



# Truth & Deception

Damen Oosthuizen

This art catalogue is a presentation of the creative works of Damen Oosthuizen, and is intended for informational and promotional purposes. Damen Oosthuizen retains all rights to his intellectual property, including his artworks, designs, and accompanying textual content.

No part of this catalogue may be reproduced, distributed, or used for commercial purposes without the explicit written consent and proper attribution to Damen Oosthuizen. Any unauthorized reproduction or usage of the content in this catalogue may infringe upon Damen Oosthuizen's intellectual property rights.

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information and proper attribution of the artworks, the artist and the organizers and publishers of this catalogue cannot be held responsible for any discrepancies or errors. The content in this catalogue is subject to change without notice.

---

**Front Cover.** Damen Oosthuizen, *Deconpyling* (2023).

**Figure 1.** Damen Oosthuizen, *Lightsapes* (2023).



# Exhibition Catalogue

November 2023

Damen Oosthuizen

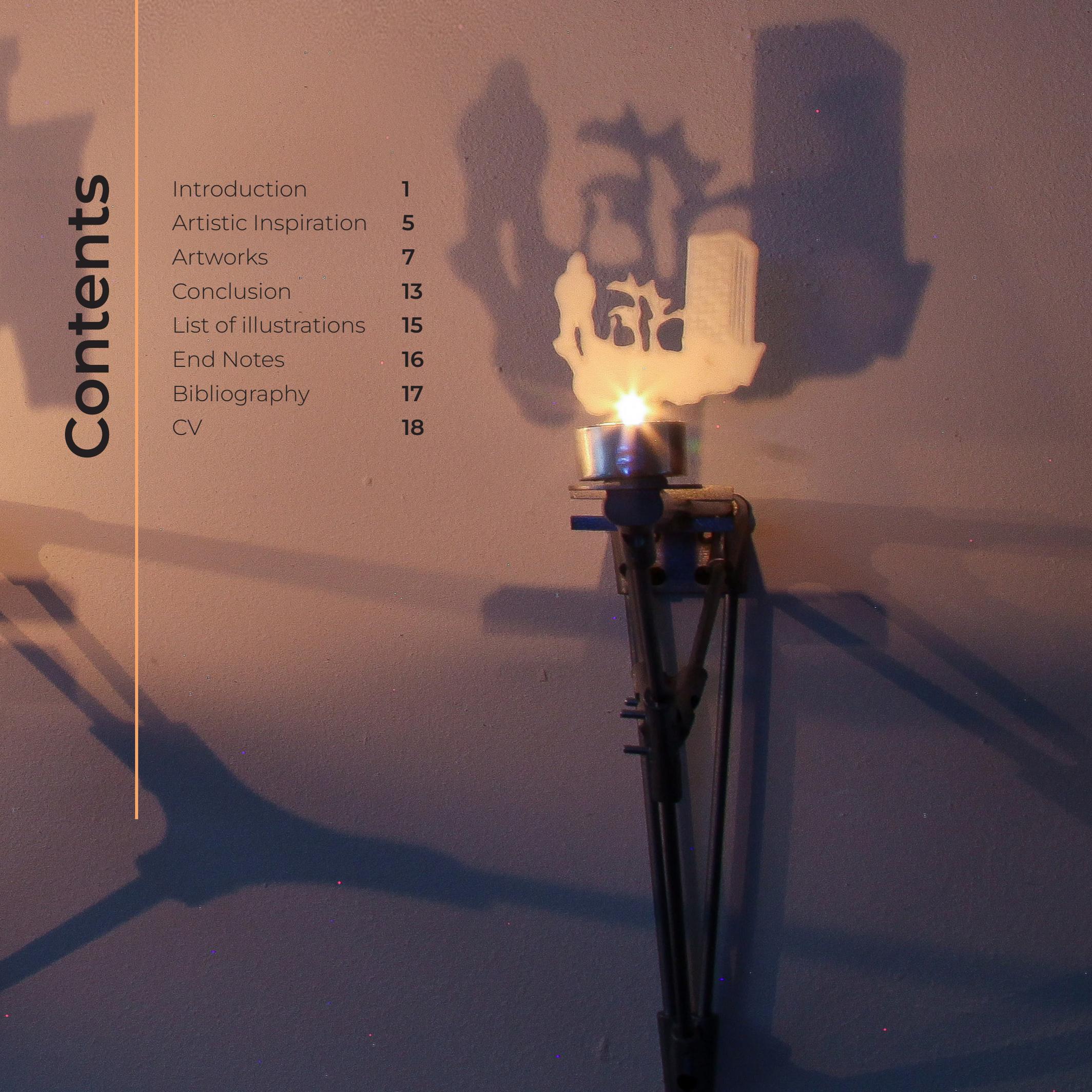
[info@damenoosthuizen.com](mailto:info@damenoosthuizen.com)

[www.damenoosthuizen.com](http://www.damenoosthuizen.com)



Figure 2. Damen Oosthuizen, Side view of *Lightscares* - 3 brackets (2023).

# Contents



Introduction	1
Artistic Inspiration	5
Artworks	7
Conclusion	13
List of illustrations	15
End Notes	16
Bibliography	17
CV	18

# Introduction

---

Light brings truth; it makes known that which was previously hidden, and allows us to see the reality. Darkness, conversely, creates mystery and deception by hiding the truth and allowing the imagination to run rampant. Whilst they might appear to be opposing concepts, the reality is that they often co-exist, with light casting shadows of darkness, and thereby creating doubt as to what the truth really is.

The energy crisis in South Africa (caused largely by sabotage, mismanagement, and corruption), has had a profound impact on the country, leading to limited economic growth, increased levels of unemployment, and a rise in criminal activity<sup>1</sup>. This has resulted in widespread uncertainty and anxiety amongst the people. Light is a form of energy<sup>2</sup>, and is often used to create electricity, or power. Darkness, therefore, depicts the absence or breakdown of power.





Figure 3. Damen Oosthuizen, Close-up view of *Deconpyling* (2023).



Figure 4. Damen Oosthuizen, Mid-burn of *Deconpyling* (2023).

My mixed media installation exhibition, Truth & Deception, investigates and explores the interplay between light and darkness, truth and deception, power and the destruction thereof. My works seek to depict the ways in which the energy crisis has affected our perceptions of power and stability, by highlighting the fragile and unpredictable nature of power. In showcasing the relationship between light and darkness, they are combined to create a sense of mystery and ambiguity, altering our perception of the world as we know it.



**Figure 5.** Damen Oosthuizen, Individual brackets of *Lightsapes* (2023).

# Artistic Inspiration

---

**“Art-making [sic] is not about telling the truth but making the truth felt.”<sup>3</sup> (Boltanski, 1994).**

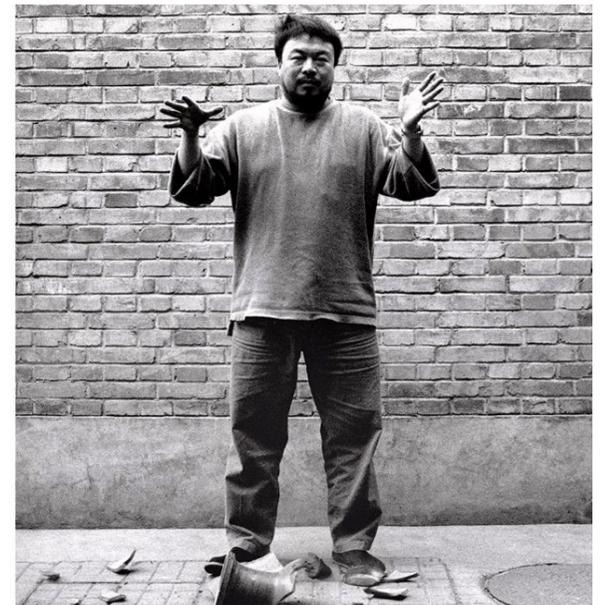
Christian Boltanski played on the notion of truth and deception by frequently blurring the lines between fiction and reality. He used light and shadow to create haunting and evocative images. These deceptive depictions of truths have been a key source of inspiration for my artworks.

In his series of light sculptures, *7 Bougies - Les Ombres* (1987) (figure 6), the flickering light of the candles creates a sense of movement and life, while the background shadow creates a sense of stillness and, ultimately, death. The ephemeral nature of candles suggests that life is finite, and that death is inevitable. In this way the memories that are cast are only for a moment, until they disappear when the light goes out. This specific artwork inspired me in my creation of *Lightscares*, as I attempt to depict the fragile nature of power and the impact of loadshedding on South Africans.

Ai Weiwei often explores themes of censorship, oppression, and the power of the individual. His work on *Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn* (1995) (figure 7) is a powerful statement against censorship and oppression, where he destroys an ancient Chinese urn, causing the destruction of a cultural and ancient artifact to highlight the fragility of history<sup>4</sup>. The photographic images capturing the destruction of something culturally significant inspired me towards the creation of *Deconpyling*, where I photographed the burning of a deconstructed pylon cast out of wax, symbolising the fragility and collapse of power within South Africa, leaving nothing but a reminder of what once was.



**Figure 6.** Christian Boltanski, *7 Bougies - Les Ombres* (1987).



**Figure 7.** Ai Weiwei, *Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn* (1995).

# Artworks

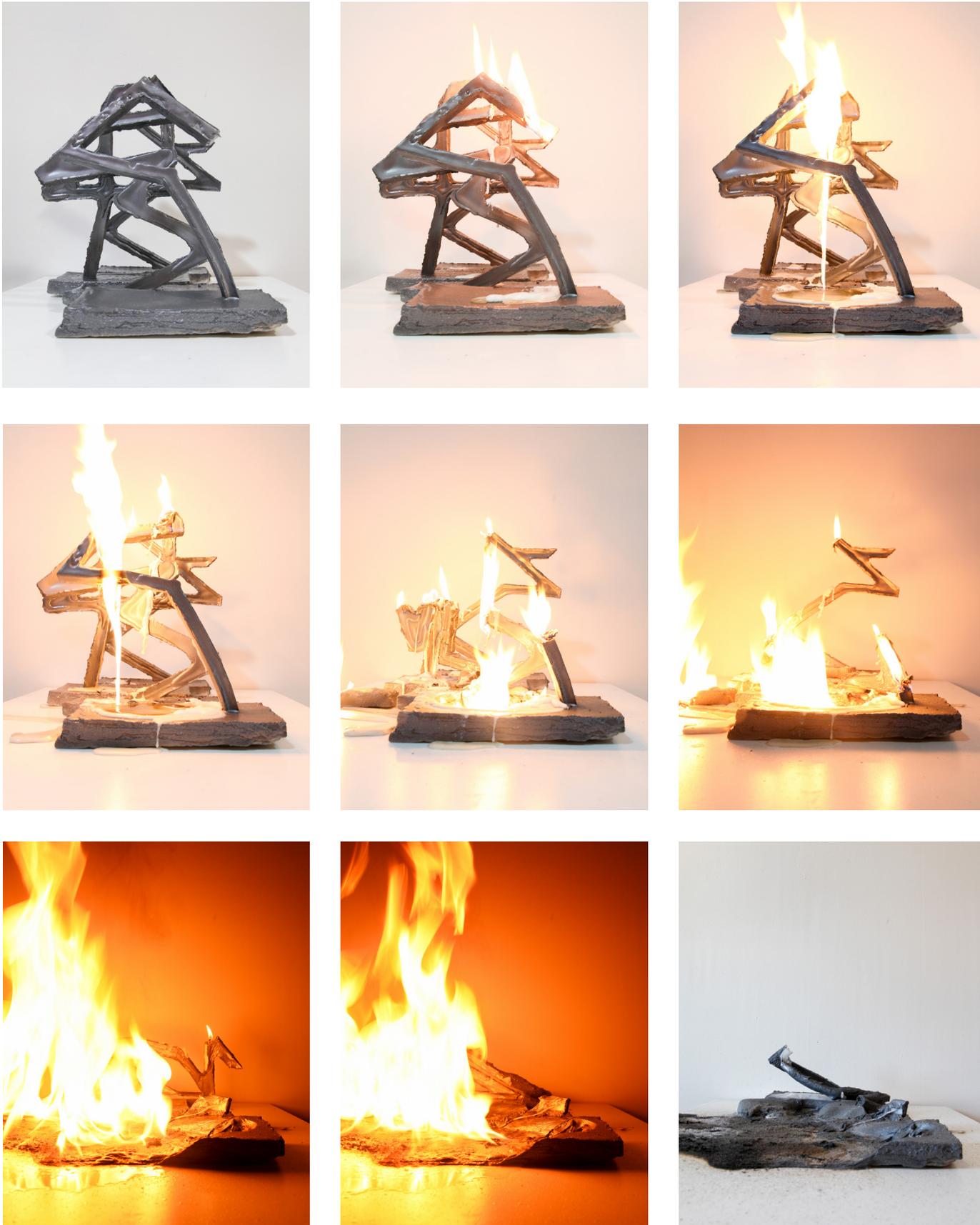
---

## Deconpyling

With my first artwork, *Deconpyling* (2023) (figure 8), I explored the concept of anamorphic art, and cast 4 candles in the constituent shapes of a deconstructed electricity pylon. I then positioned the candles in such a way that, when viewed from the front, the pylon could be seen, whole and true to its form; when viewed from any other angle, however, one would see numerous broken pieces that make little sense. The broken pylon symbolizes the disconnection of power, and the fractured nature of man-made energy. Using wax to create each element speaks to the fragility of power, as well as to the destruction thereof, and can be employed as a symbolic commentary on the very nature of reality itself, embodying a metaphorical representation of order and structure breaking down. As the candles could only be burned once, the final work on display consists of photographic images documenting the candles burning down, leaving nothing but a pile of wax and burnt remains. This final destruction of the pylon symbolizes the total collapse of power within South Africa, and the effect that is having on the country.



**Figure 8.** Damen Oosthuizen, *Deconpyling* (2023).



**Figure 9.** Damen Oosthuizen, Photographs of *Deconpyling* Series (2023).

# Lightscapes

---

Deception manifests when we are unable to see the complete picture, or when it undergoes a shift in perspective. This can especially be seen when objects are misrepresented and, as a result, new and distinct entities are created. My second artwork, *Lightscapes* (2023) (figure 11), consists of multiple wall-brackets created out of metal and plastic. The mediums speak to the fragility of power in South Africa, as well as to the deliberate sabotage and use of sub-par components on the power stations. When light is shone on the brackets, they create shadows that are reminiscent of power pylons. A small candle has then been placed on each bracket to shine a light onto various images held within the brackets. The candles are reminiscent of truth and honesty, but the shadows give a view as to what life is like when darkness strikes, when the power is gone, when deception takes hold. The ephemeral nature of a candle speaks to the unpredictability and finiteness of power, whilst the brackets being fixed onto the wall depicts our reliance on electricity and power – without it we fall.



**Figure 10.** Damen Oosthuizen, Candle figures of *Lightscapes* (2023).

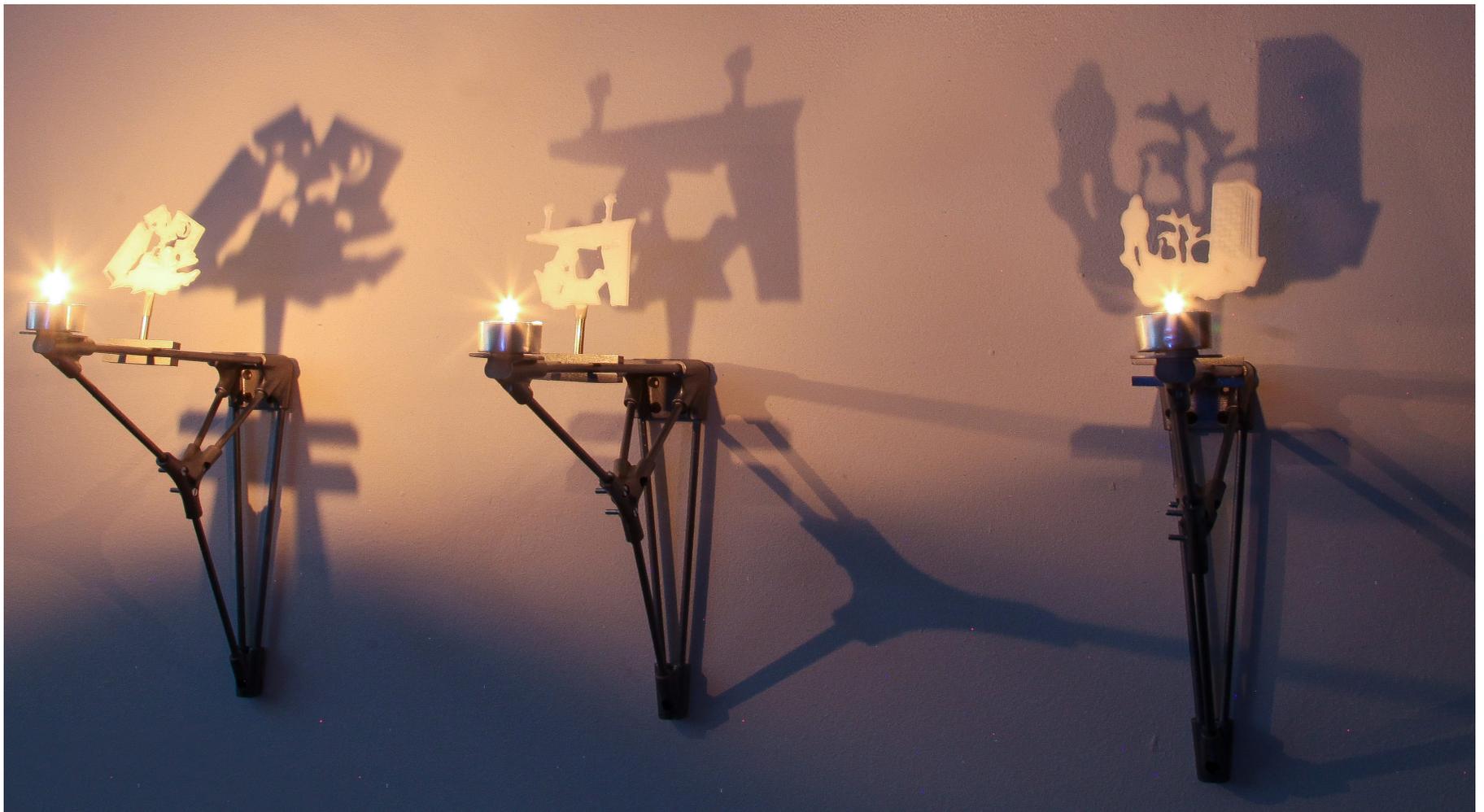


Figure 11. Damen Oosthuizen, *Lightscares* (2023).

Lightscapes Continued ../  
.....



**Figure 12.** Damen Oosthuizen,  
Front view of *Lightscapes* (2023).



**Figure 13.** Damen Oosthuizen, Side view of *Lightscapes* - 3 brackets (2023).



Figure 14. Damen Oosthuizen, Side view of *Lightscares* - 2 brackets (2023).

# Conclusion

---

My exhibition explores the theme of Truth & Deception within the realm of the energy crisis in South Africa. I use visual representations that juxtapose light and darkness to evoke a contrast between truth and deception. Shadows are used to showcase how the degradation of energy systems affects our everyday lives, whilst the burning down of the pylon candles highlights the total collapse of power in South Africa. Energy and power are something we have all come to rely on, and to intrinsically trust in. The current energy crisis, however, has shown us that power in the wrong hands leads to subterfuge and, ultimately, destruction.





Figure 15. Damen Oosthuizen, Mid-burn of *Deconpyling* (2023).

# List of Illustrations

---

Front Cover. Damen Oosthuizen, *Deconpyling* (2023), Paraffin Wax Sculpture.

Figure 1. Damen Oosthuizen, *Lightscares* (2023), Mixed Media Installation.

Figure 2. Damen Oosthuizen, Side view of *Lightscares* - 3 brackets (2023), Mixed Media Installation.

Figure 3. Damen Oosthuizen, Close-up view of *Deconpyling* (2023), Paraffin Wax Sculpture.

Figure 4. Damen Oosthuizen, Mid-burn of *Deconpyling* (2023), Paraffin Wax Sculpture.

Figure 5. Damen Oosthuizen, Individual brackets of *Lightscares* (2023), Mixed Media Installation.

Figure 6. Christian Boltanski, *7 Bougies - Les Ombres* (1987), Oxidized Copper. Retrieved from <https://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/7-Bougies---les-ombres/86581552E407867A> (Accessed on 01 September 2023).

Figure 7. Ai Weiwei, *Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn* (1995), Three gelatin silver prints, 148 x 121cm each. Retrieved from <https://smarthistory.org/destruction-as-preservation/> (Accessed on 02 September 2023).

Figure 8. Damen Oosthuizen, *Deconpyling* (2023), Paraffin Wax Sculpture.

Figure 9. Damen Oosthuizen, Photographs of *Deconpyling* Series (2023), Paraffin Wax Sculpture.

Figure 10. Damen Oosthuizen, Candle Figures of *Lightscares* (2023), Mixed Media Installation.

Figure 11. Damen Oosthuizen, *Lightscares* (2023), Mixed Media Installation.

Figure 12. Damen Oosthuizen, Front view of *Lightscares* (2023), Mixed Media Installation.

Figure 13. Damen Oosthuizen, Side view of *Lightscares* - 3 brackets (2023), Mixed Media Installation.

## List of Illustrations Continued ../

---

Figure 14. Damen Oosthuizen, Side view of *Lightscares* - 2 brackets (2023), Mixed Media Installation.

Figure 15. Damen Oosthuizen, Mid-burn of *Deconpyling* (2023), Paraffin Wax Sculpture.

## End Notes

---

<sup>1</sup> Unknown author. South African energy crisis. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopaedia. Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South\\_African\\_energy\\_crisis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_African_energy_crisis) (Accessed on 10 September 2023).

<sup>2</sup> Energy Education Canada. (n.d.). Light. Retrieved from <https://energyeducation.ca/encyclopedia/Light> (Accessed on 10 September 2023).

<sup>3</sup> Boltanski, C. (2023). Christian Boltanski. Retrieved from <https://www.theartstory.org/artist/boltanski-christian/> (Accessed on 10 September 2023).

<sup>4</sup> Weiwei, A. (2023). Destruction of the Dynasty Urn. Guggenheim Bilbao. Retrieved from [www.guggenheim-bilbao.eus/en/learn/schools/teachers-guides/ai-weiwei-dropping-han-dynasty-urn-1995](http://www.guggenheim-bilbao.eus/en/learn/schools/teachers-guides/ai-weiwei-dropping-han-dynasty-urn-1995). The act is a reminder of China's past, but it was also a symbol of the country's cultural heritage. So, by destroying the urn, Ai Weiwei is highlighting the fact that history is not fixed or immutable. As a statement against censorship and oppression, it is a powerful notion that the cultural artifact that is highly valued by the Chinese people is destroyed and can never be brought back. (Accessed on 04 September 2023).

# Bibliography

---

Boltanski, C. (2016). *Christian Boltanski: The fragility of being*. Artspace. Retrieved from [https://www.artspace.com/magazine/art\\_101/book\\_report/christian-boltanski-phaidon-54886](https://www.artspace.com/magazine/art_101/book_report/christian-boltanski-phaidon-54886) (Accessed 09 September 2023)

Boltanski, C. (2023). *Christian Boltanski*. Marian Goodman Gallery. Retrieved from <https://www.mariangoodman.com/artists/33-christian-boltanski> (Accessed 09 September 2023)

Democratic Alliance. (2020). *Opinion: Eskom crisis: Public anger is mounting against delinquent municipalities*. Retrieved from <https://www.da.org.za/2020/08/opinion-eskom-crisis-public-anger-is-mounting-against-delinquent-municipalities> (Accessed 09 September 2023)

Fenster, M. (2012). *The Transparency Fix: Advocating Legal Rights and Their Alternatives in the Pursuit of a Visible State*. University of Pittsburgh Law Review (73):1-55.

Gosetti-Ferencei, JA. (2005). *Trompe L'Oeil and the Mimetic Tradition in Aesthetics*. In Tymieniecka, AT (ed). Human Creation between Reality and Illusion. Analecta Husserliana (87). Springer, Dordrecht. [https://doi.org/10.1007/1-4020-3578-0\\_6](https://doi.org/10.1007/1-4020-3578-0_6) (Accessed 09 September 2023)

Merriam-Webster Inc. (2023). *Shadow*. Merriam-Webster dictionary. Retrieved from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/shadow> (Accessed 09 September 2023)

Mokoena, M. (2023). *Pretoria power crisis: Eskom replaces collapsed pylons with massive monopoles*. News24. Retrieved from <https://www.news24.com/fin24/economy/pretoria-power-crisis-eskom-replaces-collapsed-pylons-with-massive-monopoles-20230412> (Accessed 09 September 2023)

The Art Story. (n.d.). *Christian Boltanski*. The Art Story. Retrieved from <https://www.theartstory.org/artist/boltanski-christian/> (Accessed 04 September 2023).

Weiwei, A. (2023). *Destruction of the Dynasty Urn*. Guggenheim Bilbao. Retrieved from [www.guggenheim-bilbao.eus/en/learn/schools/teachers-guides/ai-weiwei-dropping-han-dynasty-urn-1995](http://www.guggenheim-bilbao.eus/en/learn/schools/teachers-guides/ai-weiwei-dropping-han-dynasty-urn-1995) (Accessed 04 September 2023).

# Curriculum Vitae

---

## **Damen Oosthuizen**

Born 1981

### **Education:**

Diploma in Graphic Web Design and Development  
(Prestige College, 2002)

Diploma in Web Development and Multimedia  
(Prestige College, 2003)

BA in Multimedia Studies: Computer Generated Multimedia  
(UNISA, 2018 - present)

### **Work:**

UI/UX Designer/Developer

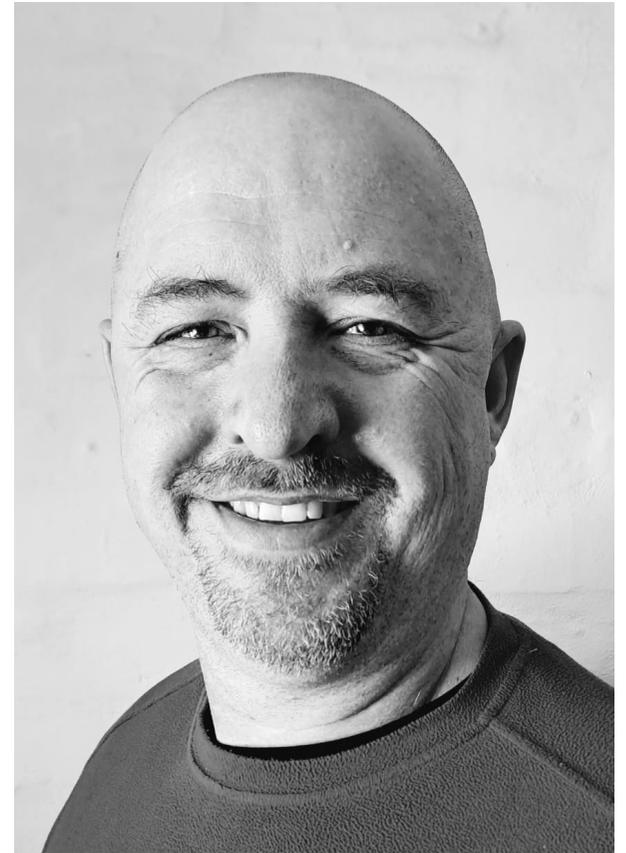
### **Exhibitions:**

UNISA 3rd year exhibition, November (2023)

### **Contact:**

[info@damenoosthuizen.com](mailto:info@damenoosthuizen.com)

[www.damenoosthuizen.com](http://www.damenoosthuizen.com)



[www.damenoosthuizen.com](http://www.damenoosthuizen.com)