

Listening, //Auru, Namibia.

Vulka SA, 1(S): 36-43 (1996)

"Footprints in the Sand"

Paul Weinberg

p. 38 says
#Khomani 1st
at Kasga Komanu

This exhibition brings together a body of work which began twelve years ago. In 1984 I accompanied filmmaker John Marshall to Bushmanland, Namibia. Arriving at the capital of Bushmanland, Tjumikui, I found people lining up for the bottlestore and shop, men in army uniforms, drunkenness and social decay.

My expectations of an egalitarian, hunter-gatherer society living in harmony with nature were shattered. The romantic conceptions of an idyllic lifestyle I had read at university clashed

horribly with the modern reality.

Something was terribly out of sync and so I embarked on a journey to understand what had happened to people who for so long had lived with their natural environment. The project has taken me to three countries – Namibia, Botswana and South Africa.

I have visited nearly all the communities who are considered San. All have been dispossessed in varying degrees. In some parts in Namibia, namely eastern Bushmanland and areas of Botswana, people still have access to land where

FOOTPRINTS IN THE SAND

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Paul Weinberg's

extensive portfolio documents
the tragedy of a dispossessed
people in transition.

Assembled over a period of
twelve years, this unique
archive creates a poignant
backdrop to the important
installation - *Miscast*.

*Negotiating Khazsan History
and Material Culture -*

*which opened at the South
African National Gallery in
Cape Town on 13 April 1996.*

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United again after years of separation, !Ae=’a, Namibia.

hunting and gathering can take place. Where people can, they have adapted to farming, cultivating and keeping livestock.

I continued over a period of time, up to the time of independence in 1989, to return to Bushmanland in Namibia.

Things changed for the better as a process began to settle the Ju’hoansi back in their *!nore* (ancestral hunting and water areas). Cattle husbandry was introduced, boreholes sunk for permanent water and skills such as gardening were taught. Crafts were taught to sup-

plement income. The Nyae Nyae Development Farmers Co-operative was established to meet the advancement needs of the communities.

But the vast majority of people have been dispossessed for some time now and seek work on farms, as they did prior to independence with the South West African army.

In Botswana the situation is more complex. In some areas the San have lost their land completely as have the majority of Nharo people to white and black farmers.



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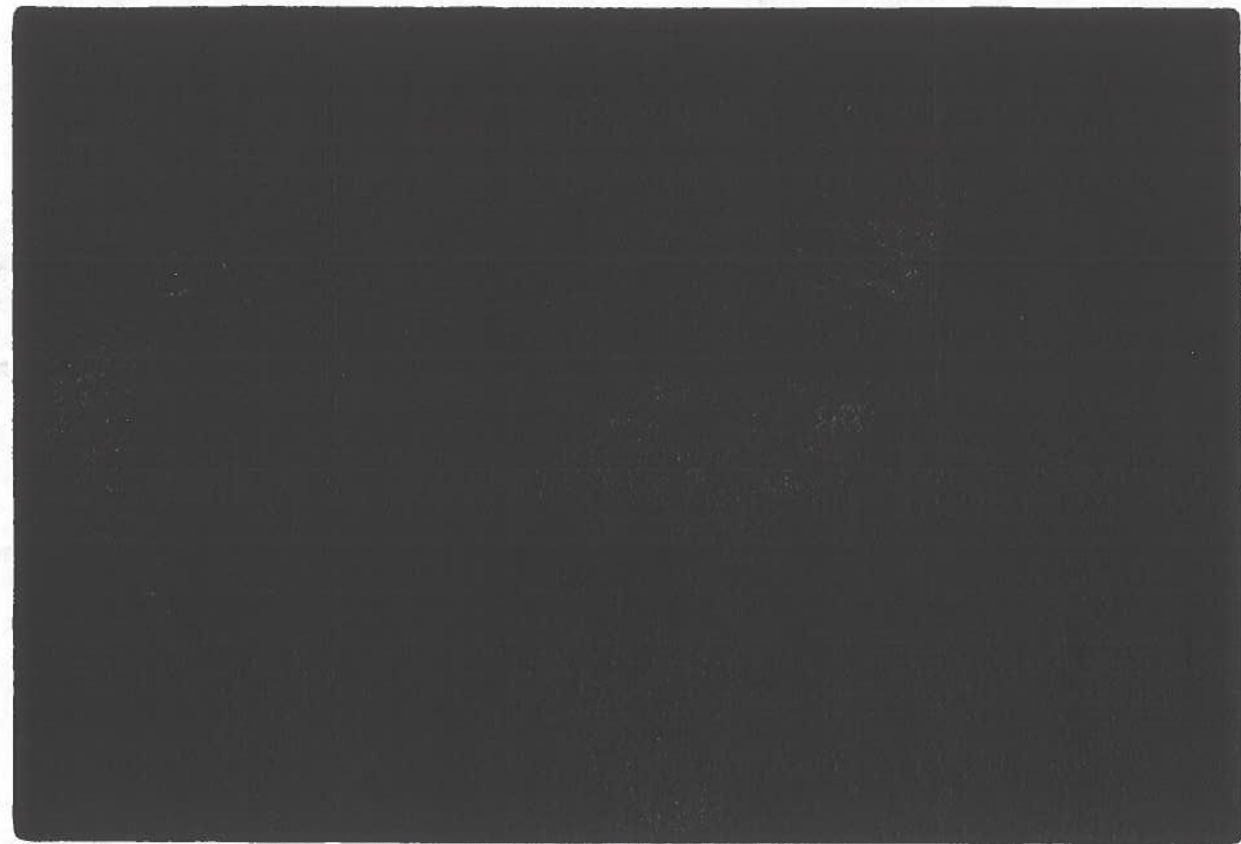
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Nxabe eating a tsama melon with her child, Malopo, Botswana.

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!Khomani

In the Central Kalahari Game Reserve various San groups live off the land with a great degree of difficulty. Hunting is restricted and government settlements have brought with them problems of their own. In the deeper regions water remains a major problem for both the people and their livestock.

In South Africa, the Qomeni are the last of the ethnic San left. They were removed from the Kalahari Gemsbok Park in the 1960s and most of the community now live in a tourist resort called Kagga Kamma in the Ceres mountains in the Cape. The history of the San in this is a sad testament to the process of settlement by black and white people who followed. There are very small groups of people who claim San ancestry scattered throughout the country.

In Schmidtsdrift live the largest grouping of San people in the world.

They are the !Xu and the Khoe people who were transported to this country from Omega Army Base in Namibia soon after it's independence.

Contrary to the image of the San as projected in a recent spate of TV commercials, advertisements and films like the *Gods Must Be Crazy*, modern-day San live a far from harmonious life. This exhibition is an attempt to document the lives of an indigenous people in a state of transition.

I join a very long line of outsiders who have recorded, studied, researched, filmed and photographed the San for over a hundred years. I wish simply to try and show the life of a one time harmonious culture in a state of change, flux and struggle. I hope that these images bring the viewer closer to the experience of the San of today in southern Africa.'



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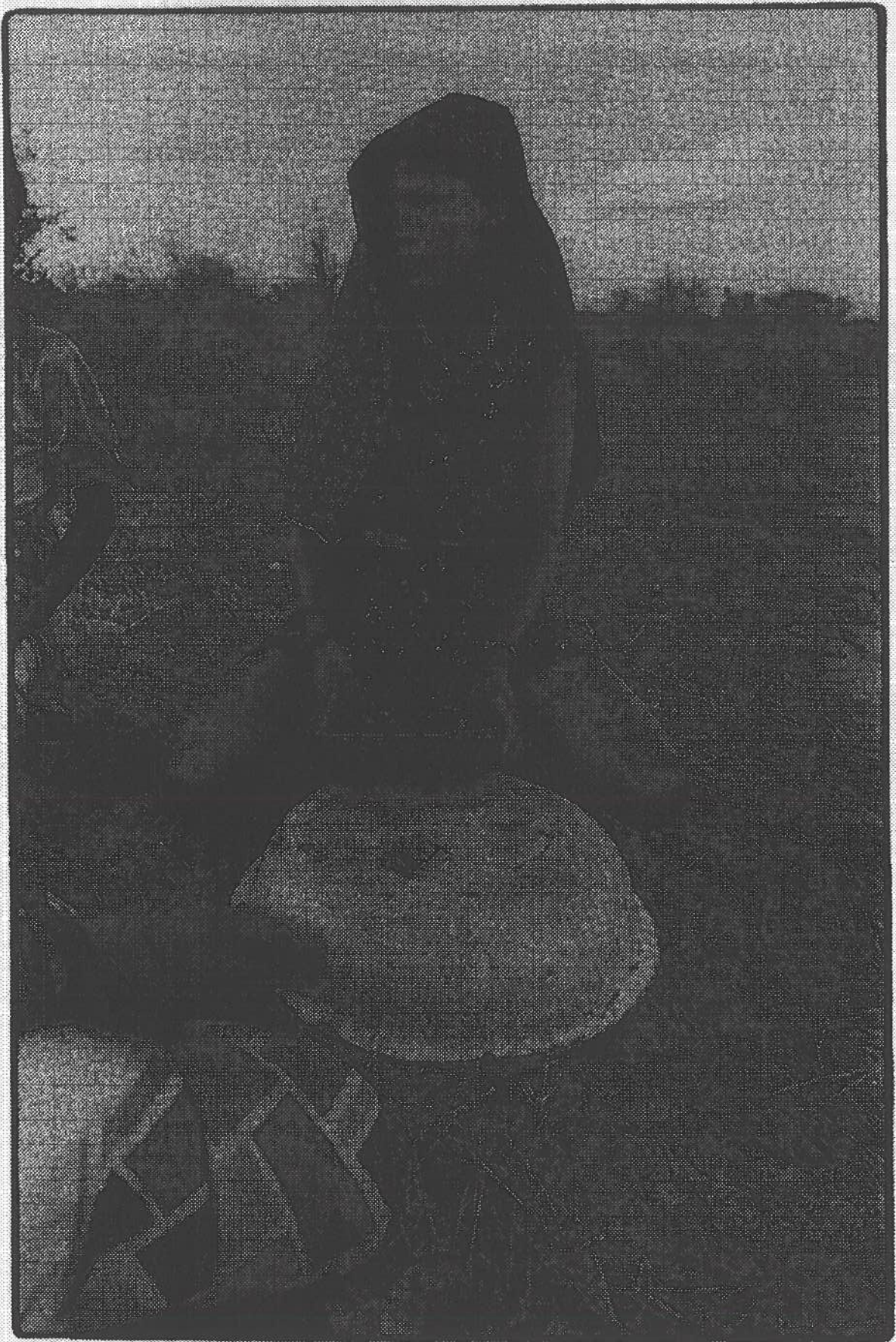
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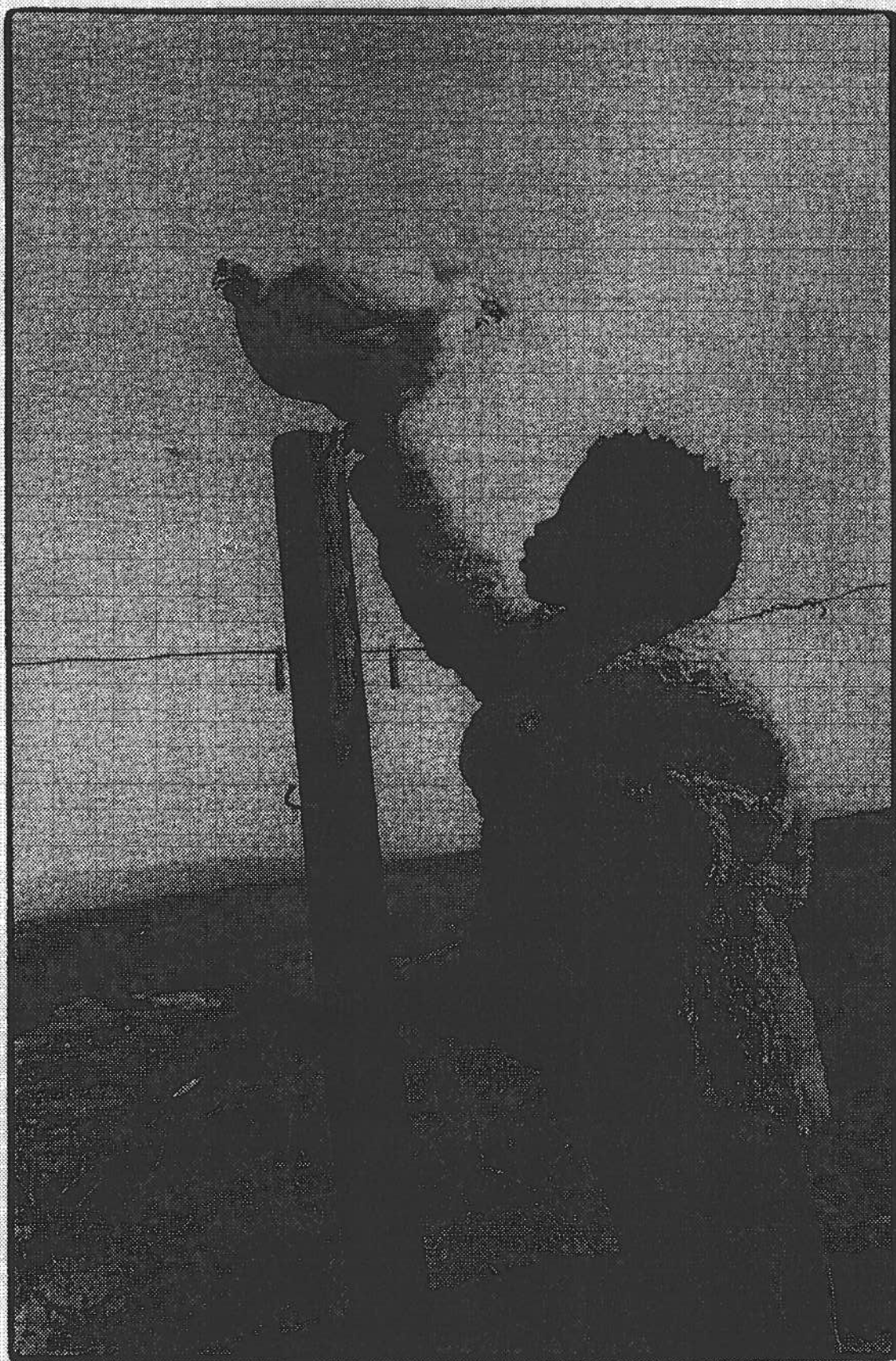
Playing the dongu, //Auru, Namibia.



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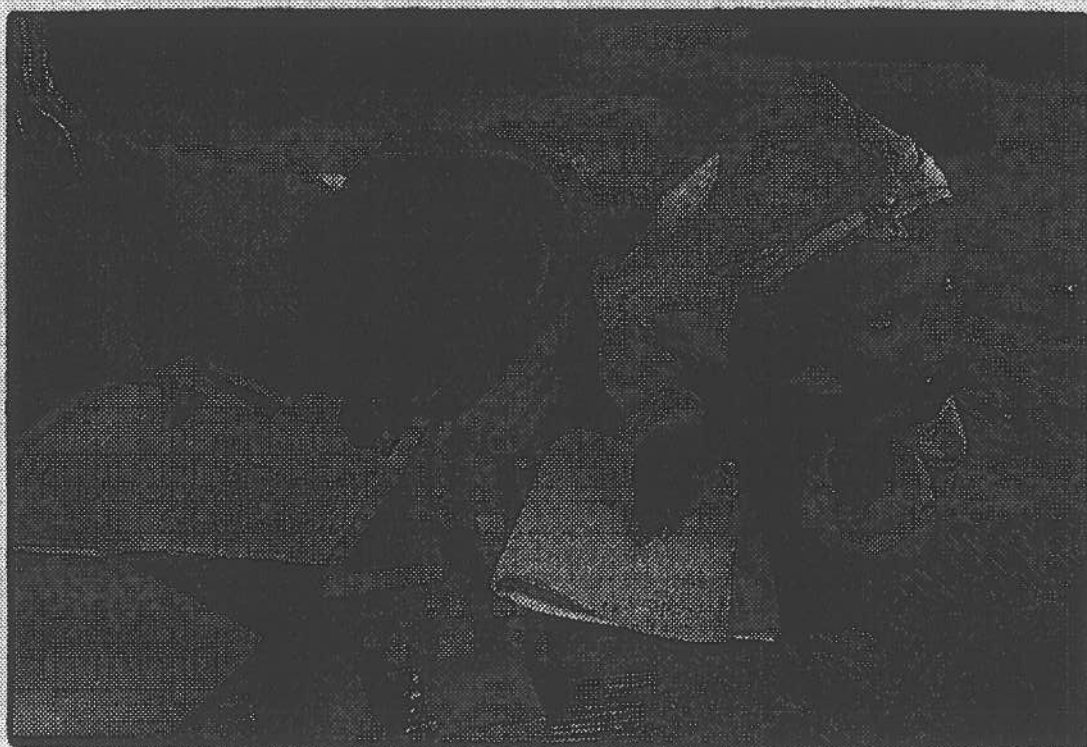
Weekend festivities, Tsumikui, Namibia.



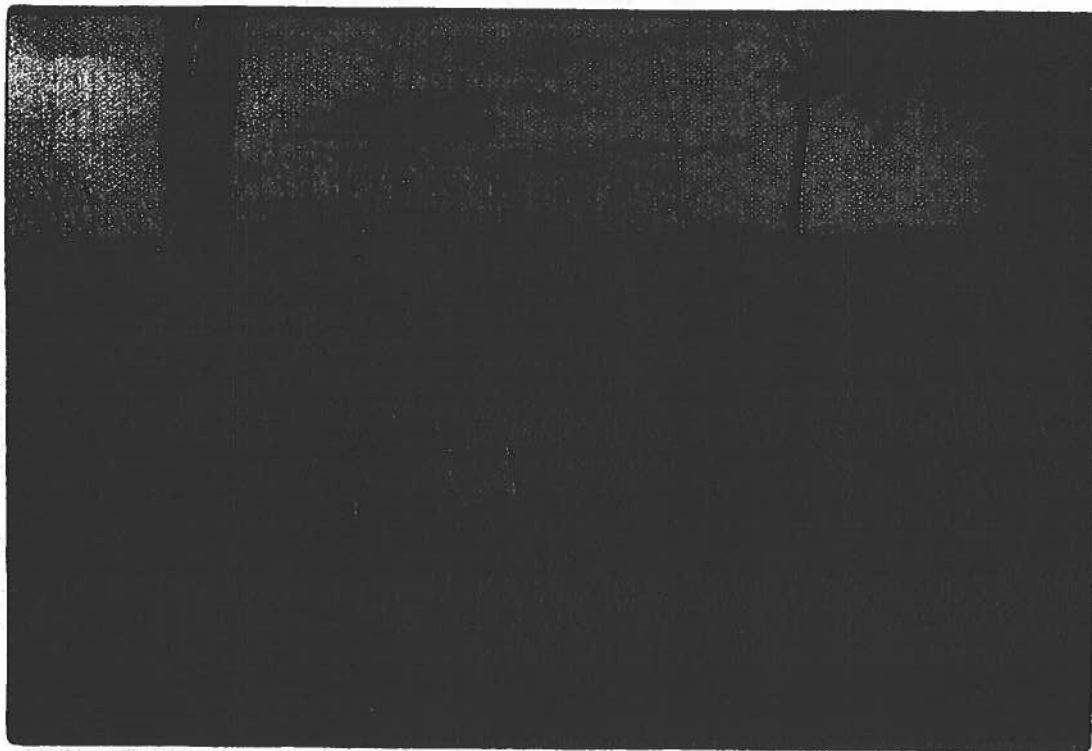
Galeb, who appeared in the film *Kalahari Harry*, plays with a chicken, Kagga Kamma, South Africa.



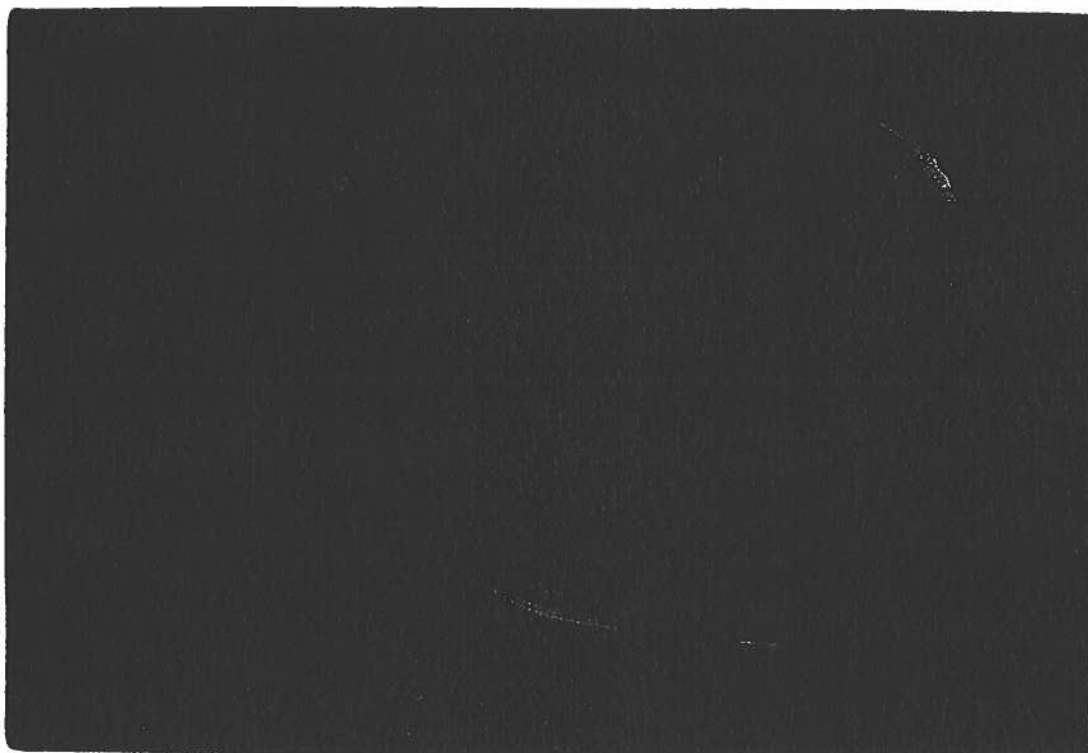
N/haru-'han, Namibia.



Class in progress at the school, Kagga Kamma, South Africa.



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Class in progress at the school, Kagga Kamma, South Africa.

The installation, **WITCAST: AFRICAN HISTORY AND ALTERNATIVE CULTURE** at the South African National Gallery in Cape Town, was curated by Pippa Skotnes and assisted during its opening and is presented in association with the University of Cape Town and the South African Museum. The exhibition closes on 15 September 1996.

When foreign ships arrived in southern African waters they brought with them cargoes of strange objects and strange people with alien ideas and unintelligible languages. They took land, exploited natural resources and began a process of protracted warfare which resulted in the total destruction of indigenous people.

This Khoisan exhibition looks at the various relationships that were established when European settlers arrived in southern Africa. That these relationships were severely imbalanced in terms of power is reflected by the colonial classification of individuals (in the examples, the anthropometric photographs of the late nineteenth century).

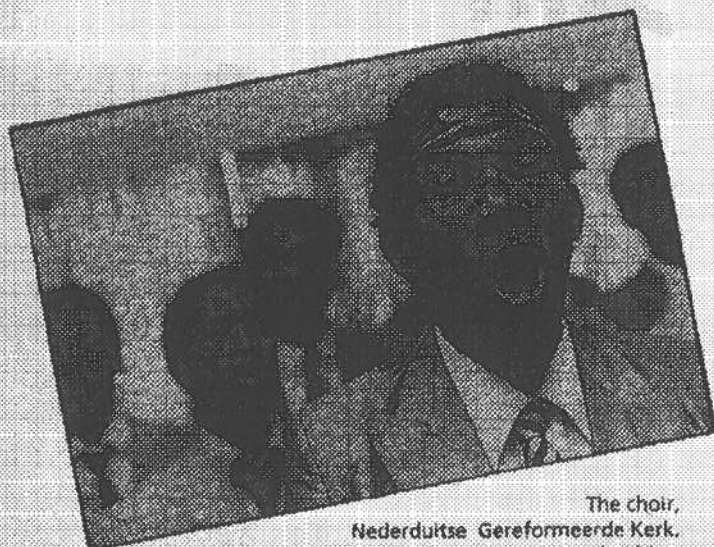
That these relationships resulted in loss of life, in multiple language deaths and cultural genocide is evidenced in the images of war, heads, languages, prison victims and slavery.

That these relationships also affirmed the various meanings of racialised racism and a common humanity is witnessed in the works of Willem Blaaie and Lucy Thiel.

The exhibition examines the tensions that exist in museums today: *what is to be shown, what is to be stored, and what is available to study.*

It tries to show that history and museums are about the present, and not about the past, and that the allures of history and material nature does not just belong to our people or the experience of the past, but to all those who formed and continue to form the complex relationships that produced the past and create present scenes to it.

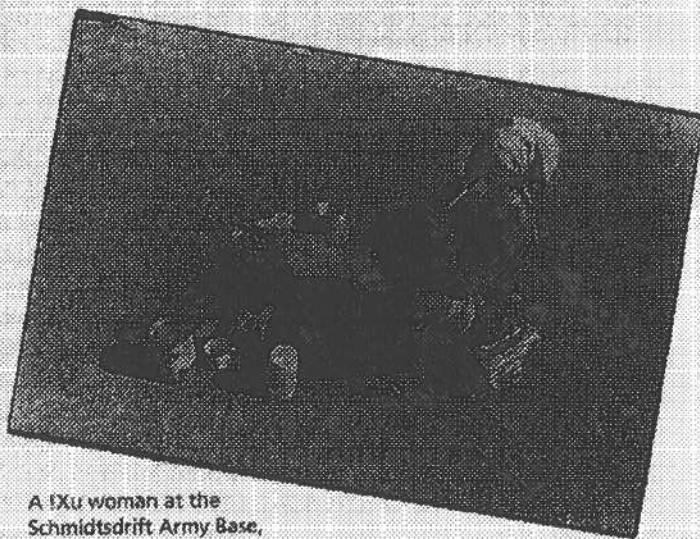
This exhibition has been supported by: Agfa, Agfa America and Lee Hays Charities, Council, Board of Directors, British Council, Canada Council, John of Good Hope Bank, Fathmair, Dutch Consulate, Federal Republic of Germany, Jewish Charitable Trust, Medunika, PG Office, Royal Netherlands Embassy, South African Airways, Sanitation and M&M and Wine Association, Co-operative, Graham, David, Kopelman.



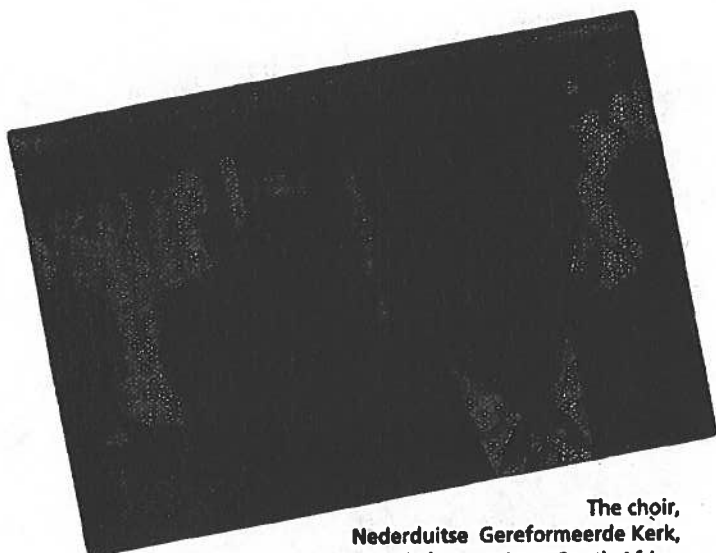
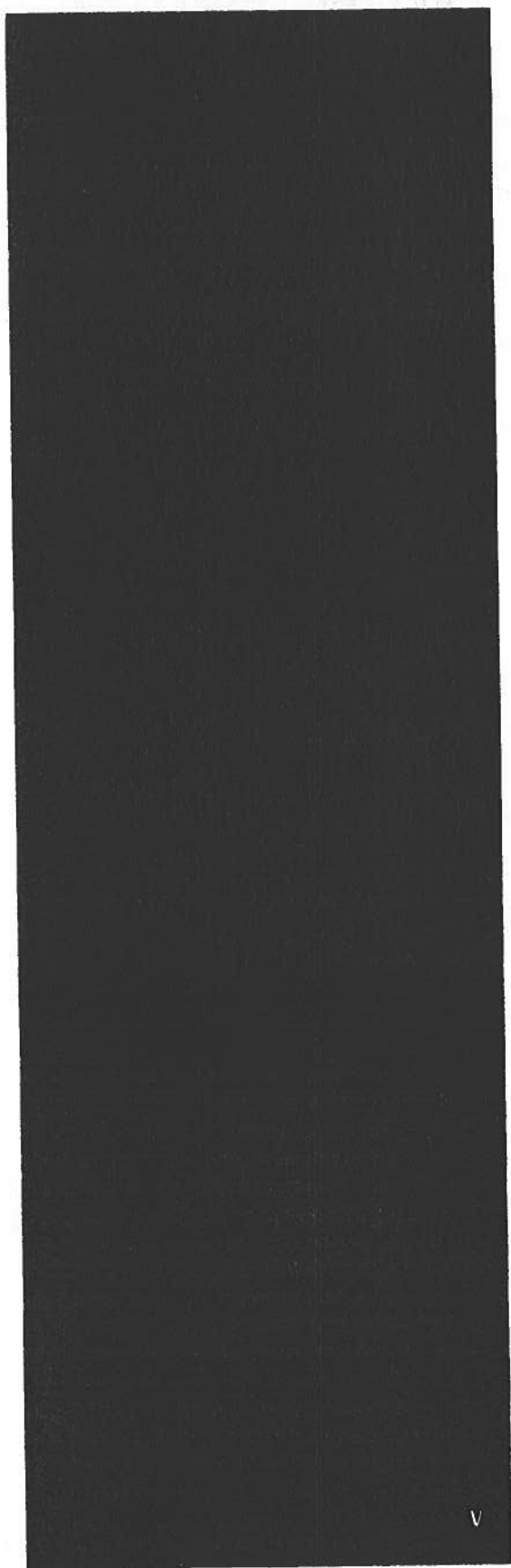
The choir,
Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk,
Schmidtsdrift Army Base, South Africa.



Waiting for demobbing, Mangetti, Namibia.



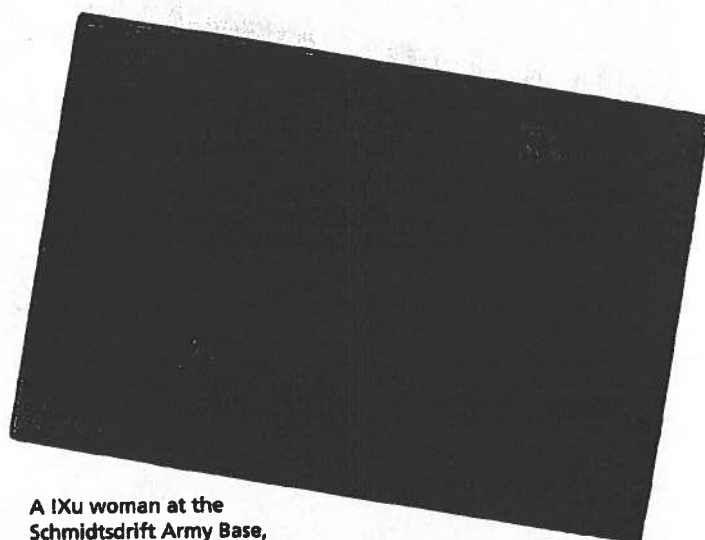
A !Xu woman at the
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