

Shine Brighter Première

Snapfile 11 “My camera is my weapon”

Document 2, Extrait p.105 – Interview by Sian CAIN, *The Guardian*, 2015

Peter Magubane’s best photograph: a girl and her maid on a ‘Europeans only’ bench

Working as a black photographer in apartheid South Africa was not easy. You had to always know where you were and who was around you. If the police were there, you couldn’t take photos – and the police were always there. If it was difficult for me to get a shot openly, I’d have to improvise: hide my camera in a loaf of bread, a half-pint¹ of milk, even a Bible. When I got back to the office, I had to have a picture with me no matter what. My editors at the Rand Daily Mail would not take any nonsense. But that was fine – they wanted the pictures and I wanted to become one of the greats.

I did not want to leave the country to find another life. I was going to stay and fight with my camera as my gun. I did not want to kill anyone, though. I wanted to kill apartheid. My editors always pushed me. “Work as hard as you can,” they’d say, “to defeat this animal apartheid. Show the world what is happening.” I never staged pictures. They were moments I came across. I took this² in 1956, while driving

¹ unité de mesure (environ 300 mL)

² A Girl and Her Black Maid

through a wealthy suburb in Johannesburg. I saw the girl on the bench and stopped. The woman worked for her parents, most likely a rich local family. These labels – “Europeans only”, “Coloureds only” – were on everything, by order of the government. When I saw Europeans only, I knew I would have to approach with caution. [...] I took about five shots and went straight back to the office. I processed³ it, then showed it to the editor and he said it was wonderful. It was published worldwide: for a lot of countries, apartheid was the news of the day. Ever since, I have been trying to find the woman and child. I have no leads⁴, but I would love to say: “Thank you very much, for not interfering with me when I took this.”

Interview by Sian CAIN, *The Guardian*, 2015

³ *développer*

⁴ clues

Document 2, Extrait p.105 – Article de Tymon SMITH, *Sunday Times*,
July 29, 2018

Magubane and Goldblatt: a study in black and white

Two of the finest chroniclers of South Africa share the bill at an exhibition of their photographs

Two men born within two years of each other, one in the West Rand mining town of Randfontein, the other in the Johannesburg township of Vrededorp. One is white, the other black. Both of their lives are indelibly changed in their teenage years when the National Party comes to power in 1948 and entrenches¹ the racial segregationist policies that the world soon comes to know as apartheid. Both respond to the injustices by picking up cameras and using them as tools to understand and expose the realities of South Africa. [...]

In that context it is necessary to acknowledge that race affected the careers and positions of both photographers. Goldblatt, in spite of his disgust with the racial policies of the time, was, by virtue of his whiteness, allowed privileges that were not as easily accessible to Magubane. [...] Magubane and other black photographers had to constantly fight to be able to be present in the often violent situations they covered and faced severe consequences were they caught.

[...]

In their own particular ways, both have helped to create a better world than the one into which they were born, miles apart in so many respects.

Tymon SMITH, *Sunday Times*, July 29, 2018

¹established

Évaluation de la compréhension de l'écrit – Guide pédagogique

Looking at Power: The Relevance of Apartheid Photography Today

A look back at Ernest Cole, one of the most important anti-Apartheid photographers, whose subversive work affirms the image's capacity to question authority and continues to resonate in the contemporary moment

The struggle to free South Africa from apartheid was one of the most remarkable challenges of the last century, and photographers played a crucial role in this struggle. By shifting their focus to provide visual resistance in the form of valuable documentation of everyday life, image-makers in South Africa had a significant impact on the course of the conflict.

Photographers had various strategies for recording apartheid; some sought to delegitimize it by using their work for political purposes, while others used their work to represent and comprehend it. Regardless, most were driven to document moments of life in South Africa because of a recognized need to reveal the striking¹ injustices of the racist system.

Ernest Cole, South Africa's first black photojournalist, challenged the power structures of apartheid South Africa in his attempt to reveal knowledge and construct social reality through his photographs. [...]

Cole's work first appeared in *Drum Magazine* in 1962 in the article "It's Integration—Result of Group Areas Act," about a neighborhood deemed "white" but that later became racially integrated. The article presents the story of a place where racial mixing occurred despite the apartheid laws, which made integration illegal. It

¹ impressive

presented a subtle, yet powerful, jab² at apartheid legislation concerning interracial relations. Cole's accompanying photographs are considered some of the most intimate documents of interracial relationships from this period.

Indeed, throughout apartheid, the government feared photography—so much so that it eventually banned foreign journalists. Documentary photography was illegal, and so Cole's work became contraband. By telling the story of apartheid, Cole confronted power structures that otherwise controlled this geographic and political region. [...]

Miller Bianucci, *Lensculture*, 2020

² attack