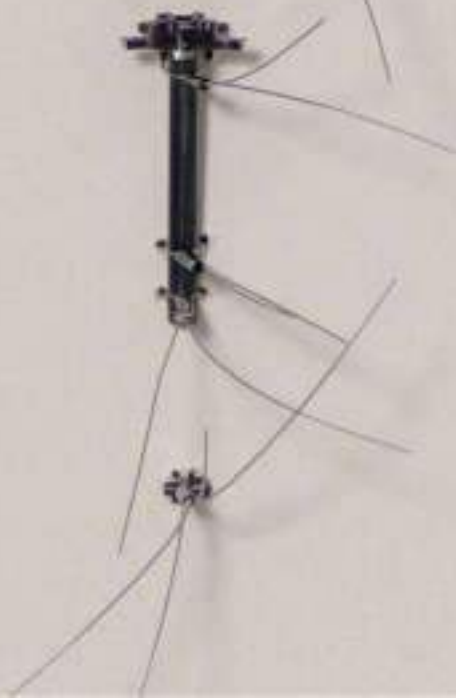


**Every beetle** (2011)  
Etching, found objects, ink, trace wire, sleeves  
380 x 790 mm



**What do you suppose?** (detail) 2011  
Etching, found objects, ink, trace wire, sleeves  
380 x 330 mm

**Spider** (detail on right) 2011  
Etching, found objects, ink, trace wire, sleeves  
380 x 330 mm





Above: **Helicopter** (2011)  
Etching, found objects, ink, trace wire, sleeves  
430 x 465 mm



Above right: **Jester** (2011)  
Etching, found objects, ink, trace wire, sleeves  
430 x 465 mm



right: **Half a pound** (2011)  
Etching, found objects, ink, trace wire, sleeves  
430 x 465 mm



Yllesmad (2017)  
Etching, found objects, ink, trace wire, sleeves  
110x160mm



**Spider** (2010)

Mixed media, pastel, ink, oil paint, acrylic paint, ink on paper.  
1000 x 1000 mm







**Dung beetle** (2010)

Mixed media, pastel, ink, oil paint, acrylic paint, ink on paper  
100 x 70 cm

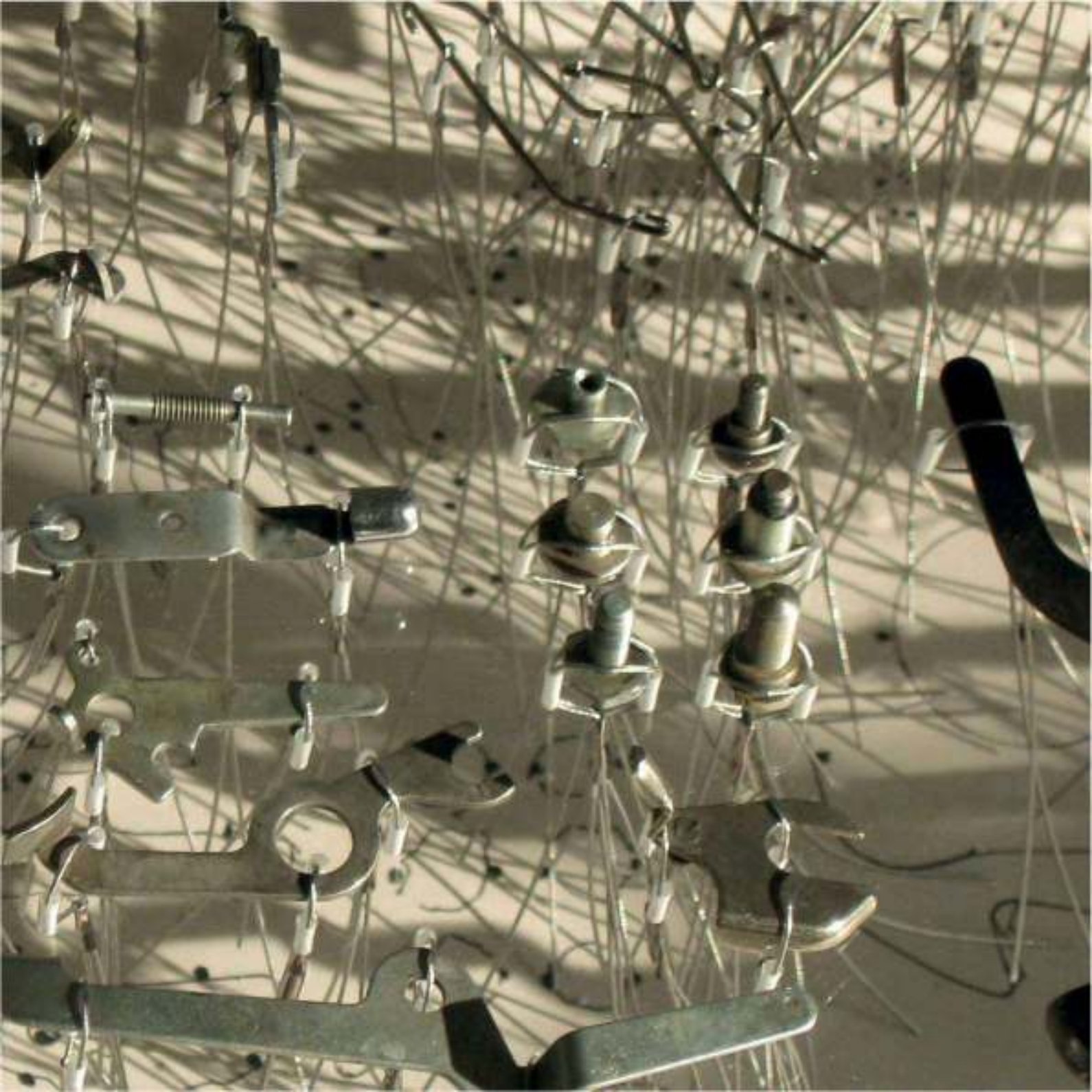




**Five guns** (2011)  
Etching, found objects, ink, trace, wire, sleeves  
580 x 800 mm









## Paula Louw

### Contact Details:

+27 73 449 1810

+27 11 477 0583

Email: [jewelbox@africa.com](mailto:jewelbox@africa.com)

PO Box 439, Bergbron, 1712, South Africa

### Degrees and Diplomas:

2007 – MAFA (with distinction), University of the Witwatersrand

2002 – BAFA (practical with distinction), UNISA

1977 – Pretoria Technikon, Fine Art Diploma

### Art Exhibitions:

2011 – Redeconstructivist, Solo exhibition, Circa Gallery, Rosebank

2011 – Jo'burg Art Fair, Everard Read exhibition stand, Johannesburg

2010 – 'In Part' solo exhibition, Fried Gallery, Pretoria

2010 – Group show, IArt Gallery, Cape Town

2010 – 'Current matters – Different opinions' group art exhibition, Franschoek

2010 – Jo'burg Art Fair, Everard Read exhibition stand, Johannesburg

2010 – Absa Group Exhibition, Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunsfees, Dordrecht

2009 – Paula Louw, 'New works' exhibition, Everard Read Gallery, Rosebank

2009 – Blue Door Studio Etching Exhibition, David Brown Fine Art, Rosebank

2009 – Jo'burg Art Fair, Everard Read exhibition stand, Johannesburg

2008 – Group Exhibition at Knysna Fine Art

2008 – Celebration: Group Exhibition at Cool Art, Parkhurst

2008 – Intervention : Group Exhibition at UNISA Art Gallery, Pretoria

2008 – Gordart Group Exhibition, Johannesburg

2008 – Jo'burg Art Fair, Everard Read exhibition stand, Johannesburg

2007-2011 – Installation at Adler Medical School Museum, Johannesburg



2006 – Everard Read Gallery, Rosebank – MA Solo show, 'Soft Return'

2005 – Everard Read Gallery, Rosebank – Group Exhibition

2003 – Plug-Ins Art Exhibition – Aardklop Art Festival

2002 – UNISA Art Gallery – Retrospective Student Exhibition

2002 – Sasol Wax Art Competition – Exhibition

2002 – New Signatures Competition – Pretoria Art Museum

2001-2002 – UNISA Art Gallery – Final Year Exhibition

2001 – New Signatures Competition – Pretoria Art Museum

2001 – Interart Exhibition of Contemporary Art – Spark! Gallery

2000 – New Signatures Competition – Pretoria Art Museum

2000 – UNISA Student Exhibition, Cape Town

2000 – Art and the Body Exhibition, UNISA Art Gallery Pretoria

1999 – UNISA Student Exhibition – African Window Museum Pretoria

1997 – Group Exhibition, Johannesburg

1994 – Group Exhibition, Johannesburg

1981 – Group Exhibition, Brakpan City Hall

1978 – Traveling Student Exhibition to Australia

1976 – Johannesburg College of Art Student Exhibition – Carlton Centre, Johannesburg

**Artworks in Contemporary and Permanent Collections:**

'As we are Liberated' – 3D Assemblage, triptych – 2011  
Private collection – Johannesburg

'Reflections on a Simple Peace' – 3D Assemblage, triptych – 2010  
Private collection – Johannesburg

'A Simple Peace 1,2,3' – 3D Assemblage, triptych – 2010  
Private collection – Cape Town

'Harmony and Dischord' – 3D Assemblage – 2009  
Private collection – South of France

'Visible Traces' – 3D Assemblage – 2008  
ABSA Bank – Johannesburg

'Much Love' – 3D Assemblage – 2008  
Marvellous Collection – Johannesburg

'Messages' – Series of 10 photograms – 2006  
Art Bank – Johannesburg

'Messages' – Photograms – 2006  
Private Collections – Johannesburg and Cape Town

'1956' – 3D Assemblage – 2006  
Private Collection – Knysna

'Appendix 1','2','3' – 3D Assemblages – 2006  
Private Collections – Johannesburg

'Stripped Torpedo' – 3D Assemblage – 2006  
Private Collection – Johannesburg

'Underwood 1907' – 3D Assemblage – 2006  
Private Collection – Johannesburg

'Portrait of My Father' – 3D Assemblage – 2005  
Private Collection – Johannesburg

'A Pathological Analysis' – Installation – 2001  
UNISA – Pretoria

'Containment: An Identity' – Installation – 2001  
UNISA – Pretoria.



CIRCA  
an artspace

This exhibition catalogue  
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the exhibition

**Paula Louw – Redeconstructivist**  
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3 November – 4 December 2011

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2 Jellicoe Avenue, Rosebank, Johannesburg  
info@circagallery.co.za or gallery@everardread.co.za  
011 388 4895 www.circaartspace.co.za www.everardread.co.za