

## **Inside and Outside: Mikhael Subotzky in Conversation with Michael Godby**

Mikhael Subotzky graduated with a first class degree in Fine Art from the University of Cape Town in 2004. His final year exhibition *Die Vier Hoeke*, on the prison system in the Western Cape, attracted immediate attention for the daring of its subject-matter and the extraordinary beauty of its imagery. Since then, Subotzky's career has been meteoric. He exhibited *Die Vier Hoeke* in the Nelson Mandela Cell at Pollsmoor Prison in 2005 and at Constitution Hill, Johannesburg, in February 2006. At the same time he showed this exhibition and his new essay *Umjiegwana* (Outside) at the Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg. Over the past two years he has exhibited also in Italy, the Canary Islands, Mali, the United Kingdom and the United States: this year he was featured prominently in *Snap Judgments: New Positions in Contemporary African Photography* at the International Centre for Photography, New York. Subotzky has been awarded the Special Jurors' Prize at the *VI Rencontres Africaines de la Photographie* at Bamako, Mali, for *Die Vier Hoeke* (2005); he won the *F25 Award for Concerned Photography* at Fabrica, Italy (2006); and he has been selected for the 2006 Joop Swart Masterclass, World Press Photo, in Amsterdam. He is currently working on a project in Beaufort West.

**MG:** From the outset your work has been characterized by a certain tension, can I say, between the beauty of your photographs and your manifest commitment to the social conditions experienced by your subjects. In this conversation I would like to address both these aspects of your work. Thus, to start at the beginning, you appear to have decided at an early age on a career as a documentary photographer: when you thought of studying at UCT, did you feel you had more to learn about photography? Or about social conditions in South Africa? Or was your decision to study Fine Art informed by the opportunities such study would provide in starting on your work?

**MS:** I decided to study art because I really wasn't sure what I wanted to do and how to do it, and because I had always imagined that I would study after school. I had a new passion for photography from my so-called 'gap year' and wanted to study something where I could develop this further, but something that was not too narrow in its focus. Fine Art seemed to be the default choice. I thought that the art degree would teach me more about photography, while the possibility of doing humanities courses at the same time would teach me about social issues in South Africa and beyond. While neither of these worked out directly as I imagined, doing a Fine Art degree at Michaelis provided a remarkable platform for artistic exploration. For me, that exploration was aimed very much towards a documentary tradition. I wasn't even sure that I wanted to be a photographer. But the work of documentary photographers was what was in front of me and inspiring me at the time, and I was lucky enough to have the space to go for it – to try and do it myself.

**MG:** When you speak of ‘the documentary tradition’ inspiring you as a student, what did you understand by that term at that time? And whose work did you find ‘inspiring’?

**MS:** My introduction to photography came largely through the work of my uncle, Gideon Mendel. I think, for me at the time, the ‘documentary tradition’ referred to the work which was, like his, socially concerned and engaged. I found these qualities first and foremost in the work of Eugene Smith and Sebastiao Salgado, but I was also very impressed by the types of images produced by Cartier-Bresson, Gilles Perress and Guy Tillim amongst others. I’m not sure, but perhaps the notion of the ‘documentary tradition’ was made up for me by both a social and a formal element. I was attracted to the formal properties of black and white, wide angle, decisive moment photography – it was the sum of the photographic possibilities that I was most aware of and most interested in. But what inspired me most was the possibility that photography provided of exploring and engaging with the world around me. I think most of this came, first hand, from Gideon’s work – and I think he is one of the few photographers who truly manages successfully to combine the social and the formal qualities of this so-called ‘documentary tradition’. I was, even at this time, strongly aware of the many problems associated with this tradition and the representational critiques of its practices and presentation. It is quite humorous to think of these early influences of mine in relation to Okwui Enwezor’s critique of ‘documentary heroism’ in the catalogue of an exhibition in which my work is included! I would like to think though, that my work walks a line which engages this documentary tradition, but in a way that is both conscious and critical.

**MG:** Susan Sontag described photography as ‘solipsistic’: rather than creating an objective view of the world, it invariably reflects the interests and concerns of the photographer. But what you are saying is slightly different, I think. You appear to have used photography as a means of getting to know your world, with your camera enabling you to go places you would not normally go. How, then, did you arrive at prison subject-matter?

**MS:** I think that is very much what I feel. Photography has been a tool in a broader search to understand and engage with the world – one that has been very effective in taking me to those places. I was in my fourth year at Michaelis searching for a subject for my final year-long project. This was in early 2004 and it was the lead up to the General Elections. There had been a high profile Constitutional Court case which concerned the rights to vote of sentenced prisoners. I had been following this with interest, but it was eventually quite randomly that I found my way into prison. I went away for the weekend to a farm near Tulbagh, and after wandering around early one morning with my camera, happened to meet some members of the IEC (Independent Electoral Commission) who were preparing for the Election – including taking the ballots into the small Dwarsrivier Prison in the area. I made about 20 frantic phone calls and was incredibly lucky eventually to get permission to take pictures in this prison – just for that one voting day. I was quite blown away by what I saw in Dwarsrivier that day. I took portraits of prisoners

holding up their ballot papers, but soon realized that I wanted to do a broader project photographing our prisons. I noticed that they were grossly overcrowded, full of social problems, and most importantly, purposefully hidden from view. I felt a strong pull to make images of a part of society which, because it was hidden, had become subject to stereotyping and fantasy. It was hidden from most of society, and yet an integral part of the life experience of so many people who pass in and out. It took another three or four months to get proper access to Pollsmoor – three or four months of letter writing and head bashing!

**MG:** How did you explain your project to the prisoners and the prison authorities? And did your understanding of the project change while you were working on it?

**MS:** I think that the explaining of the project is really a crucial step – especially with the people that I am working with and photographing. To the prison authorities – at first, the fact that I could say that it was a student project was very fortuitous in that it sounded less threatening and less like it was going to become a sensational newspaper piece. But the really important part was how I explained it to the prisoners. I have come to learn in the last couple of years that consent is really not a simple matter and it goes far beyond waving your camera and getting a nod. So I have really worked hard at figuring out ways to describe what I do and where the work is going and where it will be seen and what it will look like – and this has become a very important part of my methodology. It is not only about consent – but also about the beginnings of trying to form an open and honest relationship that will eventually lead to photographs being taken and beyond.

My understanding of the project has changed hugely while I have been working on it – I speak of the bigger project now which includes *Die Vier Hoeke*, *Umjiegwana*, and *Beaufort West*. This has really been my education in photography, so my understanding and approach to all aspects of the making of a project has changed and developed considerably. When I first went into prison, I was really just wandering around, trying to figure out how to make good, strong, and meaningful images from a hugely overwhelming array of scenes and situations. I knew roughly what I wanted to present and show about life in prison, yet I really had to figure out fast which pictures to take and how to put them together to create a meaningful narrative or presentation. It was really a lot of trial and error – especially with regard to all the different formats that I used – 35mm, 360 panoramic, and X-pan. At first I was really just trying to do a good strong documentary project on prisons – one which spoke about life in this hidden world. As it developed, I became more ambitious about the scope and started conceptualizing the Prison Photo Workshops and the *Umjiegwana* series. Without wanting to re-ignite any art versus documentary argument, I think I also started thinking of it in less of a directly ‘documentary’ mode.

**MG:** With your decision in *Umjiegwana* to record the lives of the prisoners following their release, were you consciously deciding to investigate broader social issues? Or was your main interest still with the prisoners, how they were coping with freedom?

**MS:** That was part of the attraction of doing the series – being able to use the prisoner and ex-prisoner’s stories as a nodal point to investigate broader social issues. Very early on when I was working on *Die Vier Hoeke*, I realized that I needed to find a way of tracing the narratives beyond the prisons themselves. It just didn’t feel right to show prisons in isolation. I was worried that this would contribute to a type of ‘exoticisation’ of the prison world. So I came up with the idea of photographing the lives of ex-prisoners as a way of putting what I saw in prison into a broader social context – to make reference to the direct relationship between problems inside and outside of our prisons that I believe are causally significant in both directions. But beyond that, it was wonderful for me to find a way to meditate on certain everyday things that I saw around me as well as on the more focused aspects of the project.

**MG:** Okwui Enwezor’s remark about ‘documentary heroism’, that you referred to earlier, seems to refer to one aspect of the critique of documentary photography as fundamentally self-serving that is associated with Martha Rosler, Abigail Solomon-Godeau and others. You have obviously thought deeply about these issues and I imagine that your concern not to ‘exoticize’ your prison subject-matter, on the one hand, and to really work through the issue of consent, on the other, are responses to this sort of critique. Are there other strategies you might mention in this connection? And what do you think a documentary photographer has to do to ‘make a difference’ in today’s world?

**MS:** I guess these are issues which are (or should be) quite close to the bone for any photographer who works in anything near or resembling a ‘documentary’ mode. I think the hardest thing for me to have had to deal with in my career thus far has been what is often a huge and overwhelming gulf between the contexts in which photographs are made and the contexts in which they are shown. And I have tried so hard to find just small ways to bring these two worlds together. The Prison Photo Workshops and the subsequent exhibition of *Die Vier Hoeke* in Pollsmoor were very important in this regard.

I set up and ran the Prison Photo Workshops in 2005 after completing *Die Vier Hoeke* series. Working with a small group of both male and female prisoners, I taught basic photographic skills and briefly introduced the history of photography. I tried as much as possible to get across skills which might be commercially useful one day, but the time and space frustrations of working inside prison meant that most of what we did was more just a fun activity. But that was great – I could sense how wonderful it was for the group to be out of their cells for even the short times that we were allowed. Most of the group have subsequently been released and I have managed to find once-off photographic jobs for two of them.

But the most important aspect of the Workshops to this discussion is the exhibition of the work. On Freedom Day in 2005 I held an exhibition of photographs taken by the prisoners and my full *Die Vier Hoeke* series. Nelson Mandela’s old cell in the heart of the Maximum Security prison at Pollsmoor proved to be a remarkable exhibition space. It was very important to me from the beginning of the project that I exhibit the work in a space where it could be viewed by the people

that I had photographed. It was a huge bureaucratic effort to get as many of the prisoners in the complex as possible to see the exhibition. While there were, of course, limitations to this, I am really glad that a significant number did see it. I also, and this seems utterly improbable in hindsight, managed to get 300 members of the public and the art-world into the prison for this one-day-only exhibition. It was very meaningful to me that these people could see the work in the context in which it was made. While working on the project, I realised that it didn't feel right to me to take the pictures in this crazy hidden world and then ship them across town for their only viewing to be staged at the art school or some inaccessible gallery. Afterwards people told me how resonant it felt to look at the pictures and hear the hum of prison life below and around them – the slamming of doors and keys, the clanging of pots and trolleys, and the occasional shout above the hum.

I then organised an exhibition of the prisoner's photographs (again alongside my own) in the old Women's Prison at Constitution Hill in Johannesburg. This was to go with my first solo show at the Goodman Gallery (where *Umjiegwana* was presented). The Goodman Gallery was incredibly supportive and flew up and accommodated two of the (now released) prisoners who had taken part in the workshops. Together we ran workshops and walkabouts in the exhibition space – talking about our respective experiences in prison. We spoke to art students from the Funda Centre in Soweto, and a group of 'youth at risk' from an inner city project amongst other public groups.

All of these initiatives have been my attempts to bring together the two worlds that I mentioned earlier. While I don't think I will ever be fully successful in reconciling them, it is very important for me at least just to try. Another way for me to do this is, as much as I possibly can manage, to maintain the relationships that I have formed with people that I have photographed. I do this for myself – as a way of trying to prevent this dislocation between the worlds that I operate in. But I think it is also important for the people that I have photographed that the relationship doesn't just end when I have the images that I want. Once again, Linda Givon of the Goodman Gallery has been incredibly supportive of this side of my practice. She has met many of the people that I have worked with and also made very significant financial contributions to their lives.

But to go back to Okwui's 'documentary heroism': nothing in all that I have described means that my images from *Die Vier Hoeke* (when shown in a gallery or in a magazine article) cannot be seen to be all about the heroism or skill of the photographer. I do try and prevent this through the use of textual elements and editing strategies, but the danger of this reading is always present. But for me, it all boils down to my own personal emphasis in terms of the life of an image – the entire process of its 'making' which occurs before and after its 'taking'. If this whole process was all geared towards making images that can be 'triumphantly' presented, then I think that my work would very much be associated with these more problematic elements of the documentary canon. I hope that in some way the extent to which these other stages are important to me will read in the final presentation of the images themselves – in the feel that is somehow carried across through a series. But I cannot control that – it is either read or not.

Finally, to address your question about 'making a difference'. I really try not

to be naïve or idealistic about the ability of a photographer to make a difference. We have seen horrific images of war and suffering and starvation for so many years now, and these things still occur around us. I do fundamentally believe though, that consciousness is an intrinsically important part of producing a climate where social change can occur. My process of making photographs thus feels like a part of my own personal duty to make myself as conscious as possible of the world around me. I am lucky that this process produces images which I can show to other people. If these images might have some impact on the consciousness of those who see them, then I would be very happy indeed. But I must emphasize that ‘might’. If one wants to really go and ‘make a difference’, you either do that on a personal level, or you become a revolutionary. But somewhere within this very abstract talk, I really do believe that the making of some forms of art can play a very important role in society – that is, if it is not allowed to become completely dislocated from that society in its ultimate realization. The notion of bearing witness is complicated for me in that it has often been skewed in association with the mainstream media which has very obscured motives. And yet, in its essential form, it offers a powerful model for a type of reflection that I believe is very very important to the world that has been constructed around us.

**MG:** I suppose that, traditionally, in Western societies, the class to which most art is addressed is assumed to be the class that controls society, economically if not politically. In talking about ‘social consciousness’ and ‘climate’, however, you seem to be addressing a wider audience that might somehow bring about change, and you are clearly committed to having your work seen by as wide a range of people as possible. But you are also concerned, clearly, to engage with the power relationship at the original photographic encounter, between photographer and subject. In ‘The Authentic Image’, John Berger suggests that, despite their ability to exactly reproduce the real world, photographs cannot be authentic because they remove the subject from the continuum of time. And he argues that the only way to get past that is, on the one hand, to represent different aspects of the subject at different moments in time and, on the other, to spend time with the subject in order to get to know him or her better – and, importantly, to gain their trust. Do you agree with Berger?

**MS:** I have never read that particular comment, but would agree for the most part. There is a fundamental rupture in the removal that Berger describes. Especially with regard to the first part of your question and the ‘class’ that most art is addressed to. For me though, while I am acutely aware of the need to be responsible from a representational point of view, the later part of Berger’s assertion is the most important – that the original encounter with the ‘subject’ is as open and honest as possible. I don’t like to think of it as ‘gaining their trust’. That somehow implies that there is this strange ‘other’ out there who is implicitly distrustful. And it also implies that one needs to gain the trust for a particular reason or purpose – normally the taking of the photograph. Instead, for me, it should be like any other social interaction – one that is built up slowly and might lead to mutual trust. On the other hand, I don’t in any way want to deny that there is something inherently strange and unnatural about the interaction that leads to a photograph being taken.

Nevertheless, I always try and approach the encounter as if it were a ‘normal’ interaction, rather than with any express aims such as ‘gaining trust’.

**MG:** I do not think that Berger would consider that the gaining of trust was necessarily instrumental, just that, as you clearly experience, it denotes a condition in the relationship in which the taking of a photograph becomes acceptable. Can we turn now to the style of your photographs? And can I begin by asking you where you came by the panoramic view that is such a characteristic feature of your early essays? And what you hope to communicate by using this form?

**MS:** I owe a great deal to Gideon Mendel in terms of the usage of the stitched panoramic images. I learnt about the technique when I assisted him when he was shooting his *Harsh Divide* series in 2002 and 2003. He was one of the first to use this type of image for serious documentary work – focusing mainly on online presentation of scrolling panoramas which were set to audio commentary. When I started shooting my own panoramas in 2003, I decided to focus on their printed presentation. While these large-scale printed panoramas can be highly effective visually, I remain very wary of their use. The inherent distortion associated with trying to fit a 360 degree view onto a flat page can easily lead to a gimmicky feel to the images. What’s more, very few of the distorted panoramas work from a compositional point of view, and it is very hard to accurately predict how they will look when you are making them. I take hundreds of photos from many different positions to make a panorama, and most of them are discarded. Nevertheless, those prison interiors were among the few situations that I feel are really well suited to the panoramic view. Presenting a 360 degree arc around me, the photographer, gives the viewer a very real sense of actually being immersed in the squashed humanity of those cells. I also like the way that the photographer becomes present in the realized image implicitly – by the suggestion of the still point of this turning arc where the attention of the subjects is often focused. In the prison cells, the arc of the panorama also gives a conscious nod to Foucault’s description of Bentham’s panopticon in *Discipline and Punish*.

I guess then, to answer the last part of your question, I hope to use these panoramas to communicate an extended sense of the spatial relationships that were evident when the photograph was made – relationships which encompass a full horizontal field of view and including (implicitly) my own presence. What’s more, the temporal element is just as interesting as the spatial. The panoramas are stitched from 18 separate frames. Often, I will combine separate cycles which have been taken from the same tripod placement. This means that there can be quite significant gaps in time between the moments when the separate images are taken. Sometimes, these panoramas even include the same person twice – captured repeatedly as they follow the swing of the camera. I don’t usually allow for the inclusion of repeated people, but it can be interesting in some images as it erodes the notion of the photograph as a snapshot in time – an objective description of a particular event at a particular time.

**MG:** You suggested earlier that as you moved deeper into your project, you came to think of it as less strictly ‘documentary’, and you seemed to imply that the

only alternative to this approach was ‘art’. The trouble with this popular distinction, and perhaps the reason for your caution, is that the terms ‘art’ or ‘aesthetic values’ are commonly construed to be in opposition to seriousness of purpose when, in fact, ‘aesthetics’ in the form of style, composition, lighting, etc., may be used precisely to reinforce the documentary project. In your comments above, you are saying that the panoramic form of your photographs can, amongst other things, convey a sense of enclosure, reference the panopticon, and even suggest the constructed nature of representation. These are complex ideas which are obviously better suited to the contemplative space of an art gallery than, say, the front page of a newspaper. But, of course, complexity is not identical with aesthetic value and I would say that another quality you have derived from Gideon Mendel is the capacity to make images of arresting beauty – images whose very strength of form demands that one looks at them, explores them, and thinks about them. Are you reluctant to have your photographs considered as art?

**MS:** I think that you are spot on in that the problem with these particular popular distinctions is that they are generally applied in a very limited way. I love the breadth of ‘art’, the ability to draw out subtlety and meaning within the flexibility provided by what you describe as ‘the contemplative space of an art gallery’. And, as you say, it is so important to emphasize that ‘art’ doesn’t necessarily imply an over-emphasis on aesthetics.

I am not reluctant to have my images considered as art. I make a living from the sale of my work as art. I am represented by a gallery and not a picture agency, and am constantly thinking about how to realize the image as a print that will hang as a part of an exhibition. But regardless of the context in which an image is presented, I firmly believe in the importance of its aesthetic element. An image needs to draw you in, to agitate the eye, to ask to be looked at repeatedly. This aesthetic function can be performed in either complex or extremely simple ways. When this is combined with a seriousness of purpose, the potential is there for something very powerful to be conveyed.

**MG:** I think this is a very important statement. I think that there are few documentary photographers – by which I mean here simply photographers with subject-matter as serious and purposeful as yours – that would be so frank about their relationship to art: the special conditions of viewing work that art provides, on the one hand, and the sale of their work as art, on the other. Having said that, I wonder if you would agree that you appear to be moving away from some of the aesthetic devices you used in *Die Vier Hoeke* and *Umjiegwana* in your new work on Beaufort West and are making more compact, perhaps less lyrical work? Could you explain what you are doing in this project?

**MS:** I think there is definitely some sort of shift happening with the Beaufort West work. And yes, I do think that one could describe it as more compact. In *Die Vier Hoeke* and *Umjiegwana*, the use of the panoramic format (in both 360 and X-Pan mode) lent the work a certain aesthetic impact which was in some ways independent of the actual image constructions. While I think that these aesthetic



devices were important to the realization of that work, part of what I have done in Beaufort West is say to myself – let’s see what you can do with the simplest of frames. And I have really enjoyed that – working with a frame that has come to be accepted as standard or default or even perfect (6 by 7 inch is often described as ‘perfect format’) as opposed to the more dramatic panoramic frame. It feels like one has to work harder with this format to make effective compositions – a discipline that I feel is an important part of my development. However, another reason why I have used this frame is for the larger format of 120 film which yields a bigger negative. This allows me to make bigger prints with better tonality. So I wouldn’t necessarily say that the final prints are less lyrical, but perhaps a different type of lyrical, which is less reliant on the abstracting qualities of the panoramic frame.

But finally, it is important for me that all this technical and aesthetic talk is not removed from that which is contained in the image. In Beaufort West, I was looking less at the drama of the institution (or post-institution life) and more at the particularities of people’s lives in relation to marginalization and struggle. Somehow, the simpler frame and the finer rendering of detail of the new format suited this. The situations that I photographed didn’t seem to demand an extended frame as the crowded prisons cells had done. Somehow, the horizontally truncated 67 frame seems to favour the particular over the inclusive tableau of the panorama.

The Beaufort West series that is presented here is very much work in progress. Thus far, it focuses on marginalization and risk, but I want to let it grow quite loosely over the next year. I am inspired by the way that Goldblatt’s *Boksburg* presents the particularities of a small town at a distinct time and yet alludes strongly to the broader workings of politics and society. I aim to do something similar with contemporary Beaufort West, and yet to allow the series to find its own structure – something unique to hold it together which is as yet undefined.

### **Die Vier Hoeke**

- 01 Maplank and Naomi take a picture of me during the Prison Photo Workshops. I set up and ran these workshops with a small group of both male and female prisoners in early 2005.
- 02 Unsented prisoners sleep in an overcrowded cell, Pollsmoor Maximum Security Prison. This cell, designed for 18 prisoners, often holds up to 60 men.
- 03 Unsented prisoners sleep in an overcrowded cell, Pollsmoor Maximum Security Prison. The correctional service system’s role at the end of the criminal justice processes means that it cannot refuse to accommodate new prisoners no matter what the state of the system’s general overcrowding.

### **Umjiegwana**

- 04 Ex-prisoner Hermanus lives on the Icon building site on which he works. All of his close family died during his years in prison. ‘I have nothing. Now I am worrying about who is going to put me into the ground.’
- 05 Delft is popularly known as ‘the dumping ground of the Cape’ and this new relocation camp has become known as ‘Tsunami’. Ex-prisoners Daniel and Joe were forcibly moved to Tsunami after living in and around the Cape Town city centre for 22 years.

- 06 Since he came out of jail, Marc has worked on and off for three years as a contract worker for the Cape Town City Council. ‘My contract ends on Friday. I don’t know if they will renew it or not. If they don’t, I will have to just stay at home and see where I can steal and rob the people. *Dit is die sele binne en buite Die Vier Hoeke. Die lewe is nog altyd swaer* [It is the same inside and outside The Four Corners. Life is always hard].’
- 07 ‘Its hard to be a prisoner. But it’s not so hard if you know what is the meaning of the four corners [numbers gang terminology for prison]’ - Tattoo on Vallen’s arm. Vallen spent 20 years in Pollsmoor, Allendale, Voorberg and Helderstroom prisons. He is a Sergeant No 2 in the 28s prison gang.
- 08 Tokkie is a drug dealer. Most of his income is derived from selling Tik (Methamphetamine) a drug that he is addicted to. Tokkie is a member of Cape Town’s largest and most widespread street gang, The Firm. He spent 18 months in Pollsmoor prison for drug possession and is a soldier in the 28s prison gang. ‘This is the life we live. What choices do we have? Living here I have to fight. I have to fight to survive and to get the things I want. I will do anything. Right now this Tik is my job. If they want me to shoot or stab or be a hitman, then that is what I will do. There’s no real jobs for us, so then I will choose my own job. I will do anything.’
- 09 Ex-prisoner Vallen sleeps with his family in a backyard shack in Manenberg.
- 10 Unemployed ex-prisoner Joseph has his eyes tested at a public health clinic.

### **Beaufort West**

- 11 Beaufort West Prison from above. Beaufort West Prison was established in 1873 and is unusually situated within a traffic circle in the N1 – the main highway between Johannesburg and Cape Town. Unlike most South African prisons, it is located in the centre of the town rather than hidden from view in the outskirts.
- 12 Balla warms himself by a fire outside his shack at Vaalkoppies, the Beaufort West rubbish dump. He is a part of a group of about 30 people who live in the dump. They survive off what they can find in the rubbish, as well as from the proceeds of selling rotten fruit for pig food.
- 13 Outside a pine (home brewed beer) shebeen in Beaufort West’s Kwa Mandlankosi township.
- 14 19 year-old Michelle Mallies prepares for work as a prostitute. Her entire extended family survives off the combination of her work and her father’s disability grant.
- 15 Ai Benni and Jarabi smoke Tik (Methamphetamines). There are members of the Ai 26s gang which operates in Beaufort West’s Rustdene township.
- 16 Bonita sings a hymn as the rest of the family drink and smoke in the Mallies household. The entire extended family survive off Marius’s (right) disability grant and 19 year-old Michelle’s (centre) sex-work.
- 17 Policeman Thozi sleeps next to his mother and the carcass of a goat at his family home in Beaufort West’s Kwa Mandlankosi township. Thozi is an alcoholic and his family organized the slaughtering of the goat as an offering to his ancestors in order to try and cure his problem. As a part of the ceremony, he and his mother had to sleep next to the carcass for one night.
- 18 Prisoner, Jacks, polishes the shoes of a warder inside Beaufort West prison.
- 19 A Beaufort West policeman searches and interrogates Ace (not his real name) who has just been arrested. Ace had been involved in a family dispute in which his brother was stabbed in the shoulder.