

# Visualising the voices of Redan: An experimental application of Forensic Anthropology and Narrative Identity to a disappearing landscape

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It all starts here <sup>TM</sup>





## Preface

This Master's study has been a remarkable journey which has facilitated my growth as an individual, creative practitioner and researcher. That being said, this journey was not undertaken alone. I would like to reflect on those individuals without whom this study would not have been possible.

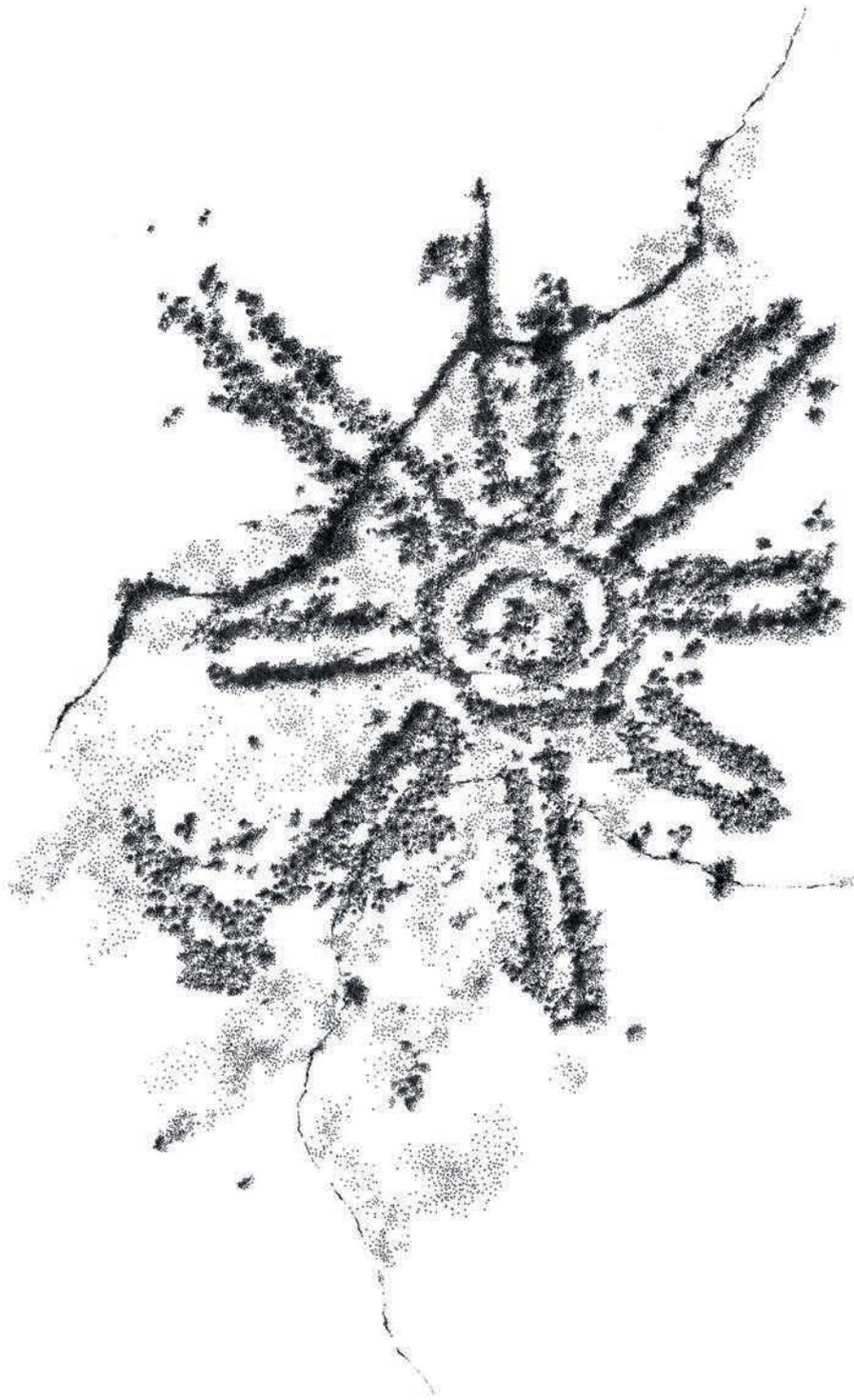
First and foremost, I owe my gratitude to my supervisor and mentor, Dr Ian Marley for his patience and pragmatism, for his willingness to share his practical and theoretical expertise and for encouraging me to trust my own creative voice. Secondly, thank you to my co-supervisor, Prof. Rita Swanepoel, for being a sounding board and academic stalwart and for her agile responses to my study's plot twists. The two of you make an amazing team and I could not have pulled this off without your selflessness, support and guidance.

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Last but not least, I am very grateful to the North-West University's *Research Niche ViNCO (Visual narratives and creative outputs through interdisciplinary and practice-led research)* for the financial assistance and support they provided.





**Figure a:** Chan, J.C. 2016. *Graphic representation of Redan site engraving B1*



## ABSTRACT

This creative-production project explored the manner in which the principles and practices of forensic anthropology can be appropriated as a design methodology and tool for the visual representation of a landscape's personal identity. In particular, this exploration was aimed at the representation of the narrative identity of the Redan rock engraving site, a neglected national monument and provincial heritage site near Vereeniging in the Gauteng province. The creative process consequently explores the manner in which the principles and practices of forensic anthropology can be appropriated as a design methodology, theoretical framework and visual language to represent the narrative personal identity of the Redan rock engraving site. This was achieved through the documentation and reconstruction of its aesthetic principles and narratives. The communication goal of this body of creative work is that landscapes ought to be afforded an equal degree of moral care, concern and respect in legal terms as human beings. This exploration thus took place within the context of environmental awareness. An interactionist dualist stance on practice-led research was investigated as an appropriate research approach and context. Therefore, Scrivener's Model for Creative Production Projects (2004), consisting of six steps, was employed as research methodology.

In fulfilment of step one, the Redan rock engraving site was identified as the subject matter of this practice-led research project through reflection on past practice. The pecked images that are a significant aspect of this site's aesthetic are being eroded away and its narrative is not well known. Both of these aspects of the site's identity are at risk of being forgotten altogether. The subsequent literature review, conducted as part of step two, identified forensic anthropology and narrative identity to be appropriate theoretical frameworks for this project. In completion of step three, these were used to reframe the Redan rock engraving site as a human entity and its dilemma as worthy of concern. The latter refers to the Redan rock engraving site as both an abandoned heritage site and damaged landscape. This process of reframing first took an explicit knowledge approach through the conceptualisation of the project. Thereafter, tacit knowledge formats were used to reframe the Redan rock engraving site through the production of a five-part artist's book in service of the project aim and communication goal. This was also in fulfilment of step four. In step five, the creative production project was reflected on as a whole. The application of Scrivener's Model to this project culminated at step six in a critical and well-reasoned report that consists of three parts – a project report in the form of this mini-dissertation, a series of reflective journals and an exhibition of the artefacts produced.

**Key terms:** forensic anthropology, graphic design, narrative identity, memory, practice-led research, Redan rock engraving site, Scrivener's model

## OPSOMMING

Hierdie kreatiewe produksieprojek het ondersoek gerig na die wyse waarop die beginsels en praktyke van forensiese antropologie toegepas kan word as 'n ontwerpmetodologie en instrument vir die visuele voorstelling van 'n landskap se persoonlike identiteit. Hierdie ondersoek was spesifiek op die voorstelling van die narratiewe identiteit van die Redan-rotsgravingsterrein, 'n verwaarloosde nasionale monument en provinsiale erfenisterrein naby Vereeniging in die Gauteng provinsie, gerig. Die kreatiewe proses ondersoek dus die manier waarop die beginsels en praktyke van forensiese antropologie toegepas kan word as 'n ontwerpmetodologie, teoretiese raamwerk en visuele taal om die narratiewe persoonlike identiteit van die Redan-rotsgravingsterrein te verteenwoordig. Dit is bereik deur die dokumentering en rekonstruering van die estetiese beginsels en die naratiewe van die Redan-terrein. Die kommunikasiedoelwit van hierdie kreatiewe werk is dat landskappe in dieselfde mate as mense in wetlike terme geregtig is op morele besorgdheid, versorging, bemoeienis en respek. Hierdie ondersoek het dus binne die konteks van omgewingsbewusmaking plaasgevind. 'n Interaktiewe dualistiese standpunt oor praktykgeleide navorsing is voorts ondersoek as 'n gepaste navorsings benadering en konteks. Gevolglik is Scrivener se Model vir Kreatiewe Produksieprosesse (2004) wat uit ses stappe bestaan, as navorsingsmetodologiese raamwerk gebruik.

In stap een is die Redan-rotsgravingsterrein geïdentifiseer as die onderwerp van hierdie praktykgeleide navorsingsprojek deur middel van refleksie op vorige praktyk. Die uitgekapte beelde wat 'n belangrike aspek van die werf se estetika is, is in die proses om uitgewis te word en die Redan-narratief is nie algemeen bekend nie. Albei hierdie aspekte van die Redan se identiteit loop die gevaar om in die vergetelheid te versink.. Die daaropvolgende literatuuroorsig, wat as deel van stap twee uitgevoer is, het forensiese antropologie en narratiewe identiteit as toepaslike teoretiese raamwerke vir hierdie projek geïdentifiseer. Na voltooiing van stap drie is hierdie gebruik om die Redan-rotsgravingsterrein as 'n menslike entiteit en sy dilemma as 'n waardige besorgdheid te herraam. Hierdie herraamingsproses het eerstens 'n eksplisiete kennisbenadering gevolg deur die konseptualisering van die projek. Daarna is 'n *tacit* versweë kennisbenadering gevolg vir die herraaming van die Redan-rotsgravingsterrein deur 'n kunstenaarsboek, bestaande uit vyf dele, te produseer ter wille van die projek- en kommunikasiedoelwitte. Dit was ook ter vervulling van stap vier. In stap vyf is op die kreatiewe produksieprojek as 'n geheel gereflekteer. Die toepassing van Scrivener se Model het in hierdie projek gekulmineer in stap ses wat neerslag vind in 'n kritiese en goed beredeneerde verslag wat uit drie dele bestaan: 'n projekverslag in die vorm van hierdie skripsie, 'n reeks reflektiewe joernale en 'n uitstalling van die artefakte wat geproduseer is.

**Sleuteltermen:** forensiese antropologie, grafiese ontwerp, narratiewe identiteit, herinnering, praktykgeleide navorsing, Redan-rotsgravingsterrein, Scrivener se Model



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# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction

### 1.1. Introduction

This practice-led research project is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Master's Degree in Graphic Design at the North-West University. It is a thematic exploration of identity within the context of environmental awareness: specifically, the narrative identity of the Redan rock engraving site, which is a declared national monument and provincial heritage site that is currently at risk of being lost to dereliction. This project is aimed at allowing people a glimpse of, and into, the aesthetic and narratives of this landscape as far as they can be reconstructed and documented at the time of this study. In order to achieve this, the field of forensic anthropology is appropriated for the purpose of an experimental application thereof to landscapes.

In particular, the manner in which forensic anthropology is able to fulfil the roles of theoretical framework, workflow and visual language in the design process is explored. A five-part artist's book (as the primary design application) titled *The voices of Redan* is the product of this experimental application that focusses on the visualisation of the interactions and narratives which constitute and surround the personal identity<sup>1</sup> of the Redan rock engraving site.

The purpose of this chapter is to briefly introduce and motivate the core elements of this project. In support of this purpose, the relation of this project's outputs to the modules of the Master's Degree in Graphic Design is first provided, followed by an explanation of the theme with which this study engages and the context in which this engagement takes place. This is then followed by a theoretical overview of narrative identity and forensic anthropology as the two primary bodies of theory that emerged through and influenced practice. Subsequently, the conceptual direction of this project and its positioning within practice-led research, as the research context and methodology, is presented. Chapter One concludes with a work plan detailing the broad outline of the remainder of this project report. The overview provided by this chapter is necessary in order for the theoretical and practical components discussed later to be understood within the context of the project as a coherent whole.

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<sup>1</sup> Personal identity is the concept that one develops of one's self and one's essence as an individually identifiable entity. This is explained in more detail in the theoretical overview provided later in this chapter and in Chapter Four.

The theoretical and practical components that comprise the practical Master's Degree in Graphic Design at the North-West University inform one another and are interwoven in order to fulfil the outcomes of the degree. The research proposal is the outcome of the GRFN811 module (Design theory and research methodology – 36 credits). This document is a mini-dissertation in service of the GRFN873 module (60 credits) and reports on the outcomes of the GRFN874 (Graphic Design: process – 36 credits) and GRFN875 (Graphic Design: practical portfolio – 48 credits) modules. In this context, the last three modules are consolidated through the implementation of practice-led research as research methodology. In other words, this project report, in the form of a mini-dissertation, explicates the correlations between the completed practice and related theory and content. It thereby consolidates the project-related process document and graphic design project (which takes the form of a five-part artist's book) into a coherent whole.

## **1.2. Theme and context**

The Redan rock engraving site (Figure 1.1) is a national monument and the subject of this graphic design project. It is located on a farm in the Vereeniging district situated in the heavily industrialised area of the Vaal Triangle region of the Gauteng Province in South Africa. Its heritage value lies in the two hundred and seventy-three (273) engravings that are evident on a sandstone outcrop, the authorship of which has not been conclusively confirmed (Willcox & Pager, 1967:492; Kovacs, 1998:10). As evident in the discussion presented in Chapter Two, this is not the sole unconfirmed detail of this national monument. Despite the need for further investigation into its history, origins and *raison d'être*, it has slipped into obscurity due to neglect and abandonment in an industrial area infamous for air pollution. Acid rain produced by the industrial activity characteristic to the area, in tandem with natural weathering and exfoliation, has had a significant impact on the visibility and preservation of these engravings (Prins, 2005a:vi, 66, 91, 187; Prins, 2007:39, 46, 47; Willcox & Pager, 1967:492).

According to Clay (2011), a representative of the World Wildlife Fund, “by 2050, we will no longer have a planet left that is recognizable” should current trends continue. In the light of this, the documentation of the personal identity of this fast deteriorating heritage site is integral to the preservation of an illustrated period of mankind's history for posterity. In a broad sense, identity is considered to be sameness, which is essential to recognisability (Hume *et al.*, 1995:390). The sameness of appearance, essentially the visual and physical aspect of personal identity, is threatened by the current management of the Redan rock engraving site and the industrial activities in the Vereeniging area.



**Figure 1.1:** An overview of the Redan rock engraving site. Photograph by researcher.

The investigation of identity that is driving the production of this series of five book objects therefore takes place within the context of environmental awareness. The twenty-first century has seen a rise in the awareness of environmental issues and protection. The environment is often positioned in general social consciousness as vulnerable. The most practical response to this has been efficient and sustainable land management. Nature, as a non-sentient entity, has its choices delegated to humankind, effectively making human beings the custodians of nature. In this role, we interact with nature in order to construct landscapes that fulfil our needs and wants – pine plantations for paper, wind farms for power, and even landscapes such as the Redan site<sup>2</sup> that fulfil cultural needs. However, without proper land management, we proceed to abuse the environment and destroy what we create through consumption, with little or no regard for the unseen consequences. The current condition of the Redan rock engraving site is evidence of the damaging effects of this behavioural pattern. The survival of humanity and, by implication, its cultures is dependent on the understanding that human life is part of nature (World Future Fund, s.a.)

The rise in social environmental awareness, the development of environmental forensics<sup>3</sup> and the sanction of the Bolivian Law of Mother Earth<sup>4</sup>, amongst other developments point towards an acknowledgement of this interconnectedness and are indicative of a trend towards accountability in one's interactions with the environment. Despite the acknowledged vulnerability of the environment, abused or derelict landscapes are typically not assigned the role of victim, and even less so as being in need of justice. Justice seems reserved for sentient<sup>5</sup> beings. Forensic anthropology is aligned with this sentiment, narrowing it further to human beings alone. In brief, it entails the identification of remains that are suspected or known to be human, in a legal setting (Nawrocki, 1996; Stewart, 1979:ix). The Redan site is not human and is thus not viewed as an entity worthy of justice within the context of the human legal system.

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<sup>2</sup> In the context of this study, reference to the *Redan site* or *Redan landscape* is to be taken to refer to the Redan rock engraving site and not to the Redan settlement located nearby.

<sup>3</sup> Environmental forensic science applies defensible scientific methods to cases of environmental contamination in the media of air, water, soil and animal and plant life for which a party may be held legally and financially responsible in order to determine the source and/or age of a contamination (Exponent, 2010; Morrison & Hone, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> The Bolivian Law of Mother Earth was drafted in response to significant environmental problems arising from that country's mining industry and regards human beings and all other natural entities as equals (Vidal, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> Under law, a sentient being is defined as an entity that has the capacity to "perceive, reason and think" and refers, by virtue of this definition, only to entities of the animal kingdom on the condition that these entities are capable of experiencing physical and psychological suffering (Duhaime's law dictionary, s.a; Passantino, 2008:70).

Common law states that if there is no victim, there cannot be a crime (Vance, 2010). Consequently, a case becomes null and void if the victim, in this case a landscape such as Redan, is not viewed as such. For that reason, the Bolivian Law of Mother Earth is a particularly ground-breaking development in this context. This law acknowledges the Earth as a legal personality with inherent rights equal to that of a human being. It explicitly positions human beings as part of nature in a shift away from the predominant anthropocentric perspective (Vidal, 2011). This law is far from perfect in its implementation and has yet to reveal tangible results but it represents a shift in thinking that is more in line with global societal sentiment (Weston & Bollier, 2013:64; Chávez, 2014). The generally prevalent perception that an environment lacks the capacity to possess victim status has led to the deterioration of a national monument, without any repercussions. Should it continue, the Redan site might easily vanish completely. Therefore, the communication goal of this project is that landscapes should be afforded the same degree of care, respect and concern as a human being.

The application of forensic anthropology to this disappearing landscape in the present project facilitates the communication of this message. Such an application conceptually positions the landscape as both a victim and an entity legally equal to human beings. The workflow of the forensic anthropologist is both field and laboratory based and engages with both the physical and psychological dimensions of personal identity. Therefore, it is appropriated here as a design methodology in the documentation of the identity of the Redan rock engraving site and the various perspectives held regarding it, its presence and *raison d'être*.

The plurality of perspectives, or multiple realities, is a key aspect of narrative identity (Polkinghorne, 1988:1; Klepper, 2013:27). In this project, these multiple perspectives include that of the Redan site as a valuable cultural resource to be preserved, a site of degenerate art, an anomaly and hindrance to be ignored in an industrial area, to name a few. As proposed by Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005), narrative identity is the “management of plurality and heterogeneity” in the formation of personal identity through narrative (Dauenhauer & Pellauer, 2011). Therefore, these contrasting perspectives are able to interact through narrative to form a coherent whole (Klepper, 2013:1, 7; Ricoeur, 1991a:73; Polkinghorne, 1988:150). Hand-in-hand with the abandonment and neglect that has resulted in this heritage site’s deterioration, comes the gradual fading of the perspectives and narratives surrounding its existence from social consciousness – the narrative criterion of personal identity.

Therefore, as mentioned, the thematic focus of this project is that of narrative personal identity. In combination, this theme and forensic anthropology are employed as theoretical foundations in the documentation and representation of the aesthetic, interactions and narratives surrounding the Redan rock engraving site as a South African rock art site – it is not my intention to remove it from its original context, despite its repositioning as a human entity. As such, rock art research is also approached as a relevant, albeit supporting, body of knowledge. The implication is that rock art research and forensic anthropology provide the tools of visual representation which inform the thematic exploration and practical execution of this project, while the latter also serves as a workflow tool.

### **1.3. Theoretical foundation**

#### **1.3.1. Narrative identity**

Up until the seventeenth century, the debate surrounding identity was concerned with one's essence as a person and the nature of identity in the case of death (Shoemaker, 2012). Lucretius (1951:121) proposed that human beings are an inseparable union of body and spirit. Ricoeur (1991a:75) agrees with this stance by conceptualising personal identity as having two fundamental aspects: *idem*- and *ipse*-identity. The former denotes a physical existence while the latter refers to subjects as agents to whom acts and psychological characteristics belong. The narratives of actions, interactions and intentions are a means of mediating the relationship between these two inextricably linked modes of existence. Emplotment moulds these into a "meaningful temporal whole" which constitutes a personal identity (Kerby, 1991:35, 39; Ricoeur, 1991a:73). This concept positions identity as an outcome of the performative act of narration (Klepper, 2013:23). Without the ability to communicate, this interaction has never occurred for the Redan rock engraving site, so these narrative faculties are imparted to the landscape in this project.

The nature of narrative is subjective and adaptive, as is autobiographical memory on which narrative is based. Self-narratives are based on self-perception and the perception one believes others to have of one's self. For Redan, this includes the external perception of the landscape as a resource not worth protecting on the one hand and, on the other, the internal perception one might expect from the site itself were it a sentient being. The narrative representations of a personal identity adapt as time passes and perceptions change (Klepper, 2013:15; Hall, 1996:274, 310). In its early years of discovery, much attention was afforded the Redan site, leading to its status as a national monument. Considering its current derelict state, it is clear that this perception has since shifted. The artist's books produced for this project capture the various

perspectives and narratives on the Redan site and manifest this landscape's memories in a form that is accessible to society for examination.

The means by which this is done and the artist's books are produced is based on the notion that we experience the world and generate narratives through the memory of the material of which we are made. This project makes use of material attributes (forensic anthropology) to reconstruct the various interactions, stories and perspectives behind the Redan site's existence (narrative identity).

### **1.3.2. Forensic anthropology**

Forensic anthropology also deals with identity as its primary focus, specifically with regard to legal implications. The cases typically brought to a forensic anthropologist are mass fatalities, homicides in which foul play is suspected. However, natural and accidental deaths also fall within their purview (Lett, 2011:7; Walsh-Haney, 2002; Nawrocki, 1996). These anthropologists work with the remains of human beings that are burnt beyond recognition, have been distributed post-mortem, are badly decomposed or mutilated, have become skeletonised or are missing body parts. While the Redan site is not human, it is positioned as a sentient being in line with the communication goal of this project.

The work done by forensic anthropologists includes the visual, tactile and laboratory-based analysis of the skeleton in the interest of studying the changes that the remains underwent during and following death. These include, but are not limited to trauma, decomposition and environmental modification. Contemporary practice has begun to extend the reach of the forensic anthropologist to include fieldwork. As such, these anthropologists may also assist in the controlled collection of remains and evidence from the crime scene. Regardless of reach, their work remains primarily aimed at the identification of the victim and the provision of information that may aid in a conviction (Nawrocki, 1996; Lett, 2011:21; 193).

In order to achieve this purpose, forensic anthropologists follow a five-phase workflow. These five phases, as explained in Chapter Four, are the introduction to and acceptance of a case on the basis of remains being human, the processing of the crime scene, the determination of a biological profile, an analysis of trauma and the compilation of a case report (White & Folkens, 2005:9-11). Conceptually, the Redan rock engraving site is dealt with as a single victim and its immediate surroundings are positioned as the crime scene. The biological profile of the Redan site, with regards to sex, ancestry, age and stature, is constructed through a combination of historical and geological data and the conceptual repositioning of information.

During the analysis of trauma, a life history is compiled as it emerges during the investigation<sup>6</sup>. This compilation process entails the examination of the bones and trace elements to establish the occurrence of major life events, such as being engraved upon or being declared a monument. Trauma analysis also serves to establish the sequence of events that led to the death of the victim and how the remains happened to be found in the condition and position that they were (Walsh-Haney, 2002). This phase is essentially focussed on the deduction of a number of the narratives which are formative for a less empirical version of identity. Furthermore, at this point, the forensic anthropologist should be able to establish a positive identification of the remains through unique traits or the comparison of the emergent life story with existing documents.

It is, finally, the forensic anthropologist's task to document the findings in a report that, along with all other material collected or produced through forensic investigation, is included in the case file used to prosecute the case. The artist's books, as research artefacts concerning the Redan site, are contextualised as segments of one such case file.

#### **1.4. Concept**

Both forensic anthropology and narrative identity inform the concept of this project. The trauma caused by human beings for the purpose of extracting resources can be read in the bones of nature and, one day, it is humanity that will bear the consequences. As such, with Redan as the subject, the case is approached as an accidental death. While the air pollution and acid rain produced through the processing of steel threatens the site, it is the reaped iron ore, not Redan, which is the intended target of these mining practices.

According to the forensic anthropologist Heather Walsh-Haney (2002), "because of the nature of the cases they work, the forensic anthropologist is often the victim's last chance for identification and justice." The primary goal of this field is the identification of human remains that have been rendered unrecognisable by either human or natural agents. Tactile examination, casting, x-rays and microscopic examination are amongst the methods employed (Stewart, 1979:ix; White & Folkens, 2005:7; Walsh-Haney, 2002). The result is often the piecing together of a contextually dependent version of events – a narrative. The power of narrative is its ability to allow us to view the world differently, or even to view an alternate one, beyond the facts (Meuter, 2013:35).

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<sup>6</sup> An analysis of a set of bones holds the potential to reveal the life story of a victim, but this does not mean that such a story is a guaranteed outcome. It is an opportunistic emergence dependent on the case and circumstances (Walsh-Haney, 2002).

Therefore, in service of the communication goal, the concept that I explore in this project is the manner in which forensic anthropology can be appropriated as a design tool for the purposes of an experimental application to the Redan rock engraving site. More specifically, this application is aimed at allowing people a glimpse into the story and aesthetic of a disappearing national monument.

The following research question and objective directed the thematic exploration and practical execution of this project:

How can the principles and practices of forensic anthropology be appropriated to guide the design process in the representation of the narratives surrounding the identity of the Redan site? Thus, the manner in which forensic anthropology may be appropriated as a design methodology and visual language to represent the narrative identity of the Redan site will be explored through practice-led research.

### **1.5. Practice-led research (PLR)**

This project accords with the view that knowledge produced in the practice-led research context relies upon the process and final artefact, as well as an explicit-format which contextualises and communicates the process that led to its generation (Candy, 2006; Munro, 2011:157). In this project, artistic practice encompasses the subject, method, context and outcome in accordance with Borgdorff (2011:46).

Visual arts research is an exploratory and open-ended research process embedded in tacit and largely ineffable knowledge (Sullivan, 2009:49; Biggs, 2004:13). Practice-led research appropriates and extends the characteristics of textual qualitative research to accommodate these forms of knowledge within an academic context. This serves to enhance the academic rigour of the visual arts (Borgdorff, 2011:44; Biggs & Büchler, 2008:9). This is achieved through reflective practice and the presentation of the research direction and artistic practice as a transparent process. Successes, failures, unexplored solutions and decisions are documented and serve as data for further research material (Nimkulrat, 2007; Coumans, 2003:65).

Practice-led research takes the nature of practice as its subject and investigates it through the interaction between content, theory (as explicit knowledge) and practice (as tacit knowledge). The theory relevant to a project frames and directs the production and interpretation of the artefact (Candy, 2006; Borgdorff, 2011:44; Sullivan, 2009:48). For the purposes of this project,

narrative identity and forensic anthropology serve as the theories that frame and direct practice to produce artist's books and other artefacts regarding the Redan site. These theories are supplemented by environmental awareness in fulfilling the role of interpretative context.

Scrivener (2002:1) acknowledge the role of theory but emphasise that the "proper goal of visual arts research is visual art." It is through experimentation and practice that one is able to discover the viability of creative solutions (Scrivener & Chapman, 2004). Therefore, multiple solutions are generated during this process but many are not comprehensively explored. Exploration in this context refers not just to the materialisation and refinement of possibilities but also to the experimentation, brainstorming and intuitive leaps within such a process. Designers resolve, adapt and connect conflicting variables to fit within or bend boundaries. Thus, this exploratory journey invites unfinished thinking with no right or wrong answers but, rather, ideas that are more appropriate or less appropriate (Biggs, 2004:15; Borgdorff, 2011:44; Schön, 1987:42).

Practice, as a driving force of this open-ended research process, raises questions that guide research which may, in turn, direct practice (Mäkelä & Routarinne, 2006:22; Biggs, 2004:8). However, these questions often emerge from practice and not as an initial requirement (Biggs, 2004:13; Nimkulrat, 2007; Borgdorff, 2011:56). The origin of PLR projects may thus take the form of a thematic exploration (identity in this project) through which a research question might emerge; the refinement and exploration of which will direct the project as a whole (Green, 2007).

Therefore, it is expected that the idea will emerge through the process of production – the response to which is critically engaged, reasoned and reflective (Scrivener & Chapman, 2004). Practice accordingly serves as a "creator of ideas" through purposeful investigation that embraces the serendipity of creation and exploration, enabling the artefact to serve as an instigator or advancement mechanism for tacit and explicit knowledge (Mäkelä & Routarinne, 2006:22; Scrivener & Chapman, 2004; Borgdorff, 2011:46, 57). Knowledge generation in this context is consequently discovery-led; this makes a hypothesis or central theoretical statement, as would be expected of traditional qualitative research, unviable for a PLR project. It is more appropriate to identify an investigatory theme which, in the case of this project and as has been mentioned, is narrative personal identity (Rubidge, 2004).

Another manner in which PLR diverges from traditional requirements is that it is highly experiential (Green, 2007; Biggs & Büchler, 2008:15). This implies the prevalence of tacit knowledge. According to Gilbert Ryle (1949:30), tacit knowledge is "knowing-how" or practical knowledge or skills for which one need not understand the enabling theoretical principles, in order to execute

these. It is a subjective and highly personal, practical kind of knowing that is embedded in action and experience and cannot fully be communicated through language (Nonaka, 2005:55; Polanyi, 1966:4, 6, 7, 17, 18). Practice, such as photographic editing or layout experimentation, makes this tacit knowledge available to the practitioner-researcher. The documentation of the process and artefact is then the means by which the implicit artistic experience associated with PLR is made accessible to a wider audience where it can be discussed within the academic context (Niedderer & Roworth-Stokes, 2007:2; Nimkulrat, 2007).

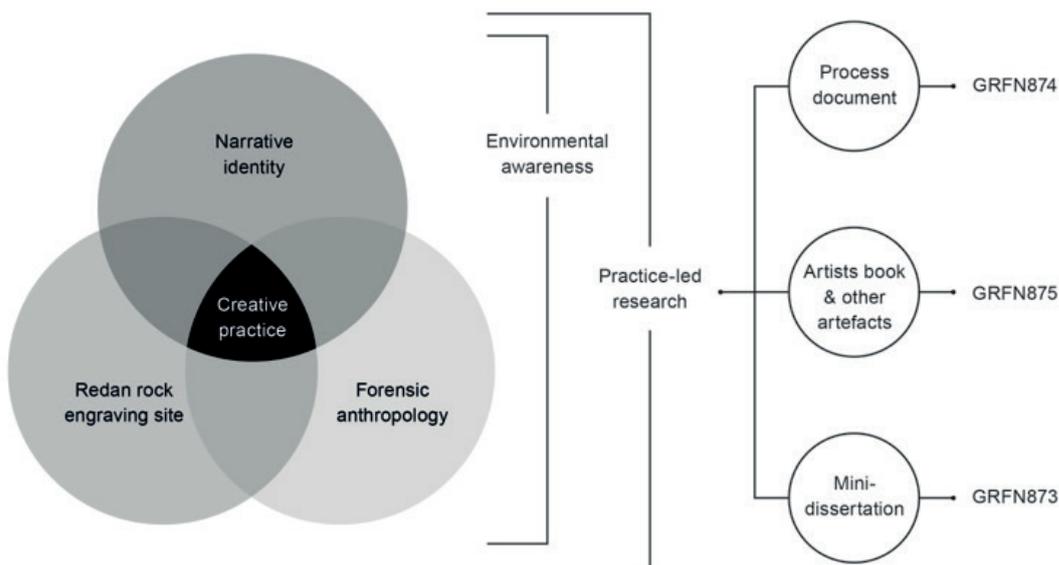
Practice-led research is particularly beneficial to this project for various reasons. Primarily, this project aims to visualise the various narratives or perspectives surrounding the Redan site through the production of artefacts, which is in alignment with the aim of arts research – the production of art. The precise nature of these artefacts is, at the beginning of a PLR project, uncertain and dependent on the interaction between the artistic experience, the subject and the responsiveness of the practitioner-researcher to the situations produced by this interaction. This project has as its subject a landscape, which by virtue of it being a physical space that one inhabits and interacts with, generates experiential knowledge – a fundamental aspect of PLR and a crucial component of the interaction that advances practice. The creative potential of this project, being experimental and exploratory, lies in the opportunities that emerge through the experience of and interaction with this physical space. Its success, therefore, depends upon the responsiveness of the practitioner-researcher. The fact that responsiveness is necessitated means that the outcomes cannot be delineated in the manner that traditional research requires. Practice-led research, in its encouragement of a thematic, open-ended enquiry, accommodates this.

Furthermore, due to this project being conceptually driven, theoretical rigour is able to enrich artistic production. Forensic anthropology and narrative identity as a combined emergent theoretical foundation guides practice while practice, in turn, directs the contextualisation of the artefacts produced. This contextualisation is essential in communicating the practitioner-researcher's intentions to the viewer and providing a consistent hermeneutic framework. A textual, explicit format is the most efficient method of communicating this contextualisation to the viewer who is not privy to the practitioner-researcher's artistic experience in its entirety, as the nature of tacit knowledge dictates. Thus, the two formats – explicit and tacit – support each other and as such, the report on this project is presented in three parts: the artefact/s, reflective journals and a textual exegesis.

## 1.6. Envisioned production

The envisioned production related to this concept, theoretical underpinning and research methodology, as detailed above, is constituted by an artist's book of five parts contextualised as a single case file. These artist's books present the history of the Redan rock engraving site through the visual reconstruction of various narratives, or memories, specifically from the viewpoint of the landscape as a fellow sentient being.

These artist's books are accompanied by supporting artefacts whose creation is also guided by the visual language, practices and principles of forensic anthropology and the concept of narrative identity. This interaction constitutes practice-led research, resulting in three pertinent aspects related to the modules of a practical master's degree. The graphic design applications are in service of the GRFN875 module outcomes and are included in the artist's book. This is accompanied by a textual exegesis of the production and thought processes linked to its making, as required by the GRFN873 module. The artefact and textual exegesis are supplemented by journals documenting the process, as part of the GRFN874 module. Figure 1.2 provides a graphic representation of the relation between these modules, theory and creative practice.



**Figure 1.2:** Triangulation of theoretical bodies of knowledge and content for the purpose of practice. Diagram produced by researcher.

## **1.7. Methodological framework**

The method according to which this practice-led research is structured is Scrivener's Model for Creative-Production Projects (2004), which includes six steps. The first is a pre-project reflection during which issues, concerns and interests applicable to the project are identified. The second comprises a review of the theory and information that are relevant to the identified issues. Step three requires a reframing of these issues, concerns and interests in response to the theory review. This takes the form of project conceptualisation and is followed by step four, which contains the cycles of production in which critical, self-reflective and reasoned practice is crucial. Step five is a post-production reflection on the project as a whole while, lastly, a reflection on the reflection takes place for the purpose of dissemination (Scrivener & Chapman, 2004).

In this study, the pre-project reflection deals with the identification of environmental awareness as the context and the Redan rock engraving site's disappearing identity as the issue and subject matter to be engaged with. The subsequent theory review defines narrative identity and forensic anthropology as the bodies of theory relevant to this study. These serve as the theoretical framework according to which the theme and context are reframed in step three, with the Redan rock engraving site as the focus of the cycles of production in step four. The fourth step employs forensic anthropology as the method of research while step five summarises and reflects on the creative development of the project. This is followed by step six, which is presented as a textual exegesis of the project, wherein all five steps are elucidated, a series of reflective journals and an exhibition. This mini-dissertation fulfils the role of textual exegesis.

## **1.8. Work plan**

This mini-dissertation is largely a reflection of the methodological framework in that it reports on the project according to the same model – Scrivener's Model for Creative-production Projects (Scrivener & Chapman, 2004). In this chapter, Chapter One, an introduction and project overview is provided in order to contextualise the reading of the following chapters. Chapter Two is a clarification of the adopted position on practice-led research, as the methodological approach with which this project resonates, placing specific emphasis on Scrivener's model (2004) as the research methodology. Chapter Three represents the first step of Scrivener's model – the identification of issues, concerns and interests to be engaged with. Therefore,

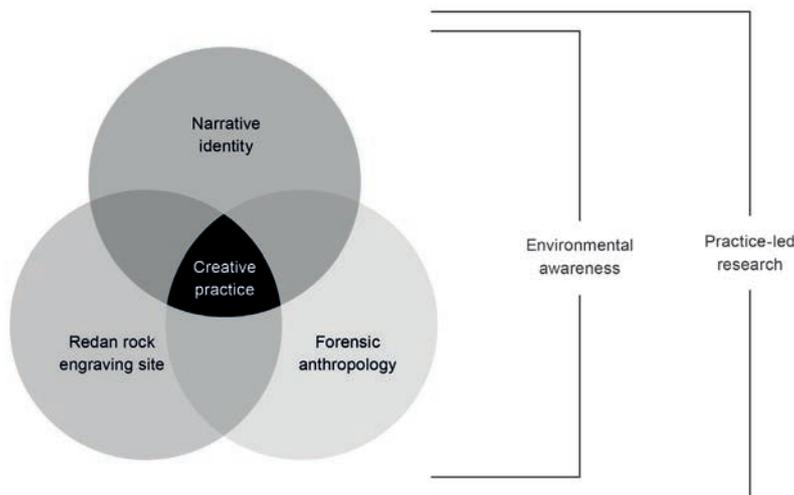
the Redan rock engraving site, its history and the broader context of South African rock art research are presented as the subject matter and the broad concept of identity is identified as the theme to be investigated. Thereafter, Chapter Four provides a literature review of narrative identity and forensic anthropology as the combined theoretical foundation of this project. It also includes a discussion on the project's concept as the manner in which this theoretical framework is used to reframe the investigatory theme and subject matter. As a result, Chapter Four is an amalgamation of steps two and three of Scrivener's model. This is followed by an explanation of the cycles of production pertaining to the artist's book and supporting artefacts in Chapter Five – step four of the research model. Lastly, Chapter Six is a post-production reflection on the project. In particular, the outline of the project and the integration of theory and practice will be addressed. In combination, the compilation of this mini-dissertation, the process books and the conceptualisation of the exhibition attached to the submission of this practice-led research project constitute the final step of Scrivener's model – post-post production reflection for the purpose of dissemination.

# CHAPTER TWO

## Practice-led research as methodological framework and research context

### 2.1 Introduction

Chapter One provided a brief overview of the project. This included an explanation of the manner in which the various contextual, thematic, conceptual, practical and theoretical aspects have been interwoven in order to comply with the requirements of practice-led research<sup>7</sup> for the purpose of a Master’s Degree in Graphic Design. This chapter presents an exploration of this field of investigation as the research context in which this project is undertaken. Figure 2.1 provides a graphic representation of the manner in which the various aspects of this project relate to one another and the identified research context.



**Figure 2.1:** Graphic representation of the relationship between the subject matter, theory and practical components of this project as it occurs in the interpretative context of environmental awareness and the research context of practice-led research.

In fulfilling the role of the research context, practice-led research defines the mode of engagement between researcher and the subject matter – myself and the Redan rock engraving site, respectively. The discussion presented here is intended to clarify my position within this field of research, considering its many, varied approaches and the implications that each holds

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<sup>7</sup> In this document, the term “practice-led research” refers to research related to creative practice.

for the mode of engagement. The stance taken in this project embraces an interactionist dualistic model wherein explicit and tacit modes of knowledge are in constant interaction with one another under the co-ordination of the practitioner-researcher. The primary aim of these interactions is the creation of an original creative production artefact indicative of technical, conceptual and theoretical rigour. Reflective practice encourages this rigour while documentation of the process bears witness to it, making the creative process transparent and accessible.

This stance has implications for three broad aspects of this project, namely the investigative approach, the role of theory and the manner of interaction between these two aspects and the subject matter. Therefore, the aim of the discussion presented here consists of three parts. Firstly, the intention of this chapter is to position creative practice as the investigative approach taken to the Redan rock engraving site – the subject matter – by clarifying the role of the said practice and the role of the artefact in the practice-led research context. The purpose of the second part of this chapter is to explicate the role of theory in the creative process as it relates to the knowledge review of forensic anthropology and narrative identity provided in Chapter Four. Thirdly, the discussion in this chapter provides the guidelines that I, as the practitioner-researcher, follow in co-ordinating interactions between the subject matter, creative process and bodies of theory. These interactions are described in Chapter Five.

In support of this aim, this chapter begins by briefly contextualising practice-led research within arts research in South Africa. It thereafter elucidates the relationship between the practitioner-researcher, critical process and artefact as three interdependent domains of this type of research and describes the parameters of dissemination as they apply to this practical research project. Finally, a summary of the position taken with regard to practice-led research and a brief introduction to Chapter Three is furnished.

## **2.2 Practice-led research (PLR) in the South African context**

Internationally, engagement in practice-led research (PLR) began roughly three decades ago in Finland, Australia and the United Kingdom. South African universities have more recently joined these international academic communities in developing this relatively new field of research (Farber & Mäkelä, 2010:8). The ongoing debates relating to PLR mark a shift in the manner of thinking about knowledge. Traditionally, arts research has displayed two primary focusses. The first is the enhancement and expansion of technical acuity within artistic practice through new methods or technologies, while the second concerns the exploration of theoretical bodies of knowledge through critical art historical readings of the artefacts produced through artistic

practice. In order for the knowledge generated by these communities to comply with research standards, a theoretical approach and a written exegesis is required for dissemination purposes. Thus, the accepted knowledge modality is exclusively explicit (Borgdorff, 2011:48-53). In this document, this mode of research is referred to as *traditional arts research*.

Practice-led research advocates a non-reductionist model for knowledge wherein explicit knowledge (theory) and tacit knowledge (creative practice) are intertwined through meaningful interaction. In this context, meaningful interaction entails allowing creative practice to guide the use of theoretical knowledge and vice versa through reflective practice, as set forth by Donald Schön<sup>8</sup>. Through the employment of this dualistic interactionist approach, PLR captures tacit and explicit knowledge in a symbiotic relationship that renders the border between traditional research and creative practice porous. Through the creative practitioner's engagement with theoretical knowledge in the creative process, the conceptual depth and rigour of the artefact is enhanced and accorded a broader scope of relevance to academic communities. Through the adaptation of selective aspects of traditional research, such as dissemination methods and the documentation of the research process, the previously mysterious and private creative process is made accessible. This enables traditional research communities to benefit from forms of thinking and understanding beyond the explicit (Borgdorff, 2011:44; Nimkulrat, 2007:2; Scrivener, 2011:273). However, tacit knowledge cannot adequately be captured in explicit knowledge formats. Therefore, in contrast to the primarily text-based publication of traditional research, PLR necessitates a two-part model for dissemination that includes both text-based and artefact-oriented components.

As will be noted in this brief comparison, the knowledge emphasised in traditional arts research does not prioritise tacit knowledge – the category of knowledge that is the emphasis of knowing how to carry out creative practice. The result of this is that, prior to the establishment of PLR, research communities did not acknowledge creative practice as research. In the university context, both in South Africa and abroad, this meant that creative practitioners were not eligible for research funding unless their research outputs fitted the mould of traditional research. The expectation was that these practitioners would conform to a system that did not accommodate

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<sup>8</sup> Donald Schön's *The reflective practitioner* (1983) and *Educating the reflective practitioner* (1987) have been influential in the establishment of an epistemology of practice – a cornerstone of PLR. Reflection and reflective practice are central to Schön's writings, taking into account the "repertoire" of previous knowledge and experience that practitioners use to understand, reinterpret and appropriately respond to situations in a self-aware manner. Schön (1983:132) states that "the situation talks back, the practitioner listens and as he [sic] appreciates what he hears, he reframes the situation once again."

the culture and values inherent to creative practice. Hence PLR was a means of building a bridge between the communities of traditional research and creative practice (Marley, 2014:134, 135).

The aspiration of creative practice communities, to establish themselves within a broader research community, was accompanied by the development and published use of numerous labels and terminology to describe their research activity. Examples of these include *practice-based research*, *practice-led research*, *performance-led research*, *arts-based research*, *practice-centred research* and *studio-based research*, to name but a few. These terms have been used synonymously and interchangeably by research communities within the humanities, both abroad and in South Africa (Niedderer & Roworth-Stokes, 2007:5, 7; Farber & Mäkelä, 2010:9). The seemingly nuanced implications of these various terms for the contribution that practice makes to knowledge, as well as their undifferentiated employment, have been the cause of much debate (Biggs, 2002). Regardless, since scholarly support for creative-practice-as-research is increasing at individual national universities, systemic assistance such as government policy and funding is beginning to respond in kind (Sullivan, 2009:43, 46).

South African universities such as the North-West University (NWU), the University of the Witwatersrand (WITS) and the University of Johannesburg (UJ), promote the production of creative outputs and internally acknowledge and fund these as valid research outputs. In 2016, the South African government's Department of Higher Education and Training (2016:4) issued the notice that creative outputs and innovations would in future be acknowledged as scholarly outputs. A draft policy to this effect is under consideration. This has not yet resulted in the passing of legislation and may take some years before it does. However, it is indicative of growing support for PLR.

There is admittedly still much to be resolved in this young and developing field, especially in South Africa. For example, the roles of image and text in this field of research are still under debate both in South Africa and abroad. On the one hand, there are those who champion the acknowledgement of the artefact, independent of a written explanation, as research (Olivier, 2010; Hay, 2010; Haseman, 2006). On the other hand, many academics and practitioners view the artefact and written exegesis as interdependent, as this study does (Munro, 2011:157; Marley & Greyling, 2010; Doman & Laurie, 2010). Differences of opinion or emphases such as these still occur in countries where PLR is more widely established. Finland is one such example where PLR doctoral studies differ in emphasis from one university to the next (Mäkelä, 2010:61). This developmental phase that PLR currently finds itself in presents its subscribers with a broad and dynamic landscape that is still in flux, within which to situate themselves.

Despite differing emphases on knowledge modalities, a universal point of consensus amongst South African practitioner-researchers is that creative practice is central to this form of arts research. In this mode of research, creative practice and the artefacts that result from it no longer passively fulfil the role of subjects for critical readings by the traditional research community. Rather, the processes that shape creative practice become the focus of investigation. According to Kathrin Busch (2009:1-2), this focus is aligned with an emerging trend in the field of South African contemporary art. This trend places the story of the artefact and the knowledge it generates in the spotlight alongside the artefact itself. Thus, the thought processes that generated the artefact and the perceptions that defined them are now as important as the artefact that was produced. The creative artefact, as the outcome of creative practice, is the manifestation of these processes and perceptions, amongst other aspects of tacit knowledge. Whereas creative practice previously performed the roles of method and outcome, it now simultaneously fulfils the roles of subject, method, context and outcome (Borgdorff, 2011:45, 46; Busch, 2009:2). In its various phases of completion, the artefact may serve as the trigger for the emergence of questions related to any of these four aspects, on the condition that its creation incorporates a critical and reflective process. The strength of creative production as a mode of research lies in the realm of “what-if” questions that are able to adjust the lens of the practitioner-researcher in order to alter his or her perceptions regarding any aspect of his or her creative practice and its outcome (Sullivan, 2009:62). Thus, Scrivener and Chapman (2004:2) describe the PLR process as one of “original *creation* undertaken in order to generate novel apprehension.”

This constant process of questioning, reframing and response through reflective practice renders PLR theoretically rich and conceptually robust. This enables it to adhere to the standards of quality related to both artistic practice and traditional research, albeit in an adapted form as adhered to by most South African universities offering PLR post-graduate programmes and research opportunities (Scrivener & Chapman, 2004:6).

This is the contextual background against which this PLR project occurs. The following section further clarifies the particular stance on PLR that this study adopts and the implications for the mode of engagement between the practitioner-researcher, critical process and artefact.

### 2.3 Practice-led research as an exploratory journey

As mentioned earlier, the view of PLR that this study accords with is that of an interactionist dualist model. As such, and as established in the previous section, PLR implies an intersection between the contexts of creative practice and traditional research. Sullivan (2009:49) equates the navigation of these two intersected contexts with an exploratory journey. It is an integrated exploration of possible worlds and future realities: therein lies the strength of PLR. It enables this form of research to open up new realms of possibility. This journey is manifested in the artefact, making it an essential part of the research process. Inevitably, in accordance with research protocol, the dissemination of the outcomes of this exploratory journey to a wider audience for verification and validation is required. In the case of PLR, dissemination must include both the artefact and theoretical exegesis (Scrivener & Chapman, 2004:2, 8).

As the phrase *exploratory journey* might imply, PLR is typically more comprehensive in focus than traditional research. It is also often interdisciplinary and encourages multiple connections. The result is a complex knowledge system that is broad, as opposed to the deep and very discipline-specific approach of traditional research. Therefore, generated knowledge and understanding is often multi-faceted. It may generate insights into the practitioner-researcher and her role. The demystification of the creative process may make a contribution to the creative field through the development or refinement of strategies and methods. It is also likely to contribute to the understanding of the human experience through its critical engagement with multiple theoretical contexts – questioning the status quo and offering critique – as this project does, through a system of knowledge triangulation, which is explained in more detail in Chapter Four (Borgdorff, 2011: 48-53).

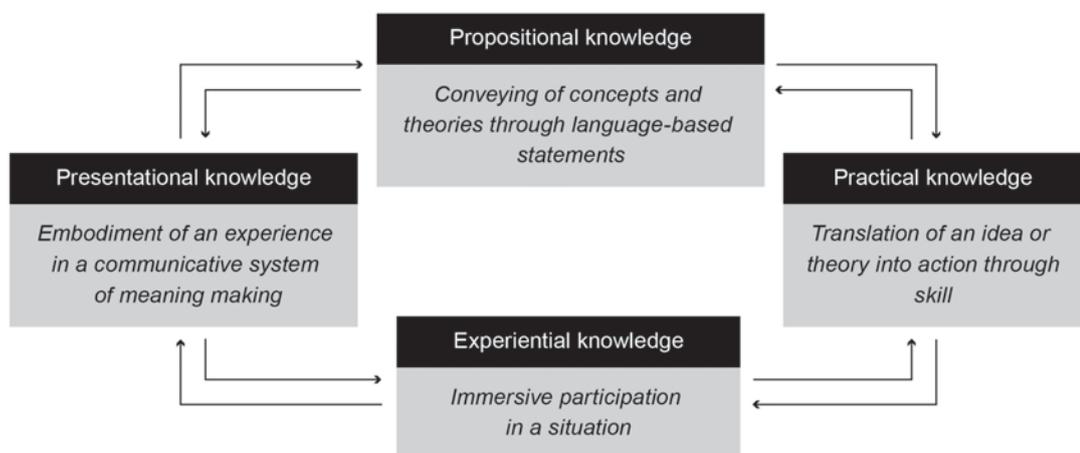
Furthermore, this process of knowledge generation is rooted in hermeneutics. By virtue of the subjective and context-specific nature of hermeneutics, a degree of ambiguity is to be expected. Thus, the role that contextualisation fulfils is a crucial one. Context is interwoven in every aspect of a PLR project. Creative practice as the mode of research is inevitably the primary context. In accordance with this, experimentation and the embracing of serendipitous action in practice is endorsed by local PLR communities. However, the theoretical knowledge engaged with, the culture of practice and the secondary context<sup>9</sup> within which the practitioner-researcher positions

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<sup>9</sup> While PLR is the overarching context as the mode of research, creative production projects typically have a secondary context. Each context contains its own body of issues, concerns and interests associated with it that are relevant to those engaged in fields related to that secondary context. In the case of this project, environmental awareness is the sub-context, dealing with issues, concerns and interests such as land management, conservation and environmental rights. Similarly, sub-contexts of psychology or user-experience design each bring with them their own relevant topics.

these happenings provide the appreciative system, interpretative framework and norms against which these unanticipated paths and their effect might be measured. This measurement also applies to the knowledge that is generated through creative practice and reported on, often in conclusion (Scrivener & Chapman, 2004:3, 7; Borgdorff, 2011:47, 48; Biggs, 2004:11; Frayling *et al.*, 1997:21)

According to Heron and Reason (1997:280, 281), knowledge is a non-reductionist concept that entails both tacit and explicit knowledge (Figure 2.2). This conceptualisation of knowledge is important in the context of PLR as it is an interaction between creative practice and theoretical frameworks. Thus, this exploratory journey is as much rooted in tacit knowledge as it is in the explicit. Tacit knowledge refers to the experiential, practical and presentational facets of knowing in and through artistic practice. The experiential facet describes the direct immersion of the practitioner-researcher in a situation, in such a manner that he/she is able to take intuitive action or make perceptual adjustments through active participation. The presentational facet is the embodiment of the experiential facet in the form of creative artefacts while, lastly, the practical facet of knowing refers to the means by which experiential knowing is translated into presentational knowing. It is the functional and skills-based knowledge particular to one's creative discipline. These three types of knowing are more effectively communicated as artistic practice because they tend to evade effective linguistic explanations or expression. The contextualisation of one's creative practice is the fourth way of knowing – propositional knowing. This entails the ability of the practitioner-researcher to employ language (explicit knowledge) to convey concepts, theories and statements (Heron & Reason, 1997:280, 281).



**Figure 2.2:** Dialectic, cyclical relationship between the four forms of knowing (adapted from Heron, 1996:167).

The integrated tacit and explicit discourse that occurs from the beginning of this journey to its disseminatory end, represents the interdependence of three domains in practice-led research: the practitioner-researcher, the critical process and the artefact. The artefact is supplemented by text to comprise the research report. While equal emphasis is afforded each domain throughout the research process, any one of these may be the initial motivation for academic inquiry (Sullivan, 2009:48). Scrivener and Chapman (2004:1) posit that the true goal of practice-related research in the arts ought to be visual art. This stance would indicate that the artefact and the processes behind its creation are the preferred locus of inquiry; this project is in accord with the said view.

### **2.3.1 The practitioner-researcher**

Despite the artefact being the arena under investigation, any research process begins with the researcher. Practice-led research necessitates constant two-way interaction between the domains of practice and theory in the mediation of a critical and reflective conversation. This complex back and forth interaction requires a practitioner-researcher to simultaneously fulfil the roles of both researcher and creative-practitioner, in a balance where both are afforded equal emphasis (McNamara, 2012; Nimkulrat, 2007:2).

The thought processes, perceptions and other tacit forms of knowing that guide the creative development of a PLR project are unique to the practitioner-researcher. In this system where creative practice constitutes the subject, method, context and outcome, the researcher is an essential participant and finds himself or herself in a unique position. As practitioner-researcher, he or she not only creates the subject of the research but also reports on it as data (Sullivan, 2009:51).

Consequently, a common research method of PLR is autoethnography, which “seeks to describe and systematically analyse (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno)” (Ellis *et al.* 2011). Autoethnography positions the reflective, critical processes of the individual researcher-practitioner as the research focus in the broader context of a creative production culture. The practitioner-researcher retrospectively reports on these processes and the realisations and understandings that are uniquely made possible through active participation in the creative process. This stance emphasises the importance of the insider perspective with regard to knowledge (Rutten, 2016:299, 300). The direct access of the practitioner-researcher to embedded knowledge, practical participation and experience lends credibility and validity to her research as it is not based on conjecture or translated through outsider-perspectives (Gray & Malins, 2004:23; Borgdorff, 2011:51).

The endorsement of the insider perspective takes into account the influence of the cultural idiosyncrasy of the particular practitioner-researcher. Her response to any design problem or research question is informed by her unique experiences, pre-conceptions, aesthetic sensibilities and training – her tacit knowledge. These shape, amongst others, the choices and responses in the selection of issues with which to engage, the medium and manner of engagement, the possibilities that are proposed as solutions, theoretical contexts and the manner in which these factors interact to produce a particular articulation or interpretation of content (Munro, 2011:158).

The practitioner-researcher, coming from his or her particular background, therefore provides an initial context for the research process. As a South African citizen in an era that calls for an authentic African voice and decolonised identity<sup>10</sup>, engagement with South African rock art in this project was more likely than with rock art of European origin. This investigation of the Redan rock engraving site is positioned within the context of environmental awareness, as informed by my personal interest in nature conservation and my passion for the outdoors. The primary manner, medium and format through which this content and context is engaged is the creative development of an artist's book. Since I am a print media designer by training, with a preference for illustration practice, it is unlikely that I would have opted for a multimedia-oriented creative response. These are a few of the cornerstone aspects of this practice-led research project. However, they are not the only aspects that my cultural idiosyncrasy influenced. This decision-making profile is present throughout the research process.

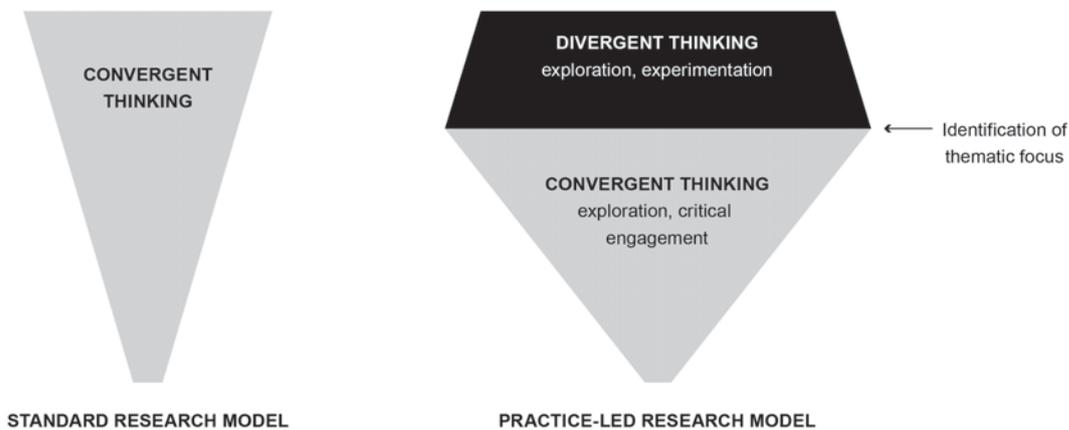
### **2.3.2 The critical process and artefact**

The research process within PLR is an inverted one. Sullivan (2009:48) describes the process as working from the “unknown to the known.” It opens up a window into a possible reality – something not certainly known to be possible – and in doing so, aspires to compel its audiences, whether academic or layperson, to re-evaluate that which is known and familiar to us and our perceptions of that knowledge. This journey of novel apprehension is not hypothesis-driven but, rather, led by exploration and discovery, wherein intuition, guesses, hunches and serendipitous

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<sup>10</sup> In South Africa, trends in aesthetics, knowledge systems and social perceptions amongst other things have in the past been decidedly Eurocentric due to a history of colonisation and the influence of the Apartheid regime. South Africa gained its independence just as globalisation began to lay down roots. This gave South Africa little chance to develop a cultural identity that is uniquely its own. However, as trends in contemporary art turn to local narratives, there has been an increased focus on the exploration of what it means to be African and on topics that are rooted in local knowledge and experience.

results divert the pre-empted path towards unexpected outcomes (Rubidge, 2004:8; Gray & Malins, 2004:12). While the immediate funnelling of knowledge domains, as illustrated in Figure 2.3, is problematic to an open-ended process such as this, the process remains purposeful (Scrivener & Chapman, 2004:5,7,8; Sullivan, 2009:48; 49, 62). Consequently, the practitioner-researcher works divergently from a broadly defined focus before transitioning to a convergent mode of engagement (Figure 2.3). At the end of this adapted funnel, we find an artefactual outcome. This outcome is not an answer. It is a single interpretation of the subject matter that the practitioner-researcher identifies as the better solution out of the myriad possibilities presented to him/her throughout the critical process; and it is intended to operate within a specific interpretative context in order to embody knowledge and generate insights (Biggs, 2004:3,7; Borgdorff, 2011:44; 56).



**Figure 2.3:** A visual comparison of the research models employed in traditional arts research and practice-led research. Diagram produced by researcher.

Creative production, as an interaction between practice and theory, is the mode of research and drives the research process through this funnel from initiation to conclusion (Biggs, 2004:2; Scrivener & Chapman, 2004:2). The act of creating and the resultant artefact are vehicles for thought and are accordingly central to the process of understanding and exploring an issue or theme. Creative practice makes this personal journey and tacit knowledge accessible to academia (Niedderer & Roworth-Stokes, 2007). The artefact, as presentational knowing and the outcome of creative practice, is able to communicate that which language cannot. The integration of theoretical frameworks with creative production remains crucial as a means of enrichment. The role of theory is to open up possibilities in the process of creation, which may

thereby inform the creation of an artefact (Sullivan, 2009:47, 48). This is meant as a two-way interaction. Therefore, just as theory is able to direct practice, practice is able to direct the use of theory. The two knowledge domains are intended as interdependent components that dovetail with one another.

This interaction should be of such a nature that it is still able to accommodate emergent opportunities. Therefore, the process ought not to be limited by the employment of theory; neither should the use of theory be limited by practice. The act of making and the emergence of possibilities and initial ideas are largely intuitive and serendipitous (Sullivan, 2009:48). This applies to both practice and theory. The result is that the method may direct the practitioner-researcher's choice of theory, as opposed to the inverse process that is typical of traditional arts research. This is true of this particular project. Two theoretical frameworks are discussed in Chapter Four: forensic anthropology and narrative identity. The latter is an emergent theoretical framework resulting from the appropriation of the forensic anthropologist's workflow. Relevant theoretical frameworks, whether they will later serve a primary or a supportive role, often emerge through practice in this manner.

However, the creative production process is not one which lacks intentionality. The response to these serendipitous developments is required to be critically engaged. Serendipity and intuition are thus supported by critical reflection on resource domains, completed artefacts, the creative strategies employed and work in process; and reflexive action that takes these insights into consideration. This enables the process to be "self-conscious, reasoned and reflective" (Sullivan, 2009:48). Reflective practice unites theoretical inquiry as thought and practice as action, ensuring the rigour of the creative production process. It consequently plays an integral role in the acknowledgement of practice as research (Scrivener & Chapman, 2004:2; Candy, 2006; Gray & Malins, 2011:22).

Self-critical iterative practice is a particularly pervasive form of reflective practice. It involves the generation of multiple solutions, critically reflecting on the options, identifying the strengths and weakness of each, and then generating a new corpus of solutions in response to this reflection. This occurs in cycles until a suitable solution is produced; the process of experiential learning becomes a looping one (Biggs, 2004:9). This iterative process is captured in a reflective journal, or via a similar documentation process in a format suited to the type of creative practice. It may include activity and development logs, diary entries, work in progress, contextual references, visual references, theoretical points of departure, information on time management and the outcomes of evaluation, amongst other matters (Gray & Malins, 2004:57, 59). Thus, it represents

the complex conversation taking place between multiple domains in the creative production process and must be indicative of informed decisions in the development and selection of a final solution (Stapleton, 2006). Therefore, it is essential that critical reflection be a prevalent factor in the decision-making process.

The creative process is often described as “messy” due to its experimental and exploratory nature (Munro, 2011:160, 162). However, it is not entirely unstructured. Stephen Scrivener developed a model to methodologically frame the creative process, albeit in a broad manner, thus meeting traditional arts research in the middle of the spectrum between the two. Scrivener’s model is not the sole attempt to position an open-ended process within a structure that is understandable to a broader academic community<sup>11</sup>. However, it is the model that most suitably accommodates my creative practice in this project. The flexible phase-based structure accommodates exploration while enabling it to be sufficiently specific to prevent it from being too vague and consequently redundant. This model was also shown to be functional for the practice-led research project carried out by Estee Steyn (2011) for the purpose of attaining a Master’s degree in Graphic Design at the North-West University’s Potchefstroom Campus. Therefore, it is the model that is subscribed to in this project.

### 2.3.3 Scrivener’s Model for creative production projects

Scrivener’s Model for creative production projects consists of six steps: a pre-project reflection, an identification of resource domains, the reframing of subject matter, cycles of production, a post-production reflection and a post-post-production reflection (Scrivener & Chapman, 2004). This model is depicted in Table 2.1 below.

**Table 2.1:** Scrivener’s Model for Creative Production Projects (adapted from Scrivener & Chapman, 2004).

STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5	STEP 6
Identification of issues, concerns and interests	Theoretical review and artistic audit	Reframing of identified issues, concerns and interests	Cycles of production	Post-production reflection on project	Post-post-production reflection for dissemination

<sup>11</sup> Doman and Laurie (2010:39-50) propose a six-part framework that emphasises four dimensions of reflective creative practice. The exposition of this framework is more detailed than that provided by Scrivener (2004), some aspects of which are relevant to Scrivener’s model and provide useful triggers for exploration.

The first step of this model is a “pre-project reflection.” This entails the identification of issues, concerns and interests that are to be engaged with through creative practice. These are typically drawn from the practitioner-researcher’s cultural idiosyncrasies and thus have highly personal origins. However, in order for creative practice to transcend the limits of personal professional practice, these must bear relevance to current preoccupations within a broader context, such as environmental awareness in this project (Scrivener & Chapman, 2004).

The second step requires the “identification of resource domains.” This entails a combination of literature study, artistic audit and practical experimentation in identifying the various bodies of knowledge that are relevant to one’s study. This includes the subject matter applicable to the issues, concerns and interests identified in step one, the manner in which other creatives have engaged with similar topics, possible theoretical contexts and potential practical techniques or strategies that might be employed in the exploration of these.

Step three is the reframing of the said issues, concerns and interests (Scrivener & Chapman, 2004). In this project, this takes place in two forms. The first is conceptualisation wherein these are reframed in response to the theory review and artistic audit, thereby engaging with propositional knowledge. The second is that of engagement with these issues, concerns and interests through creative practice, which engages experiential, presentational and practical knowledge. As will be observed, step three is carried out on two levels – tacit and explicit. The result is that steps two and three interact, as opposed to taking place in a purely linear fashion. Steps three and four also interact in response to step two.

Step four advocates research through artistic practice, or “cycles of production.” This step is pre-occupied with thinking-through-art. Through practical participation and application, the relationship and role of the aspects identified in the previous two steps are clarified and refined, in such a fashion that a thematic point of departure may be identified. This step engages with iterative and reflective practice guided by critical thought in the triangulation of the multiple domains now informing one another and one’s creative practice. The exploratory journey that ensues is crucial to the development of the project and may require the repositioning or replacement of domains. The artefact in consequence becomes an indispensable component of this process of thinking-in and thinking-through-art (Scrivener & Chapman, 2004).

Step five comprises a “post-production reflection.” This is a reflection on the project as a whole – the evaluation of one’s actions, decisions and practice and their efficacy so that future practice may be informed. This is followed by step six, which is a post-post production reflection wherein reflection on reflection takes place for the purpose of dissemination. As mentioned in Chapter

One, in the case of this study, this takes the form of a mini-dissertation, a corpus of reflective journals and an exhibition of the practical component of this study. The aim of dissemination is the exposition of the conceptualisation, production processes and perceptions that shaped the artefact.

In relation to the workflow depicted by Figure 2.3, steps one and two constitute the top of the adapted funnel. The exploration of the relationships between domains in order to refine a focus in step three and the triangulation between practical, contextual and theoretical domains are manifest in the divergent portion of the funnel. Step three, in conjunction with step four, also engages with the convergent process after the clarification of the domains, focus and the roles of these. Finally, steps five and six are represented by the funnel end, at which point the dissemination of a research report is necessary.

### **2.3.4 The research report: reflective journal, artefact and mini-dissertation**

As established in previous sections, PLR is made possible through the merger of two knowledge domains – tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge – which Scrivener’s model, as the selected methodological framework, supports. As research, both require dissemination. There is not yet consensus within the broader practice-led research community regarding the parameters for the research report due to differing views on the degree of emphasis that each domain ought to receive (Elo, 2009). There appears to be a polarisation with regard to this. At one pole is the stance that purports the necessity and exclusivity of explicit knowledge modalities in reporting on the research process. At the other pole, we find those who advocate the sufficiency of the creative artefact as a research report, independent of any written report. This stance views the creative artefact as being intrinsically knowledge bearing, albeit as a tacit knowledge modality (Haseman, 2006:6). Between these two poles we find various balances of the two, with varied degrees of importance ascribed to each of the two components. The trend is to aim at some kind of balance between the two (Candy, 2006; Niedderer & Roworth-Stokes, 2007:5).

As stated earlier, the stance taken for this project is that both knowledge domains be afforded equal emphasis in the research process. The research report ought to reflect this. However, these knowledge domains are ontologically different<sup>12</sup>. Subsequently, a variety of communication

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<sup>12</sup> Tacit and explicit knowledge are distinctly different in nature – while the latter is defined by a literary, text-based mode of expression that can be universally communicated and understood, the former cannot comprehensively be expressed through words and is personal in nature. The methods that are employed to tap into these two knowledge domains reflect their distinctiveness. The validity of explicit knowledge is measured by its linguistic expression. The standards of validity for tacit knowledge also embrace a higher degree of subjectivity than explicit knowledge does.

modalities should be employed. Language-based formats cannot effectively communicate the experiential component of knowledge, just as personally-rooted responses steeped in ambiguity and practical knowledge cannot effectively communicate theoretical concepts. Therefore, the research report pertaining to this project comprises three parts, namely the artefact (a five-part artist's book), a body of process work captured in the reflective journals and a textual exegesis (the mini-dissertation). Only in a combination of these is the holistic research report constituted.

The artefact is indispensable in the generation of comprehension and as an outcome of practice must be produced. Artefacts embody tacit knowledge. They offer tangible proof that something previously unconsidered or considered to be impossible, is in fact possible (Scrivener & Chapman, 2004:8). Artefacts cannot, however, exist in isolation. Arts research is by nature hermeneutic. The absence of a prescribed context for the interpretation of the knowledge embodied by the artefact, renders the process uncontrolled and the knowledge ambiguous. Artefacts are typically contextualised through text-based formats (Biggs, 2003; 2004:10). The primacy of language-based statements in this component of the research report does not dictate a print publication as the only format, although that is the format elected for this specific project. The chosen format, be it a webpage, interactive e-book or documentary video for example, ought to be appropriate to the project which has been developed (Gray & Malins, 2004:59). This textual exegesis presents the various dynamics at play in the creation of the artefact, such as the thematic direction, over-arching theoretical frameworks, context, intended outcomes and serendipitous turns in practice. This records arguments of originality, rigour and validity in the process of achieving research recognition (Green, 2007:4; Scrivener & Chapman, 2004:3).

While the textual exegesis records these arguments, the reflective journal provides proof thereof. Through a combination of tacit and explicit knowledge modalities, the reflective journal captures the critical process in its raw form from an insider's perspective. This renders transparent the rigorous process of iterative practice, decision-making, theoretical and contextual navigation and reflection. The aim is to explicate the practitioner-researcher's chain of reasoning that results in an original artefact (Coumans, 2003; Green, 2007:2). In combination, the reflective journal and textual exegesis open the experiential aspect of practice to discourse within a broader academic community (Nimkulrat, 2007:6).

## 2.4 Summary

In summary, PLR is a young field that is beginning to gain traction in South Africa. This is evidenced by the notice issued by the South African DHET calling for comments on a draft policy regarding the acknowledgement and subsidisation of creative outputs as valid research. Despite this, there are still many aspects on which consensus has not been reached. As various creative fields with their unique demands attempt to position themselves within this holistic knowledge framework, the landscape remains in flux. One aspect on which there is consensus, is the essential role of creative practice in PLR. Creative production is the driving force of the research process in which a practitioner-researcher, critical process and artefact engage in meaningful interaction. These three domains of PLR are interdependent.

The practitioner-researcher mediates the complex back and forth interaction between tacit and explicit knowledge – practice and theory – with the support of reflective practice through engagement with the critical process and the creation of the artefact. This mediated conversation between multiple tacit and explicit knowledge domains operates within an interpretational community and advocates exploration, emergence, interdisciplinarity and the embracing of serendipity and intuition. This assumed-to-be “messy” process is afforded structure in this study by Scrivener’s Model for Creative Production Projects (Scrivener & Chapman, 2004) which is broad enough to accommodate the wide-ranging dynamics at play in the creative process, yet specific enough to render the process understandable to a broader academic community.

The most prominent aspect on which there is still much debate is the nature of the research report. Despite, the altered epistemic focus, dissemination remains a key phase of PLR. A polarised community has emerged wherein an either-or stance has been adopted – either the artefact or the textual exegesis – with a shifting spectrum inbetween the two that accords both a degree of emphasis. In this project, emphasis has been equally distributed across tacit and explicit knowledge modalities, the effect being a non-reductionist stance on knowledge.

In alignment with the interactionist dualist stance on PLR described in this chapter, the mode of research for this project is creative production wherein explicit and tacit knowledge interact in a meaningful and symbiotic manner. Hence, engagement with the Redan rock engraving site is aimed at the production of an artefact of technical, conceptual and theoretical rigour that captures and triggers the thought processes, perceptions and tacit knowledge involved in its creation. Theory and practice enrich and accommodate one another in this creative process, as narrative identity and forensic anthropology enrich this creative production project.

The interaction between these bodies of theory and subject matter takes place in a reflective conversation mediated by the practitioner-researcher to produce a body of practical work that forms a cohesive whole within the research context of PLR.

In the next chapter, the first step of Scrivener's Model is undertaken. A discussion is presented on the Redan rock engraving site and the challenges it faces in the context of heritage conservation and environmental awareness. The Redan site and its story provide the subject matter of this project and identify personal identity as being an appropriate broad thematic departure point to be refined and clarified in later steps (discussed in Chapter Four).

# CHAPTER 3

## Pre-project reflection: The Redan rock engraving site

Table 3.1: Chapter 3 in the context of Scrivener’s Model as indicated in red

STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5	STEP 6
Identification of issues, concerns and interests	Theoretical review and artistic audit	Reframing of identified issues, concerns and interests	Cycles of production	Post-production reflection on project	Post-post-production reflection for dissemination

### 3.1 Introduction

Chapter Two explored the interactionist dualist stance taken on PLR, as the research context of this project. In this chapter, a reflection on past practice and a discussion of the Redan rock engraving site is presented in fulfilment of step one of Scrivener’s Model. Particular attention is paid to its history and identity as a South African open-air rock art site and the challenges it faces as a disappearing landscape. The intention is to equip the reader with relevant information on the interpretative context and subject matter with which this project engages through artistic practice. This will in turn enable a better understanding of the applicability of the emergent theoretical foundations (narrative identity and forensic anthropology), and conceptual reframing of the subject matter discussed in Chapter Four.

In support of this aim, my project *Written in Bone: Blood from Stone* (2013) is introduced as the precursor to this study. This project builds on the core components of that one, with the Redan rock engraving site as its focus. Bearing this subject matter in mind, it is necessary to briefly describe the broader contexts of heritage preservation and environmental awareness within which the Redan rock engraving site falls. This is followed by a description of the site, which is contextualised by a brief account of the site’s history and the challenges it faces. Various perspectives and opinions on the site and its identity are then provided in motivating the Redan rock engraving site’s applicability to this project. Thereafter, a summary is provided of the Redan site’s story and the manner in which various aspects of it fulfil the roles of issue or subject matter, motivational concern and thematic interest. A brief introduction to Chapter Four concludes this chapter.

### 3.2. Reflection on past action

The project *Written in Bone: Blood from stone* is a body of creative work completed in 2013 in fulfilment of the outcomes of the GRFI471 module (Illustration as professional practice)<sup>13</sup>. The project served as the precursor to this project and laid the foundation for many of the conceptual, theoretical and design decisions explained in Chapters Four and Five.

*Written in Bone: Blood from stone*<sup>14</sup> is an exploration of the themes of death, identity and fragility in response to an interest in environmental conservation, specifically with regard to landscapes that had been altered by mining practices. This exploration took place through the application of the principles and practices of forensic anthropology to the Salvamento Quarry<sup>15</sup>. This application was based on the symbiotic relationship between the three themes, in which a disposition towards fragility enables aspects of visual identity to be revealed through death<sup>16</sup>: a dynamic that is also evident in forensic anthropology. Access to the bones of an individual is necessary in order for a forensic anthropologist to identify the deceased. The principal artefact that resulted from this exploration is an artist's book. The cycles of production explored this genre of bookmaking and its flexibility and it was subsequently identified as an appropriate genre of bookmaking for a PLR project emphasising experimentation and the serendipity of creative practice. The cycles of production also drew attention to the notion of memory as personal identity.

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<sup>13</sup> This module code has since been changed to GRFI472. This module continues to form part of the curriculum for the BA (Honours) Degree in Graphic Design at the North-West University's Potchefstroom Campus.

<sup>14</sup> Only the key concepts that influenced the creative development of the current project are discussed here. A more comprehensive overview of the practical outcomes of the project *Written in Bone: Blood from Stone* is available at [www.behance.net/Jo-Ann\\_Chan](http://www.behance.net/Jo-Ann_Chan)

<sup>15</sup> The Salvamento Quarry is an abandoned granite quarry between Parys and Potchefstroom in the Vredefort Dome heritage area. Mining operations were halted in the mid-1990s due to the granite being graded as inferior quality. The blocks that had been cut for export were left behind, neatly arranged in rows across the landscape (Reimold & Gibson, 2009:201, 221, 252).

<sup>16</sup> An example of the symbiotic relationship between death, identity and fragility is the manner in which growth rings, which are unique to each tree, are only visible once the tree has been felled. In this project, the term "mining" was seen to refer, not only to the mining of precious metals, but to any industry where resources are reaped from the environment, thus including rock mining, mineral mining and forestry.

This Master's study is a separate practice-led research project that developed from the explorations of *Written in Bone: Blood from Stone*. As such, the pre-production reflection of this project begins with the thematic departure point of personal identity. Another important aspect that resulted from this initial project is the current project's subject matter. The Redan rock engraving site was identified as a possible landscape to explore in addition to the Salvamento Quarry. However, it was not realistic to do so within the time period and credits of the GRFI471 module, thus making it eligible instead for the role of subject matter in this Master's project.

### **3.3. The Redan rock engraving site**

The Redan rock engraving site is an open-air rock art site that is currently facing challenges that are not dissimilar to those of many other in-situ sites both in South Africa and abroad. Many of these challenges are the result of the inherent exposure of open-air sites to the natural elements and human activity – both of which are attached to environmental concerns in varying degrees. Unfortunately, many South African rock art sites have already been significantly damaged or have disappeared altogether. Portions of these national assets were removed from their original spatial context for storage and preservation between the 1930s and 1960s. However, at that time, the collections to which they were moved were often poorly curated and, to date, the historical context of these removals has received little attention (Woodhouse, 1991:6; Henry, 2007:45). The Redan rock engraving site is no exception to this situation, as this chapter will illustrate. While there are various other rock art sites facing this plight, the numerous uncertainties and contradictory perspectives on this particular prehistoric heritage site have produced a fascinating story of which few are aware: a story that is embedded in its visual identity and which this PLR project endeavours to capture.

#### **3.3.1 A brief description: field notes**

The Redan rock art site was declared a national monument in August 1971 and is listed as both a national monument and provincial heritage site by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA, s.a.; SAHRA, 1971; Van der Spuy, 1971:15). This makes the Redan site one of only twelve rock art national monuments in South Africa and the only remaining major rock engraving site in Gauteng (National Museum Bloemfontein, 2015; Prins, 2005a:vi). Despite this, information on this rock art site is limited and most of this scanty corpus of information is difficult

to access. The small portion that is readily available is internet-based and marketing-orientated. The production of this material is managed by the Sedibeng District Municipality and parties in the tourism industry; and offers little more than a physical description. The descriptions offered by the various parties are also vague and contradictory. The material situates the engravings near or in the Vereeniging district in the Gauteng Province on a farm named either Waldrift or Kookfontein, stating the presence of 244 petroglyphs and highlighting their geometric and abstract aesthetic.<sup>17</sup>

A visit to the Redan rock engraving site revealed it to be located on private farmland amongst the industrial sites in the Meyerton area of Vereeniging in the Gauteng Province. This rock art site was once enclosed by a fence and announced by a plaque (see Figure 3.1) but is now unmarked. The Springfield Junior Secondary School on the M61 is the closest one might come to a recognisable marker for this national monument, which can be found approximately 700 metres away.



**Figure 3.1:** Dowson, T. 1993. RSA-RED1-14. The gate to the fenced Redan rock engraving site. The plaque had already come loose and can here be seen lying face-down to the bottom right of the image.

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<sup>17</sup> Gauteng Tourism Authority, 2014; Harrison, 2004:28; Sedibeng District Municipality, 2009; ShowMe Community Websites, 2009; Vaal Triangle Info CC, 2005.

While the site also includes a built circular structure and a stone passageway of large boulders, the heritage value of the Redan site is considered to lie primarily in the engravings pecked into eighteen of the thirty-three rock surfaces of an isolated outcrop of Ecca sandstone (Kovacs, 1998:10). To my knowledge, there are only two studies that have been undertaken which comprehensively document the site's layout and engravings: Willcox and Pager's study of 1967 and Prins' study from 2005. Willcox and Pager (1967:493) catalogued 244 pictographs while Prins (2005:vi) identifies 273. Both counts exclude the numerous cupules<sup>18</sup> that are also present. The vast majority of the pecked images bear a geometric aesthetic that is non-mimetic, although both studies identify ten that are representational of animals and singular engravings that are possibly intended to be a human figure and a mask (Prins, 2005a:248; Willcox & Pager, 1967:493).

These engravings are currently exposed to both natural and human elements. The immediate surroundings of this provincial heritage site are utilised for agriculture, factory space, clay mining and education. The open spaces are also being used as an informal motorcycle track and for the hunting of snakes. In the distance, one can see the remains of a mine dump and the cooling towers of the Vereeniging power plant – landmarks of the mining, steel and engineering industries that continue to play a significant role in the economic development of Vereeniging and the Vaal Triangle areas (Leigh, 1968:1, 6, 37). Kovacs (1998:10) and Willcox and Pager (1967:492) further describe the site as being on the bank of a small stream that flows into the Klip River. It would seem that this water source has since either dried up or been diverted, leaving a wetland in its place. Another prominent feature of the surrounding landscape is a large sinkhole located less than 100 meters away from the Redan site (Figure 3.2).



**Figure 3.2:** Main sinkhole next to the Redan rock engraving site. Photograph by researcher.

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<sup>18</sup> In rock art research, a cupule is a human-made dome-like depression in a rock surface (Bednarik, 2008:61).

The sandstone outcrop is also overgrown and littered with debris as a result of the current ease of access. As mentioned earlier, the site was once fenced off, with a single access point through Springfield Junior Secondary School. However, by June 2014 the fence had been stolen, most likely to be sold as scrap metal, leaving the site open to anyone willing to venture through an overgrown field (Maya, 2014). In addition, enquiries at Springfield for the key to the site's access gate revealed that only one staff member was aware of the site's presence; this individual reported that the key had been misplaced amidst staff changes. The Vaal Teknorama Museum in Vereeniging is currently the provincial heritage authority managing the Redan rock engraving site and its conservation. However, due to a lack of staffing and funding, the sinkhole and other concerns have gone unaddressed. Tours of the site are arranged on request, but as indicated by the misplacement of the key, these are few and far between. As such, the site's state of neglect and obscurity persists as part of the broader context of open-air rock art.

### **3.3.2 The Redan site in context**

Rock art artefacts and sites are evidence of human presence and engagement with the landscape, although our understanding of them as an art genre is still in its infancy (Kleiner, 2009:15). As a part of South Africa's cultural heritage, the visual narratives, mimetic and otherwise, left behind by the ancestors of modern human beings represent a link to the distant past and carry the possibility of enabling researchers to understand the culture, lifestyle and worldview of the societies that created them. Despite the acknowledged significance of rock art sites, such as Redan, and their role as historical and cultural documents, many are threatened by – or have already been lost through – both human and natural processes (Steel, 1991:23).

The rock surfaces that serve as the canvas for these visual narratives in the form of rock engravings and paintings are not permanent, yet they are also often not portable. As such, many rock art sites like Redan are left in situ. While rock art sites possess little, if any, ecological importance, they should be regarded as part of the landscape and be interpreted and preserved as such (Bakkevig, 2004:65). However, in industrial and mining areas such as Meyerton, air pollution and the resultant acid rain pose a significant threat to the preservation of open-air rock art (Avery, 1975:139; Steel, 1991:24). Sandstone is not the class of rock most vulnerable to acid rain, yet this environmentally damaging phenomenon does have deleterious effects on exposed sandstone surfaces. The most identifiable of these effects is the marking of surfaces with black deposits, as is evident at the Redan site. Another, more troubling, effect is the ability of acid rain to dissolve the sandstone matrix, in effect erasing the engravings that make the rock art site

unique, identifiable and valuable (Gifford, 2005:16). Chemical weathering further compounds the issue of natural weathering as Ecca sandstone is by nature particularly friable. When sites are left exposed to the natural elements, natural weathering through veld fires, the frost-thaw process and direct heat, amongst other agents, are constant factors of concern. Seasonal fires and surface exfoliation are particular concerns for the Redan site. The management, conservation and protection of these sites is crucial for their preservation, but this has proven difficult to implement, both locally and internationally.

In order to ensure the preservation of these sites and the cultural heritage that they represent in South Africa, legislation was put in place in 1911 to protect and preserve them. Very limited control can be exerted over the natural processes that inevitably degrade an open-air rock art site like the Redan one. However, threats caused by human beings, such as acid rain, vandalism and theft, are preventable; also, through the declaration of specific rock art sites to be monuments and heritage sites, rock art continues to enjoy legal protection in South Africa (Deacon, 1991:229, 230; 1993:120). Despite this, the majority of cases brought to the attention of the various rock art conservation agencies result in little more than a set of unfulfilled recommendations (Avery, 1975:139). This has also been true of the Redan rock engraving site on numerous occasions.<sup>19</sup>

However, according to the *National Monuments Act* (28 of 1969, section 3-6), the declaration of a rock art site as a national monument does not determine the ownership of the land. Thus, the Kookfontein farm on which the Redan rock engraving site is situated, has been part of the private sector for the vast duration of its operation. This is possibly one of the major pitfalls of South African heritage legislation. Although it has been updated on numerous occasions since 1968, this feature has continually been inherited by subsequent legislation. Thus, the responsibility for implementing the recommended measures has proven to be a point of contention in the story of this particular site. While heritage authorities are responsible for recommending steps towards site-specific preservation, the financial responsibility for implementing the recommended steps

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<sup>19</sup> Sporadic attempts were made between the 1940s and 1990s to curtail the natural and human reports provide evidence of this. Amongst them are reports by P.V. Tobias (1954:2), the South African Archaeological Bulletin (1954:111-112) and the South African Archaeological Society (1947:23), as well as documents housed at the Vaal Teknorama Archives Depot (122/2, Correspondence 9 February 1973).

has in the past been placed, at least in part, on the land owner.<sup>20</sup> Under these conditions, it was inevitable that conservation attempts and recommendations from heritage authorities would rarely be effected. As a result, conservation efforts were often launched and managed on a largely informal volunteer basis by individuals with a personal interest in the prehistory of the area or in the site itself. As discussed in Chapter Five, the efforts at the maintenance and conservation of the Redan rock engraving site range from international publicity to access control, as well as the erection of fences and surveys by heritage authorities. Support from the commissions and associations tasked with conservation was, however, often limited and the prescribed measures that were suggested were often hampered by financial constraints.

Furthermore, in cases where poor management is evident, it would seem that rock art faces a paradox with regard to its role as a cultural and historical document. The declaration of a rock art site as a national monument is meant to enable its protection under South African law, thereby ensuring its preservation for future generations. However, a by-product of such a declaration is public awareness of the site, highlighting the issue of conservation. In cases where inadequate infrastructure has been provided and where inadequate managerial capacity is evident, public awareness paradoxically puts these sites at higher risk of damage as a result of the lack of education regarding visitors' comportment at these rock art sites (Deacon, 1991:232). Opening these sites to the public as cultural artefacts thus facilitates their loss. Allemand and Bahn (2005, in Saiz-Jimenes, 2005:3) have argued that "the best way to protect rock art is to leave it alone". With regards to the human factors to be considered, this may be true for the Redan site. The obscurity of the site inadvertently prevents theft, but it also means that the site and its engravings will continue to fall into disrepair.

It seems senseless to protect something with no intention of allowing engagement with it. Yet simply to allow a historical document to fade into oblivion would seem counterintuitive to satisfying the inherently human desire to know and understand our past. In this respect, little

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<sup>20</sup> Section five, point (f) of the *National Heritage Resources Act* (25 of 1999) describes the land owner as the primary party responsible for the maintenance of any declared monument on land under his/her ownership. The National Monuments Council (replaced by SAHRA) will only take on the role of maintenance should the owner fail to maintain such monuments satisfactorily. Badenhorst (2003, in Prins, 2005:72), the owner of the land where the Redan site is located, was not notified of the implications of having a declared national monument on his land, nor was the necessary support provided to Viljoen as representative of Ocon Bricks – subsequent landowners as of 2005 – and recommendations by the SAHRA were left unimplemented due to the financial implications for Ocon Bricks (Prins, 2005:72).

compares with the experience of an in-situ exploration of an open-air rock art site as part of its landscape. However, the current state of non-representative rock art research and the history of neglect of rock art sites would indicate that the documentation of these sites and their disappearing narratives is the most effective way of giving future generations a chance to experience threatened sites like Redan, albeit in a restricted capacity.

### **3.3.3. Cultural and theoretical perspectives on rock art as they relate to the Redan site: discrepancies and challenges**

A wide variety of cultural and theoretical perspectives have been expressed on the Redan rock engraving site: the range of these have compounded the challenges faced in preserving it. The purpose of this section is not to identify which perspectives or value judgements are correct or flawed, but rather to provide an overview of the most prominent perspectives that have influenced the identity and preservation of the Redan site as a South African rock art and heritage site.

The first range of perspectives to be addressed is that of interpretative frameworks. The perception of the meaning, value and social role of art draws on assumptions that are based on culturally aligned worldviews (Kieran, 2005:1, 2). Up until the fairly recent emergence of the local narrative as perspective in the post-modern age, the dominant system of assigning value to Southern African rock art was based on colonial assumptions and was accordingly Eurocentric. A distinctly European perception of the world, aesthetic standards and the issues with which art may or may not engage was being imposed on sites of African origin. Henri Prosper Edouard Breuil (1877 – 1961), a French historian, was an influential contributor to rock art research in the early twentieth century; he (1979:11) proposed that the creators of rock art were, for the first time, aiming at the production of high art. He compared rock art artefacts to the cultural products deemed successful by European standards of sophistication and aesthetics – typically paintings and sculpture. The result was the relegation of rock art, particularly that of the non-mimetic tradition, to the category of degenerate art. This is evidenced by the largely deprecatory descriptions applied to the non-mimetic engravings at Redan during most of the twentieth century.<sup>21</sup> This meant that the value and social role manifested in the artwork by the

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<sup>21</sup> Published descriptions of the Redan rock engraving site include phrases such as “crudely executed”, “basic scribbles”, “crude” and “inferior peckings” (Willcox & Pager, 1967:492; Willcox, 1964:56; Johnson, 1910:48, 50). Jeffreys (1953:19) categorises the Redan petroglyphs as doodles and describes them as “coarse and lack[ing] artistry.” Johnson (1910:48) refers to the engravings as “[t]he most primitive series of petroglyphs that I have yet seen”, while Willcox (1964:58) compares South Africa’s non-mimetic art to that of children.

African culture believed to have authored it and that assigned to it by the Western cultures that “discovered” it, were often at loggerheads.

George William Stow (1822-1882), a South African geologist and ethnologist acknowledged as the father of rock art research in South Africa, was the first to pay the non-mimetic class of rock art (also known as the geometric tradition) any significant attention. Walter Battiss (1906–1982), a South African artist who is highly regarded both nationally and internationally, aligned his copying of South African rock art with Stow’s more appreciative sentiment. Battiss (1948:128) referred to the non-representational images as an “astonishing museum of prehistoric design.” This appreciative stance is also the one with which I concur in this project. Cultural artefacts should be interpreted from an emic perspective. Non-mimetic rock art is simply one of those classes of artefacts that twenty-first century researchers self-admittedly do not yet fully understand; an outsider’s inability to understand something should not be a reflection of its value in a post-modern age.

In emphasising an emic perspective, authorship becomes a crucial issue in the interpretation of rock art artefacts. The authorship of the engravings at the Redan site is currently unconfirmed, although two dominant views regarding the cultural origin of the engravings have emerged – San and Khoekhoen<sup>22</sup>. The former is aligned with the predominant belief concerning rock art authorship in the nineteenth century – namely that all items of rock art, both rock paintings and engravings, were the work of San hunter-gatherers (Prins, 2007:42). The shamanistic approach to art interpretation is strongly associated with this stance and is a further contribution made by Breuil. He proposed that the rock art paintings he studied were a response to “sympathetic magic” to ensure success in the hunt. The shaman is a central figure in the spiritual life of the indigenous cultures of Africa, as well as in other regions of the world. These individuals are considered to have access to the spirit realm through trance rituals, enabling them to protect, heal and guide their communities. The shamanistic interpretative approach emphasises the experiences, beliefs, rituals and role of the shaman in ensuring a society’s welfare. This became the predominant interpretative framework for all rock art, painting and engraving, mimetic and non-mimetic alike (David Lewis-Williams, 2002:2; Dowson, 2007:49, 51). This is also the assignment of meaning and *raison d’être* presented by the Vaal Teknorama Museum on tours to the Redan rock engraving site.

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<sup>22</sup> While both the San and Khoekhoen lived in small communities, the social structures of these groups were far removed from one another. San society was primarily nomadic and regarded every individual as an equal. Khoekhoe society is more in favour of ownership and settlement, enabling its members to build up wealth in the form of cattle, sheep or goats. This community structure implies a hierarchy where one’s position in this hierarchy is dependent on one’s wealth (Ross, 2008:10).

The majority of South African rock art is still culturally credited to the San; up until the late nineteenth century, San authorship was the only acknowledged interpretative framework. However, there is an emerging body of research that proposes the involvement of smaller indigenous groups in the creation of South Africa's rock art heritage. In particular, the schematic and geometric rock art tradition in South Africa, particularly but not exclusively in the form of engravings, is now being attributed to Khoekhoen herders<sup>23</sup> (Chippendale, 2006:1; Smith and Ouzman, 2004:502, 503). Furthermore, David Lewis-Williams (2006:344) notes that Khoekhoen engravings tend to occur primarily on exposed rocks along the banks of rivers. As noted earlier, the engravings at the Redan site are predominantly geometric. In addition, what is now a wetland was once a small stream. Prins (2005:iv) proposes that, on the basis of inter-site analysis, the Redan site might more conceivably be the work of Khoekhoen herders than of San hunter-gatherers.

The growing argument for Khoekhoen authorship at sites such as Redan marks a divergence from the San shamanistic tradition as an interpretive framework. This affects the meaning, narratives and intentions that researchers might ascribe to the Redan rock engraving site. A proposed purpose of the site, and the theory receiving the most support at this stage, points towards the site being a place of shelter and segregation for young women during their first menstrual cycle as part of Khoe initiation rites (Prins, 2014; Hykkerud, 2006). The role of the shaman in such a situation is unclear in the light of our currently limited knowledge of the lifestyle of the Khoe<sup>24</sup>. These two interpretative frameworks – shamanism and initiation rites – might not be mutually exclusive. The geometric and schematic rock engravings of the Redan site may still include entoptic<sup>25</sup> imagery to some degree.

Another unconfirmed aspect of the Redan rock engravings site is age. Due to the sandstone being of the Ecca variety, an age range of 225 to 252 million years can be assigned to the rock outcrop itself. However, the age of the engravings is almost impossible to confirm at this point in time. Unlike rock paintings that can be dated through the analysis of ingrained biological matter by the use of radio-carbon dating techniques, rock engravings have no absolute time-frame

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<sup>23</sup> It would be inappropriate to deny the presence of the schematic and geometric tradition in San rock art. While San representational rock paintings are undeniably the best known form of South African rock art, there are rock art sites which have been confirmed to be of San origin, that display the schematic rock engraving tradition, such as the Bosworth site engravings in the North-West Province.

<sup>24</sup> Research on the art of smaller communities such as that of the Khoe has been negligible although it is beginning to gain momentum (Smith & Ouzman, 2004:502; Origins Centre, 2015).

<sup>25</sup> In archaeology, the term *entoptic* refers to visual experiences produced by the eye and brain and is often associated with shamanistic and trance practices (David Lewis-Williams & Dowson, 1988:201, 202).

indicators apart from archaeological artefacts. This could produce a relative<sup>26</sup> and unreliable conclusion at best (Olsen, 2017). As a result, no absolute dating has been attempted at the Redan rock engraving site and the relative ages that have been proposed – between one hundred and eight thousand four hundred years old – are too far-ranging to be of consequence (Willcox & Pager, 1967:496; Prins, 2005a:91).

As concerns issues of age, authorship and intention, the site is still relatively under-researched. On paper, the importance of the Redan rock engraving site is beyond question. The South African Heritage Resources Agency (1971) clearly ascribes scientific and cultural value to it, which is substantiated by its status as a national monument and provincial heritage site. However, the weak implementation of the legislative principles meant to ensure the site's preservation reflects a measure of apathy (Prins, 2007:49). In the span of forty-eight years, two of the rock surfaces bearing documented engravings have vanished, whether through intentional removal or natural changes in the environment. There is a lack of infrastructure, such as fences, walkways and protective covering against acid rain and ultra-violet rays, at the site, while numerous engravings have also faded beyond recognition in this period. At the time of this study, there were no plans to rectify the situation or maintain the site. This has left the engravings vulnerable to both humanly-produced and natural agents acting without any deterrent. It is due to the lack of future plans to preserve the Redan rock engraving site, and the strong possibility of this site disappearing as a result, that I have selected it as the subject.

The Redan rock engraving site has an untold story embedded in its visual identity. Unfortunately, the combination of the physical, systemic and perceptual challenges it faces may well result in the engravings disappearing before its story can be pieced together. The mining practices and industrialisation of Vereeniging, particularly the environmental impacts of these, have exercised a pivotal influence on the preservation of the site's visual identity and the accessibility of the personal identity that is embedded within it. This is compounded by the poor financial situation of the area and the many unconfirmed details of its origins, which make it difficult to protect and promote as a tourist site. While I lack the capacity to directly subvert the deleterious forces at play in the story of the Redan rock engravings, I hope at least to capture the narratives around this open-air rock art site and visually preserve this narrative personal identity for future generations, who might be better equipped to understand the graphic code of its geometric engravings.

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<sup>26</sup> The terms *absolute* and *relative* refer to two categories of archaeological dating techniques. Absolute dating makes use of scientific techniques, such as radiocarbon dating, to calculate a precise numerical age. Relative dating refers to the inference of an approximate age or age range through nearby archaeological sites and artifacts or through inter-site analysis (Olsen, 2017).

### 3.4 Summary

This pre-production reflection briefly highlighted the two most relevant influences of the project *Written in Bone* on the early development of this one, namely theme and subject. The theme under investigation in this project is narrative personal identity, which began with the broader thematic interest in personal identity as identified through the post-production reflection on *Written in Bone*. The Redan rock engraving site was also selected as the subject as a result of this previous project.

It is a little-known rock engraving site in the Meyerton area of the Gauteng Province's Vereeniging district which is relatively under-researched. As a result, the cultural and theoretical perspectives on Redan, the available information related to its story and the characters that populate it are not consistent. The sole aspect of the Redan site's background that can be indisputably confirmed is that it has a history of neglect, obscurity and abandonment, with a few key individuals attempting to champion its preservation at intervals. To compound the problematic situation facing this provincial heritage site, the apparent apathy towards this friable sandstone outcrop has left it exposed to damage by both natural and artificial agents, particularly the acid rain associated with the industrial character of the area. The largely non-mimetic engravings of this site, in which its heritage value lies, are rapidly disappearing under these conditions, which is the concern that motivates this project. While this contextual and historical background is perturbing from an environmental and heritage preservation perspective, it does make the site an ideal subject and issue to be engaged with in this practice-led research project. The theoretical aspects that inform the investigation of this subject are forensic anthropology and narrative identity. These are described in the next chapter, along with the relation of these bodies of theory and subject matter to the conceptual foundation of this project.

# CHAPTER 4

## Theoretical framework and conceptual foundation: Forensic anthropology and narrative identity

**Table 4.1:** Chapter 4 in the context of Scrivener’s Model as indicated in red

STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5	STEP 6
Identification of issues, concerns and interests	Theoretical review and artistic audit	Reframing of identified issues, concerns and interests	Cycles of production	Post-production reflection on project	Post-post-production reflection for dissemination

### 4.1. Introduction

The preceding chapter introduced the Redan rock engraving site as the subject matter with which this project engages, its background and the challenges it faces within the context of heritage preservation and environmental awareness. This chapter reports on both steps two and three of Scrivener’s Model, with the understanding that these two steps are symbiotic. The concept that directs this practice is informed by core aspects of the bodies of theory and the subject matter discussed in Chapter Three. Similarly, the selection of the theoretical frameworks is informed by the project concept. As such, this chapter describes the relevant aspects of forensic anthropology and narrative identity as the main theoretical bodies of knowledge with which my artistic practice interacts in this project. This description is presented in relation to the project concept that is both informed by and informs the selection of these bodies of knowledge. Therefore, the intention of this theoretical review is two-fold: (i) to expand upon the concept driving this project; and (ii) to acquaint the reader with the theoretical points of departure with which my creative practice engages, thereby enabling a richer understanding of the artefacts produced and the thought processes behind their production.

At this point, it is important to note that while narrative identity is discussed in this chapter as the investigative theme of this study, this practice-led research project commenced as a thematic exploration of the broader concept of personal identity through forensic anthropology. Narrative identity, as a more focussed theory of personal identity, emerged later through creative practice.

With this in mind, this chapter begins with an explanation of the concept directing this project's chain of reasoning in order to contextualise the bodies of theory. This is followed by an exploration of the field of forensic anthropology as a dualist theory of identity. The intention is to probe the potential for its use as an exploratory tool, method, visual strategy and theoretical framework in this project. This exploration will consist of a discussion of the foundational aspects of forensic anthropology that enable it to align with this project's concept. It will also explain the workflow and techniques from this field that are relevant to my creative practice. A focussed theoretical inquiry into narrative identity as conceptualised by Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005) follows, wherein the thematic departure points for creative practice are focused on. To conclude, a summary of forensic anthropology and narrative identity as they relate to each other and to this concept and project, is provided and a brief introduction to Chapter Five is given.

#### **4.2. Concept: a narrative identity written in bone**

A concept provides a roadmap for a project. As described in Chapter Two, artistic practice and theoretical bodies of knowledge inform one another through meaningful interaction in the development of artefacts. This interaction takes place in an open-ended, exploratory process that encourages and accommodates the serendipity and emergence of new possibilities. The practitioner-researcher responds to these situations through critical reflection and reframes or adjusts the artistic, contextual or theoretical approach as necessary. The concept ensures that the exploratory journey one embarks upon has direction and focus and that divergent thinking eventually arrives at convergent practice.

The concept guiding this particular exploratory journey has its origins in the loss of the Redan rock engraving site's recognisability as detailed in Chapter Three. The most common understanding of identity is sameness and because it is the loss of visual sameness that constitutes the unrecognisability of the Redan site, personal identity was identified as the theme to be investigated. This loss of identity translates into the loss of a yet-to-be-understood part of history and the cost of this forfeiture will be paid by humankind in the form of diminished cultural knowledge. Forensic anthropology is specifically concerned with the restoration of an identity to an unrecognisable subject in contexts of legal consequence. As such, the said field was identified as a relevant body of knowledge for the exploration of personal identity in this project. Narrative identity later emerged as a more specific theoretical framework within the theme of personal identity, due to the work of forensic anthropologists often resulting in a reconstruction of a victim's life story. Therefore, in the exploration of the theme of narrative personal identity in

this study, the principles and practices of forensic anthropology are applied to the Redan rock engraving site as a tool for visual representation, theoretical framework and design methodology. The coherence of this concept is facilitated by a series of similarities or overlaps between the selected bodies of knowledge.

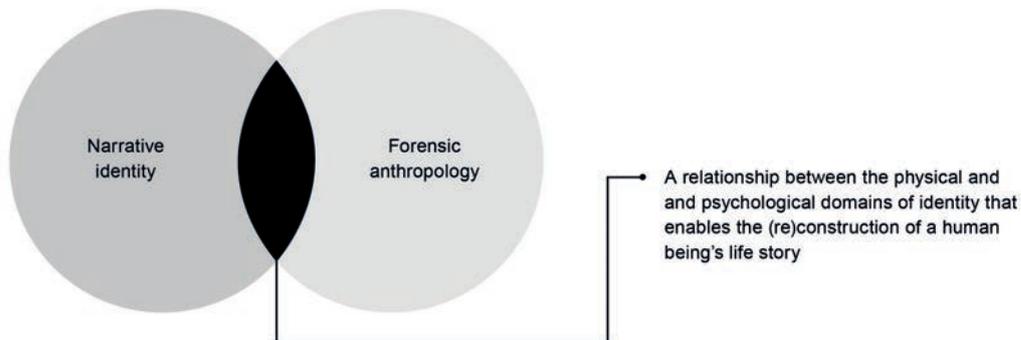
These overlaps relate to three important aspects of this project at this point – the communication goal, the aim in service of this communication goal and the thematic departure point. The communication goal of this project is the conveying of the message that landscapes should be honoured and treated as the equals of human beings and thus reflects a biocentric perspective. This message is facilitated by the role of unrecognisability in forensic anthropology and the dilemma of the Redan rock engraving site. This overlap is graphically represented in Figure 4.1. This communication goal is a response to the decline in the environmental situation seen worldwide, including in South Africa. The Redan rock engraving site is a single representative of the landscapes that are disappearing as the result of a lack of appropriate care and attention.



**Figure 4.1:** Graphic representation of the point of overlap between forensic anthropology as theory and the Redan rock engraving site as subject matter. Diagram produced by researcher.

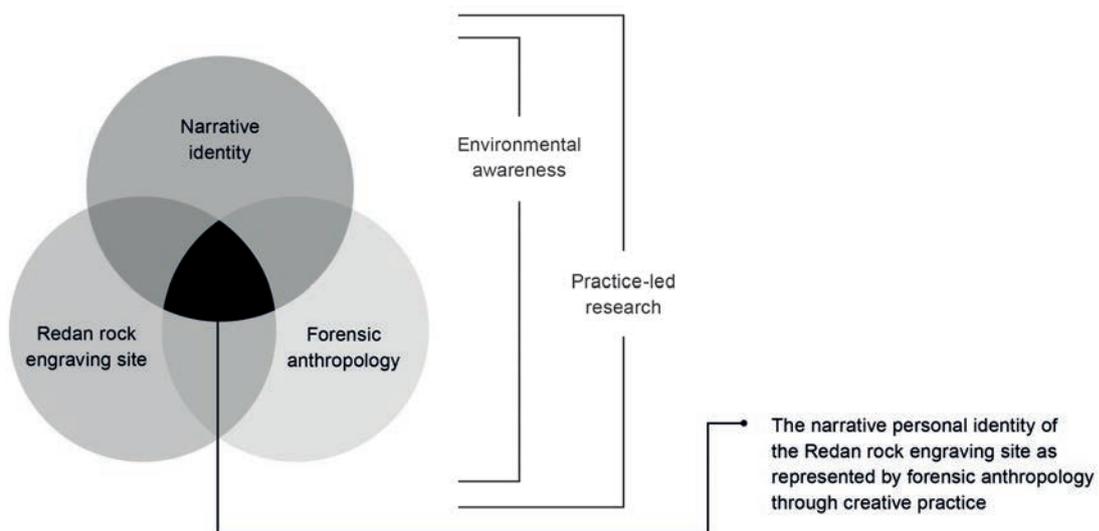
In support of this communication goal, the workflow and practices of forensic anthropology – a field of practice reserved for application to human beings – are applied to the Redan site. The aim of doing so, and of this project, is to capture the story and aesthetic of the Redan rock engraving site in the hopes of creating a visual record for future generations who might be better equipped to understand its enigmatic aesthetic. The fulfilment of this aim is facilitated by the dynamic between the physical and psychological dimensions of identity reflected in narrative identity and forensic anthropology. In both bodies of knowledge, these two dimensions of identity are inextricably linked in the construction or reconstruction of a life story, respectively. This overlap is illustrated in Figure 4.2. The end-goal of a forensic anthropologist is to identify the remains presented to them. The story revealed and aesthetic captured through the application of forensic

practices constitutes the identity of the Redan rock engraving site and may be considered a narrative personal identity – which, like the field of forensic anthropology, is a concept reserved for human beings. Narrative identity thus serves as the thematic departure point of this project.



**Figure 4.2:** Graphic representation of the point of overlap between forensic anthropology and narrative identity as theoretical frameworks. Diagram produced by researcher.

As will be evident from the explanation above, the bodies of theoretical knowledge to be engaged with were specifically selected in support of the communication goal. The common thread is the superimposition of practices and concepts reserved for human beings onto a non-human subject – a landscape. The communication goal is manifested in a body of creative work; the concept could thus be visualised as a symbiotic system of theoretical frameworks wherein creative practice is the subject, method and goal as schematically depicted in Figure 4.3.



**Figure 4.3:** Graphic representation of creative practice as the point of overlap between forensic anthropology, the Redan rock engraving site and narrative identity as bodies of knowledge. Diagram produced by researcher.

Before exploring these theoretical frameworks in more detail, it is important to emphasise that while narrative identity is the focus of this chapter, it was an emergent theoretical framework. The initial thematic departure point that guided the earlier phases of production was the much broader framework of personal identity. This was then narrowed to the category of interactionist dualism, of which narrative identity forms part. It is also worthwhile to note that there are aspects of theoretical bodies which are less significant to the overall conceptual direction of the project that came to bear on the creative process. This is not unexpected considering the interdisciplinary nature and intertwinement of method and theory advocated by practice-led research. The relevant aspects of the supporting theoretical bodies that arose in response to creative practice will be examined as necessary in Chapter Five. Forensic anthropology and narrative identity remain the primary bodies of theory that are discussed below.

### **4.3. Forensic anthropology as a dualist theory of personal identity**

The twentieth century bore witness to a surge in philosophical research that aimed to dissect the ontology of the concept of personal identity (McCall, 1990:1; Swinburne, 1973:231). The concept of identity, at first consideration, possesses an apparent simplicity and yet has proven particularly problematic (Gallois, 2011)<sup>27</sup>. There exist accounts of personal identity, such as strict identity, that encounter few complications in responding to problems. However, these are typically ill-equipped to provide support when dealing with complex qualitative issues of personal identity retention in fields such as philosophy, law and ethics (Ord, 2002:1). In attempting to address issues that relate personal identity to ethics, it is the dualist position or an iteration thereof that has been accorded the most attention by philosophers. The dualist position on personal identity is not without difficulties. However, it is a position with which the constitution of human beings may be argued to resonate and one which is in accord with and caters for exploration in this practice-led research project (McCall, 1990:18-20; Shoemaker, 2012).

Substance dualism holds that the mind and body have fundamentally distinct ontologies; variations of this philosophical view can be found in both modernist and contemporary theories of personal identity. In isolation, each of these dimensions constitutes its own account of personal identity, with its own complexities and criteria for continuity and retention. While contemporary

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<sup>27</sup> The discourse around the metaphysical conundrums on which contemporary theories of personal identity are founded is not within the remit of this study. The interested reader is referred to Wittgenstein (as quoted by Williams (1995:391)) and Gallois (2011).

models seem to reflect a consensus – that personal identity represents an interactionist wedlock between a physical biological entity and psychological characteristics – it is the nature of the relationship between the two that has been the source of much debate and produced a significant amount of literature on personal identity (Atkins, 2005:7; Lucretius, 1951:121; Swinburne, 1973:231). In this section, I propose that forensic anthropology constitutes the same interactionist dualist view of personal identity.

Identity is perceived as sameness and, as a relation, necessitates unity between two distinct subjects – qualitative identity – or between a subject and itself: numerical identity (Black, 2004:1; Hume *et al.*, 1995:390). The field of forensic anthropology focusses on the latter as does this study, more specifically, the numerical identity of the Redan rock engraving site. In this project, the issue of tautology related to numerical identity is responded to by means of the comparison of versions of a self from various points in time. Therefore, the numerical identity focussed on here is the establishment of unity between the Redan rock engraving site at past points in time and its current self. Within the conceptual framework of this project, the current self of the Redan rock engraving site represents the bones of a victim.

Forensic anthropology is the practice of applying physical anthropology and archaeology to human skeletal remains of medicolegal significance. Traditionally, this field was laboratory-based and centred around the determination of a biological profile. In the last two decades, significant changes have been effected in the practice and application of forensic anthropology. The contributions that forensic anthropologists are able to offer to the processing of a crime scene are now acknowledged, thereby extending the reach of skeletal analysis beyond the laboratory and into the field. This gives practitioners more access to the forensic and physical context in which remains are found. Furthermore, the focus has shifted towards individuation, expanding the forensic anthropological practice to include the “scientific study of an individual’s pre- and postlife history” – the story attached to the remains (Boyd & Boyd, 2011:1407). The field is also becoming more interdisciplinary as forensic anthropologists engage with digital technologies and artists in the analysis of the age progression and identification of living individuals (Jankauskus, 2009:197). While the application of forensic anthropology to the living is not applicable to this study, it is interesting to note that forensic anthropology displays a number of overlaps with practice-led research as described in Chapter Three – interdisciplinarity is the first of these that I wish to highlight.

Another similarity is the encouragement of collaboration. Forensic anthropologists usually collaborate with forensic pathologists, forensic odontologists, archaeologists, criminologists, legal authorities and other specialists throughout the course of an investigation. Human skeletal remains serve as the object of inquiry for the forensic anthropologist in such a collaboration, the objectives of which are usually the identification of the remains and the determination of the sequence of events that led to these remains being in their current state, particularly in cases where foul play is suspected (Ubelaker, 2006:4). As a field concerned with personal identification through the inspection and comparative examination of the skeletal structure, forensic anthropology is inevitably visually oriented in its practice (Thompson, 2008:165). This characteristic makes it very suitable for the enrichment of the creative practice of this practice-led research project aimed at the visualisation of personal identity.

The circumstances that lead to a forensic anthropologist being recruited for a case typically include situations where the condition of the remains evade standard methods of identification, such as fingerprinting or visual identification by next of kin. The remains under a forensic anthropologist's purview are often burnt beyond recognition, may have been distributed post-mortem, are badly decomposed or mutilated, have become skeletonised, are related to mass fatalities or are incomplete (Nawrocki, 1996; Lett, 2011:21; 193; Jankauskus, 2009:197). For the purposes of this project, the Redan rock engraving site, in its current state, is primarily treated as a skeletonised set of remains.

On being presented with a set or fragments of remains, the forensic anthropologist is first required to establish whether or not they are of human origin. Should the remains be classified as non-human, the forensic anthropologist is not required to provide further analysis. In the case of human remains, the determination of the number of individuals that the remains represent and their antiquity is required. If a set of remains is current enough to warrant forensic interest, a case and corresponding chain of custody is established (Stewart, 1979:32, 33, 36; Klepinger, 2006:19). As stated earlier, while the Redan rock engraving site is not technically human, it is hypothetically classified as such in terms of the conceptual direction of this research project.

The classification of remains by a forensic anthropologist often coincides with the processing of the scene by law enforcement personnel. The contamination of the scene may well complicate the identification of the remains or, in some cases, render it impossible. The prevention of scene contamination is thus an ongoing concern. The retrieval area provides the skeletal remains with a context, one that can be useful in the analysis of the remains later (White & Folkens, 2005:9). The photography of the scene prior to alteration by the forensic investigation and the gridding of

the area where remains are found aids the preservation of the crime scene. The documentation of items of evidence – both bone and otherwise – in relation to their found location through photography and mapping, serves a similar purpose through the preservation of contextual evidence. The forensic anthropologist might not be solely responsible for the processing of the scene but plays an important role in the direction of the search strategy and the preservation of the remains recovered (Stanojevich, 2012:154; Thompson, 2008:168-170).

A skeletal inventory of the recovered remains follows the excavation and retrieval process at the crime scene and is typically made in a laboratory setting. This entails the placement of the remains in anatomical order in order to note the presence or absence of bones or, in the case of multiple individuals, duplication. This is documented through photography and case notes that describe the condition of the bones and a taphonomic assessment<sup>28</sup> of post-mortem damage (Simmons & Haglund, 2005:161; White & Folkens, 2005:355). This excavation, documentation and retrieval process is employed as the second phase of a forensic anthropologist's workflow in this project, despite its concurrency with classification and case presentation procedures.

The next phase of laboratory analysis is the identification of group traits or biological profile. This includes the determination of sex, ancestry, age and stature, in this specific order as each characteristic has repercussions for the one that follows<sup>29</sup>. The development of a biological profile is based on the visual assessment of skeletal morphological features as a method. In the first profile aspect, the victim is classified as male or female on the basis of biological sex as opposed to gender. The ancestral profile of the remains falls into two parts: biological ancestry and geographic ancestry. The former refers to biological variation between populations according to genetic makeup while the latter refers to the geographic origin where the individual spent his or her life. Both aspects present with morphological and structural markers and receive one of four classifications, African, European/Caucasian, Native American and Asian. The determination of age is the third aspect of the biological profile to be afforded attention. This refers to the age of the

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<sup>28</sup> "Taphonomy" refers to the study of the processes that affect physical remains during the post-mortem period up until discovery. It includes processes such as decomposition, burial and animal feeding, amongst others (Lyman, 2010:2).

<sup>29</sup> The contemporary trend in forensic anthropology is to develop a biological profile including only sex, age and stature unless ancestry is needed for repatriation purposes. Ancestry is most commonly referred to as "race" by the layperson and most medico-legal agencies although the terms are not synonymous. The concept of race is a controversial topic in the broader field of anthropology and, therefore, in forensic anthropology as well (Iskan, 1988:209; Simmons & Haglund, 2005:161; Stanojevich, 2012:1). However, as further discussed in Chapter Five, I feel that the African origin of this site is a prominent contributor to its visual and holistic identity and have thus elected to include it in this project. A more thorough discussion of this issue is provided by Sauer (1992:107-111).

victim at the time of death and is responded to with the estimation of a range as opposed to a single definitive number of years. A similar range-oriented approach is taken when providing the stature of the victim in terms of height and build. Once again, this refers to the stature of the victim during life, not the current stature of the remains as taphonomic factors may have caused shrinkage in the bone matter. The specific aspects that are assessed in the development of each of these profile aspects are not necessary for an explanation of the chain of reasoning presented in Chapter Five and are thus not be dealt with in more detail. Suffice to say, each aspect requires the assessment of more than one morphological or structural feature for an acceptable result, since forensic anthropological practice is rooted in the *interpretation* of evidence (Klepinger, 2006:43, 63; Simmons & Haglund, 2005:161-165; Walsh-Haney, 2002).

Up to the present, forensic anthropological practice has dealt solely with the physical aspect of identity. As mentioned earlier, I propose that forensic anthropology is, in fact, a dualistic model of identity. My motivation for this is the analysis of trauma, which is the fourth phase of the workflow presented here. This phase focusses on the determination of cause of death and the identification of distinctive characteristics that might be attributed to a specific individual (Stanojevich, 2012:2). Through examination of the bones and trace elements, it often happens that the life story of the victim emerges. Specific life events, such as an accident, serious illness or cause of death can be read in the condition and appearance of the bones. These incidents can then be compared to existing documentation, such as medical records, to confirm identity (Walsh-Haney, 2002). This step can be considered the deduction of narratives or memories from physical manifestations or markers of those incidents. This is formative for a less empirical version of identity – a psychological facet of identity.

There is no predefined method or technique for this phase to guarantee the emergence of the victim's life story. Boyd and Boyd (2011:1410) note that, while the traditional approach in forensic anthropology follows a linear movement from theory to methodology as presented in Figure 4.4, recent developments have resulted in the relationship between methodology and theory being an intertwined one. This is similar to the model advocated by practice-led research. The forensic anthropologist is required to respond to the cues given by the specific set of bones as opposed to initiating a uniform set of actions for all remains. Visual, stereoscopic, microscopic and radiographic examination are only a few of the examination procedures that can be initiated as a response. Therefore, it can be said that this process is flexible and open-ended and at the conclusion of this process, the forensic anthropologist should be able to establish a positive identification of the remains, or in less ideal circumstances, a circumstantial identification of the remains (Lett, 2011:21; Walsh-Haney, 2002).

Theory → Methods ( → methodology) + data → interpretation/explanation

**Figure 4.4:** Traditional relationship between theory and method within forensic anthropology (after Boyd & Boyd, 2011:1410)

The final phase of the forensic anthropologist's role in a case is to document all procedures and then report on his or her findings. This report should include a case introduction, the skeletal inventory, hard tissue pathology, all measurements taken, determinations made, taphonomic assessments, the victim's biological profile, evidence of trauma, time and cause of death, any characteristics that contribute to personal identification and a summary. The forensic anthropologist may also be required to appear in court as an expert witness as part of the reporting process (White & Folkens, 2005:355-357; Stanojevich, 2012:2).

In summary of this five-phase workflow, the forensic anthropologist is concerned with the physiological (body) facet of identity in phases one, two and three. Phase four, trauma analysis, is concerned with the psychological (mind) facet in the form of the reconstruction of events or memories. The physical profile of the remains presented up to, and including, phase three is more generic in the sense that multiple individuals may share the same profile. This physical profile becomes unique when considering the manifestations of life experience deduced in phase four. The memories attached to the bones cannot be separated from the physical entity as the medium through which these memories were experienced – a wedlock of mind and body that constitutes a personal identity constructed through narrative.

#### **4.4. Narrative identity as emergent theory**

The concept of narrative identity is well-represented in the writings of French philosopher and phenomenologist Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005). According to Ricoeur (1991a:73), narrative identity is “the sort of identity to which a human being has access thanks to the mediation of the narrative function.” Narrative identity follows an interactionist dualistic model similar to that of the model of forensic anthropology presented above. Consequently, it also finds itself in consensus with other contemporary theories of personal identity (Dauenhauer & Pellauer, 2011).

The Ricoeurian self consists of two parts, sameness and selfhood, which are unified through the act of narration. Ricoeur (1991a:74) refers to these respectively using the Latin terms *idem* and *ipse*. As clarified in the previous section, the concept of identity is typically understood to mean sameness.

*Idem*-identity corresponds with this concept, which is rooted in empirical or material correlations – the analysis of the physical identity of a person. However, in referring to the retention of this level of identity as the “re-identification of the same”, Ricoeur (1991a:74) links *idem*-ity to four senses of sameness. The first and second senses of identity-as-sameness support one another. The first sense is that of numerical identity. This entails that two instances of an entity, where both instances bear the same nominal identity, constitute a single entity as opposed to multiple. This produces the criterion of uniqueness and singularity. The second sense of *idem*-ity is that of qualitative identity, which refers to extreme resemblance where the similarity enables two entities to serve as substitutes for one another without altering the meaning of the context in which these entities occur. The associated criterion is thus similarity. A re-identification of something to be the same as a prior occurrence of itself is dependent on both the singularity and similarity of those instances (Ricoeur, 1992:116; Ricoeur, 1991a:74; Klepper, 2013:4). The implication for the Redan rock engraving site is that its current self and previous documentations of it have to represent a singular entity as well as being visually similar in order to retain its *idem*-identity.

However, all material beings, both living and non-living, are predisposed to change, which threatens the criterion of similarity. This is referred to as *change over time* and serves as the third sense of identity-as-sameness with the criterion of uninterrupted continuity. In many instances, changes undergone by an entity are patterned and, thus, predictable. Our cognisance of this predisposition enables us to accept these time-bound changes in subjects with the effect that we recognise the subject as being the same entity as that prior to the change – in much the same way that we recognise a puppy and the subsequent adult dog as one and the same (Gendler, 2009:580). The condition is that the organisation of component parts continues to constitute a whole (Ricoeur, 1992:117). Therefore, despite the effects of erosion, theft and controlled removal of engravings, the Redan site is able to meet this criterion based on our expectations of the changes that this site is likely to undergo as an instance of rock art, which in line with this conceptual direction may be considered to be its species-designation. As an in-situ rock art site, it is expected that it suffer the effects of erosion. As an instance of rock art, it is expected, albeit unfortunate, that the Redan site engravings would be the object of theft for black-market sale.

The last sense of *idem*-ity is permanence over time and refers to the search for a permanent structure that determines the organisation of the parts that form the whole. For human beings, as biological individuals, individuated genetic code may fulfil this role (Ricoeur, 1992:117).

Permanence over time is a criterion of both identity-as-sameness and identity-as-selfhood, creating an overlap between *idem*-ity and *ipseity*. However, when considered in the context of *ipseity*, we find that this criterion begins to diverge from the other senses of identity-as-sameness in the sense that it is not founded on quantitative arguments or logical statements. Instead, it relies on character as a structural constant. In the context of *ipseity*, permanence over time is the relationship between intended and executed action. It is concerned with agency – the possession of a history of actions and involvements by an embodied agent and the connectedness of these actions through intention. This is the psychological facet of Ricoeurian identity (Ricoeur, 1991a:74-76; Kerby, 1991:35). In the case of the Redan site, the ascription of identity-as-sameness is natural. However, the ability of a non-thinking entity to possess agency is not acknowledged. This has consequences for the retention of this subject's Ricoeurian personal identity, as explained below.

The modalities of *ipse* and *idem* interact with one another in striving for a coherent sense of permanence in time while acknowledging the fluidity of character. This interaction is mediated through narrative. They are inextricably linked in an embodied agent and the subjective narrative mediation of these modalities constitutes a narrative personal identity. The presentation of an embodied agent bridges the divide between Cartesian and anti-Cartesian<sup>30</sup> conceptions of the self. This form of identity is exclusive to human beings but is also not automatic – one may present with identity-as-sameness without ever exercising control over one's narrative (Hutto, 2007:7; Dauenhauer & Pellauer, 2011). A dissociation of this kind between *idem*-ity and *ipseity* would constitute the loss of narrative personal identity (Ricoeur, 1991a:74-75). Therefore, the lack of the capacity for identity-as-selfhood results in the loss of personal identity for the Redan rock engraving site. Consequently, in line with the conceptual direction of this project, the Redan site is assigned a hypothetical agency and thus the capacity for narrative identity.

Narrative identity is “a person's internalized and evolving life story” (McAdams & McLean, 2013:233). The association of life with narration is well established and the “dialectic of *ipse* and *idem*” is a result of the narratives told – the character is formed by the plot and is understood through the performative act of narration. The plot renders the smaller life stories told of one's

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<sup>30</sup> Monism stands in opposition to dualism, of which Cartesian dualism is the primary proponent. Monism posits the primacy of either matter over mind (physicalism) where consciousness and mental processes are derivatives of brain function; or mind over matter (subjective idealism) where all physical events and objects are merely perceptions of the mind (Robinson, 2016).

self in relation to one's selfhood, sameness and those interacted with, more intelligible. It does this by synthesising disparate and discordant plot environments, actions, situations and other individuals, into a concordant whole with a temporal span. Thus, it can be said that narrative identity is a social construction concerned with the temporal dimension of human existence (Ricoeur, 1991b:425, 426; Ricoeur, 1991a:73, 77, 78; Ricoeur, 1992:114; Ricoeur, 1984:69-73).

Until the conclusion of that temporal span, one's narrative identity remains mobile and susceptible to revision. Life stories and perceptions of the self are constructed from autobiographical memory; and memory itself is adaptive. Autobiographical memory engages in a two-way interaction with self-perception. The manner in which a memory is drawn from one's mental archive, the form it takes and the nature of its retelling, is dependent on one's current self-perception, as well as the perception of one's self that one hopes to create in others based on the conventions of a specific situation – internal private expression and the external dynamics of public expression, respectively (McAdams & McLean, 2013:233; Wilson & Ross, 2003). Therefore, while the "I" of a story may serve as narrator, the act of narration acknowledges and is influenced by multiple perspectives of and on the narrative's subject, whether concordant with self-perception or not. The acknowledgement and influence of these perspectives is not uniform but dependent on the source and the narrator's perception of the source. This is of interest in the case of the Redan site as many aspects of its history are unconfirmed or have multiple responses and its perceived importance and value have changed over the span of its lifetime. The implication of the role of autobiographical memory and perception in the enactment of an identity is that the narratives of Ricoeurian identity are founded on interpretation and dependent on interaction with others. These is a fusion of historical fact, and fiction based on reconstructions of the past and an envisioned future (Ricoeur, 1987:244-249; Ricoeur, 1991b:425; Ricoeur, 1991a:73).

However, a self-maintaining character with a coherent narrative does not automatically constitute personal identity. Reflection on one's actions and experiences and the appraisal of the moral and social value of these in relation to their agents and victims is a crucial aspect of character and the maintenance of narrative "discordant concordance" (Ricoeur, 1991a:78; Ricoeur, 1992:150,151,158). Autobiographical self-narratives are vehicles for reflection and are the manifestations of identity. The medium for narrative expression is often socially institutionalised, such as a diary, biographical novel, testimonials and confessions, amongst others, which generate one's autobiography (Klepper, 2013:16,17; Hutto, 2007:4,5). In reference to forensic anthropology, medical records, case reports, anthropological interpretations and witness statements may fulfil a similar role. These bite-size narratives appropriate various manifestations of memory in the

interest of social examination. Hahn (1998:27,28) refers to these as “biography generators” and comments that these are the means by which one reflects on and examines one’s life. While literary based biography generators are well accepted, Langellier (2001) proposes that other non-literary marks, such as scars and tattoos or engravings in the case of the Redan site, could fulfil the same role. These non-literary marks are evidence of a history of acts and interactions and communicate on a semiotic level. The dynamic at play is thus the following: one lives a narrative, interprets the episodic particulars of autobiographical memory through the narrative configuration of biography generators and serves as the subject of interpretation. This dynamic places the “I” of a narrative in the position of both writer and reader (Ricoeur, 1987:246). This is comparable to the bifurcated role of the practitioner-researcher advocated by practice-led research; one is both the creator of and reporter on the subject of research.

Therefore, in summarising this section, narrative personal identity as conceptualised by Ricoeur is exclusive to but not automatic in human beings and follows an interactionist dualist model. *Idem*-ity (identity-as-sameness) correlates with the physical facet of identity while *ipseity* (identity-as-selfhood) correlates with the psychological facet: both bring with them a more generalised history, whether attached to culture, species or genre of experience. These two facets are inextricably linked in an embodied self and the ongoing, adaptive and evolving dialectic constitutes narrative personal identity, because narrative is the privileged medium that is uniquely qualified to mediate the interaction. Narrative draws discordant and disparate narrative elements into a “meaningful temporal whole” that is more understandable to one’s self and others (Ricoeur, 1991a:73). Inherent in the employment of narrative as a privileged medium is the dependence of narrative identity on interaction with others. Narratives are constructed from episodic autobiographical memories that are tailored to suit their audience, setting and one’s current, and desired, self- and social perception. The telling of these narratives through biography generators is tantamount to reflection whereby acts and traits are assigned to an agent or victim to whom praise or blame can be attributed. The Redan site lacks natural *ipseity*, thereby excluding the capacity for agency, narrative construction and reflection. However, under the conceptual direction of this project, the site is assigned a hypothetical *ipseity*.

## 4.5 Summary

In summary, the concept that ensures the focus and coherency of the exploratory practice attached to this practice-led research project, has three important aspects. The first aspect, the communication goal, can be summarised as the conveying of the notion that landscapes should be considered and treated as the equals of human beings if meaningful change is to be seen in the current environmental situation. The Redan rock engraving site serves as a representative of the landscapes disappearing as a result of the current anthropocentric stance towards environmental conservation. The second aspect, the project aim, is to capture the story and aesthetic of this landscape through the application of the forensic anthropological workflow and associated practices to the Redan site as victim. The third aspect, the thematic departure point, is the theory of narrative identity – specifically that of the Redan site. Therefore, the concept advocates the application of bodies of knowledge reserved for human beings to a non-human subject in conveying the notion that landscapes require the same degree of moral care, respect and concern as human beings in terms of law.

Forensic anthropology and narrative identity serve as the theoretical bodies of knowledge with which this project engages. Both follow interactionist dualist models reserved for human beings and position physicality and psychology as ontological different aspects of personal identity which affect one another: because the needs of the physical dimension are the material through which life is experienced, they affect intention, agency and experiences of events while intention requires a physical entity through which to enact agency. Narrative identity theory refers to the physical and psychological dimensions as identity-as-sameness (*idem*) and identity-as-selfhood (*ipse*) respectively. One's personal identity is the dialectic of these two dimensions as mediated by narrative. In comparison to forensic anthropology, the forensic anthropologist engages with the physical dimension of identity, or *idem*-ity, in the first three steps of his or her workflow. These steps are the presentation of a case, scene processing and the identification of a biological profile. The psychological dimension of identity, or *ipse*ity, is engaged with in step four, which is trauma analysis and the construction of a life story that correlates with an identity, should it emerge through the analysis. The methodology by which this analysis is performed is not prescribed but rather left open to each individual situation and the theories necessary for analysis and identification. The accommodation of emergence and the intertwinement of theory and methodology correlates with practice-led research. The final step of the forensic anthropologist's process is the writing up of a report and, potentially, the testifying as a witness in court. These are in essence narratives – the means by which a narrative personal identity

is constructed – and are appropriations of autobiographical memory, albeit presented by a third person. They might thus be considered a class of post-mortem biography generator that positions the individual as both reader and writer in the interest of reflection – a bifurcated role structure comparable to the practitioner-researcher in practice-led research as facilitated by engagement with autoethnography.

Therefore, it can be concluded that forensic anthropology is an interactionist dualist model that constructs identity post-mortem through narrative, while narrative identity is constructed during life and is fixed and concluded at the moment of death. Forensic anthropology and narrative identity display parallels rooted in interactionist dualism and both exhibit correlations with practice-led research. This makes them suited, not only to the conceptual direction of this study as applied to the Redan rock engraving site, but also to this study as a practice-led research project.

# CHAPTER 5

## Theoretical framework and conceptual foundation: Forensic anthropology and narrative identity

**Table 5.1:** Chapter 5 in the context of Scrivener’s Model as indicated in red

STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5	STEP 6
Identification of issues, concerns and interests	Theoretical review and artistic audit	Reframing of identified issues, concerns and interests	Cycles of production	Post-production reflection on project	Post-post-production reflection for dissemination

### 5.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the concept of narrative identity and the field of forensic anthropology were explored as the two-pronged theoretical foundation with which creative practice engages in this project. It also expanded on the concept that is driving the project’s chain of reasoning: the reframing of the subject matter and concerns in relation to the theoretical review. The said reframing addresses the explicit knowledge facet of step three of Scrivener’s model (2004). Through artistic practice, or cycles of production, the process of reframing continues through engagement with tacit knowledge modalities in step four. This builds on the conceptual framework and is the focus of this chapter.

As such, the aim of this chapter is to explain the process of creating the artist’s book, which was informed by reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action and reflection-for-action. Reflection is the means by which creative practice critically engages with this project’s system of knowledge triangulation (see Figure 5.1). As explained in Chapter Four, the subject matter and theoretical foundation function collaboratively to facilitate the creative development of this project. Therefore, the influences of the subject matter, theoretical foundation and artistic practice on one another are explored here. A particular focus is placed on the manner in which these influences interact in achieving the communication goal and aim described in Chapter Four.

Hence, the first point of discussion is the system of knowledge triangulation that is relevant to the creative practice described in this chapter. Thereafter, the cycles of production are discussed individually with a specific focus on the aim of each cycle and the management of the knowledge triangulation process. The body of creative practice is divided into seven cycles of production<sup>31</sup> based on the specific aims that these address and which are comprehensively documented in the process books (Addendums 1 to 9) that are attached to this study. Consequently, just those moments and processes that had a noteworthy influence on the manner in which those aims were fulfilled, are accorded attention. As a conclusion to Chapter Five, a summary is given of the cycles of production as processes of knowledge triangulation.

## 5.2 The triangulated journey

As mentioned in Chapter Three, Sullivan (2009:49) describes practice-led research as an “exploratory journey”. Building on this analogy, knowledge triangulation enables the navigation of the creative production landscape towards valid and relevant resolutions, particularly in the management of the cycles of production. In the course of these production cycles, the practitioner-researcher recurrently selects the better solution from multiple options. In this manner, creative practice accommodates and reflects experimentation, emergence and innovation while remaining relevant to the project aim and communication goal.

In this project, knowledge triangulation involved a combination of forensic anthropology, narrative identity and the Redan rock engraving site. The system that organises these three aspects consists of two overarching mechanisms or structures: a roadmap that defines the borders of the creative production landscape and a route that provides a plan of action for navigating it<sup>32</sup>. Creative decisions are therefore required to fall within what the borders accommodate and to meet the aims that the plan of action prescribes. In the context of this particular PLR project, the

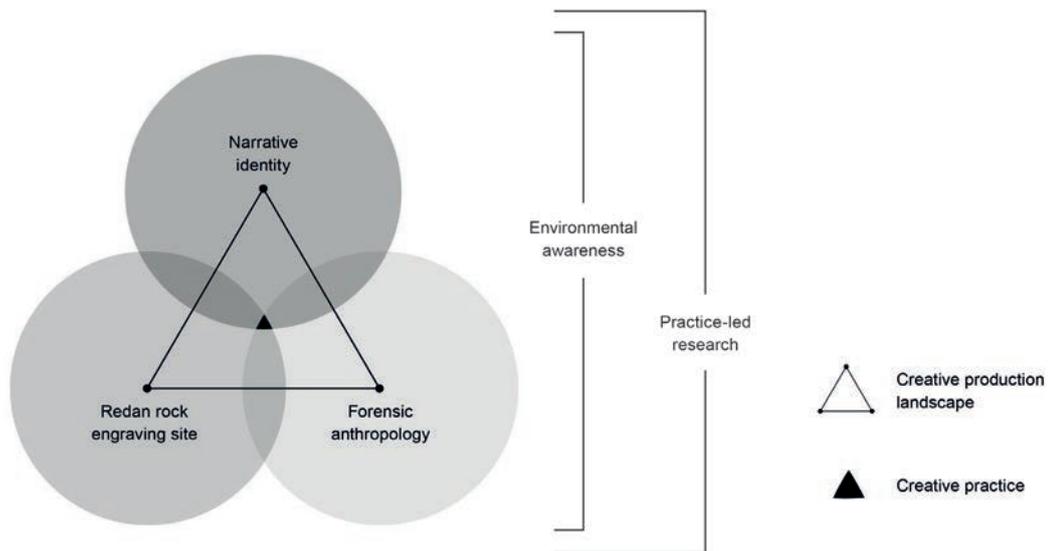
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<sup>31</sup> The numerical order of the cycles of production is roughly chronological. However, it is important to note that many cycles do overlap due to the emergence of learning or knowledge revealing better solutions that are applicable to previous cycles. Furthermore, creative practice and subsequent research triggered by reflection may identify problems of which the practitioner-researcher was not previously aware. This organic process of knowledge emergence and reframing is inherent to PLR. However, in the interest of clarity, these cycles of production are discussed in a linear modular form.

<sup>32</sup> Triangulation is evident in qualitative research as a means of ensuring credibility, validity and rigour through a search for consistency. While PLR is a form of qualitative research, the triangulation that takes place in step three of Scrivener’s Model is more readily comparable to navigational triangulation than academic, although it serves much the same purpose.

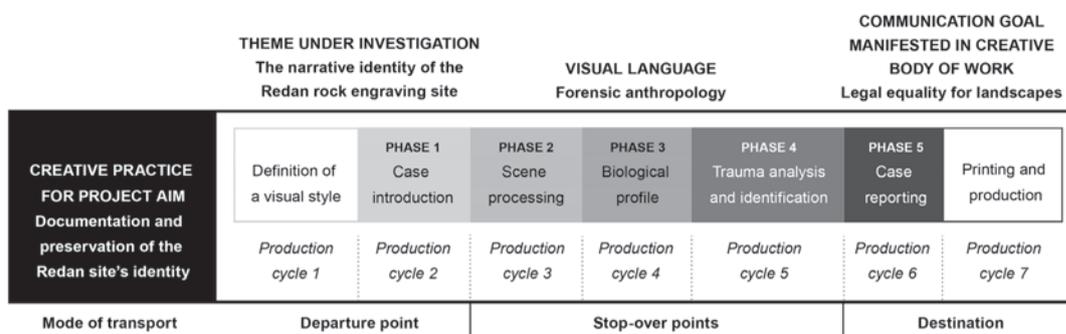
roadmap is based on the subject matter and theoretical foundation. The route is guided by the theme being investigated, the project’s aim, communication goal and visual language. The subject matter serves as the mode of transport and represents one’s current location. Therefore, design decisions are motivated by the aspects of these two structures, in two respects. The first is the relation of the selected option to the multiple standpoints in the theoretical and contextual background with which one is confronted while the second is the degree to which the option supports the project aim and communication goal through the prescribed visual language.

The roadmap of this PLR project is depicted in Figure 5.1. As may be seen, the anchor points of the borders are portrayed by the Redan rock engraving site, forensic anthropology and narrative identity. The overlap signifies the narrative identity of this site as represented by forensic anthropological principles through creative practice. It also denotes the practitioner-researcher’s current location. It is important to note that, despite the conceptual repositioning of the site as a human entity, the intention is not to remove it from its context. Therefore, as the subject matter and an anchor point of the roadmap, it brings with it the field of rock art research and the associated practices and principles. These are accordingly afforded influence over the chain of reasoning.



**Figure 5.1:** Graphic representation of the contextual and theoretical foundations as roadmap. Diagram by researcher.

The interaction between these three elements within this roadmap takes place through creative practice that follows a planned, but broad route as depicted in Figure 5.2. The result is that the creative practice oriented towards the project aim provides the metaphorical mode of transport on this journey. In this specific project, it will be recalled, the aim is the documentation and preservation of the aesthetic, interactions and narrative. The theme of narrative identity fulfils the role of the departure point while the communication goal – legal equality for landscapes – as manifested in the final body of work, constitutes a destination. In order to make the journey more manageable, it is broken up into shorter cycles of production with their own smaller artefactual outputs. The cycles of production applicable to this are provided by forensic anthropology in the form of its practices, principles and a five-phase workflow. While the forensic anthropologist’s workflow constitutes the majority in terms of production cycles, this workflow was supplemented by two cycles specific to creative practice. The first is the definition of a visual style for the project as a whole, taking into consideration the role of forensic anthropology as the visual tool and methodology within the cycles of production. The second supplementary cycle is that of printing and production.



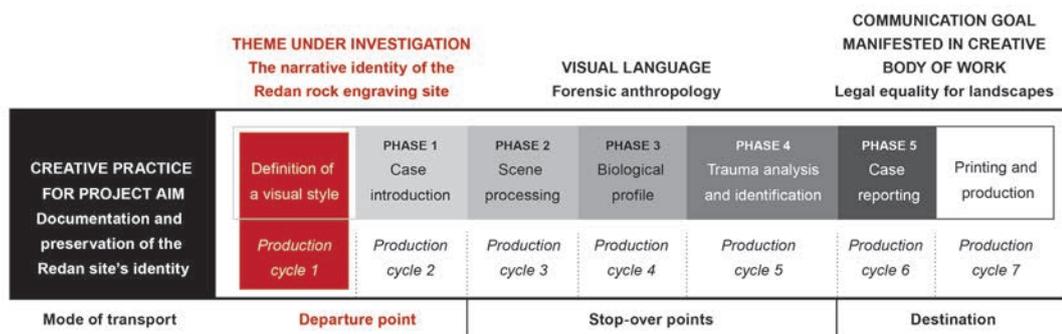
**Figure 5.2:** Graphic representation of the theme under investigation, visual language, communication goal and project aim as route. Diagram by researcher.

As may be seen in Figure 5.2, production cycle two is depicted as being subsequent to production cycle one. However, in reality, these two overlapped significantly and for the most part, were engaged with simultaneously, as explained in the next section.

### 5.3 Cycles of production

The production cycles discussed here form part of step four of Scrivener’s Model (2004). It is, however, important to note that steps two, three and four are often intertwined. This is due to the iterative cycles of resource gathering, production, reflection and reframing advocated by PLR. This and the broad knowledge structure that PLR engages with implies that while the primary theoretical and contextual frameworks have been identified and discussed in Chapters Two and Four, additional theoretical resources are also deployed in the production cycles in response to creative practice. These are elaborated on as necessary. The remainder of this section reports on these cycles of production<sup>33</sup>.

#### 5.3.1 Production cycle one: aesthetics and form



**Figure 5.3:** Production cycle one in the context of the planned route as marked in red.

This first production cycle encompassed the activities related to the definition of the visual style and form of the creative body of work. Consequently, it had two aims – firstly, to define the form that the final artist’s book would take and, secondly, to define the consistent visual style that was applied throughout the following production cycles. There were three particular objectives attached to the second aim: 1) the selection of a consistent yet flexible layout style that resonates with forensic anthropology; 2) the establishment of a system for incorporating imagery into the page layouts, and 3) the selection of typefaces for headings, sub-headings and body copy that

<sup>33</sup> The cycles of production are presented in the past tense due to this report on them being a reflection on past action.

would resonate with both the visual identity of the landscape and forensic anthropology. Both the form and visual style were required to contribute to the aim and communication goal of the project (cf. Chapter 4). The artistic audit, identification of additional resources, ideation and practical process work completed in service of these aims and objectives are documented in Addendums 1 to 4.

The deliverables of this production cycle were an approved proposal for the form of the artefact, layout grid, colour palette, typefaces and illustration samples. In proceeding towards these deliverables and the cycle's aims, a collection of visual material and further information on the subject matter was necessary. However, as determined in Chapter Three, there is very little published literature with the necessary depth and a scarcity of published visual material on the Redan rock engraving site. Therefore, the main forms of resource gathering employed in this cycle were interaction with knowledgeable individuals and the Redan rock engraving site itself. Discussions were held with Dr Marguerite Prins<sup>34</sup>, in person, telephonically and via email. Her PhD thesis in History, titled *The Primordial Circle: the prehistoric rock engravings of Redan, Vereeniging* (2005) was a cornerstone of my literature review. She also provided access to the photo-documentation that had been carried out in completion of her PhD study. Figures 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6 are samples of this. The Redan site, its history and its present situation was also discussed with Maya Petrose in his capacity of tour guide to the Vaal Teknorama Museum, which is based in Vereeniging and currently manages the site. As detailed in Chapter Three, these two individuals present contradictory perspectives on the site's authorship – Petrose favours the shamanistic interpretative framework associated with the San hunter-gatherers while Prins advocates the site's role in Khoekhoen initiation rites of young women. I also found it necessary to visit to the Redan rock engraving site. This was particularly important for the creative development of this study since an investigation of a landscape's identity naturally favours immersion in that three-dimensional space. These three means of engagement with the aesthetic and story of the Redan site provided the foundation for the practical exploration of possible forms and visual styles. The development of a proposed form, the selection of typefaces and the development of an illustrative style and layout grid are specifically afforded attention.

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<sup>34</sup> Dr Marguerite Prins completed her PhD at the North-West University's Vaal Triangle Campus in 2005. She has worked as an art educator at the Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG) and lecturer and is currently an art instructor at the Cheshire Home for the Physically Disabled.



**Figure 5.4:** Prins, M. 2005. *Photo-documentation of engraving B1 for the purposes of identification*



**Figure 5.5:** Prins, M. 2005. *Photo-documentation of engraving B1 for reproduction purposes.*



**Figure 5.6:** Prins, M. 2005. *Photo-documentation of engraving B1 with scale and colour reference.*

The form of the artist's book was the first deliverable to be dealt with because any design work is undertaken with a specific format in mind. The artist's book was selected as the genre in which to situate the final body of work since a book naturally lends itself to the telling of a story. Furthermore, as noted in the pre-production reflection, an artist's book is a particularly flexible genre and does not rigidly adhere to the form of a published codex, enabling it to accommodate a combination of multiple image-production methods in the preservation of the Redan site's narrative identity. This open form also allowed the artist's book to tap into the visual language of archiving. Archiving was identified as an appropriate field of visual language for the form due to the project aim being similar to that of an archive facility – the documentation and preservation of the aesthetic, narratives and interactions of the Redan site for posterity. In its final form, the artist's book consists of five free-standing book objects<sup>35</sup>. The implication is that the cover of each book object mimics an archive box, enabling the artworks to be loose items. At this point, it was not yet necessary to detail the final selection of materials or the mechanics of the book covers. It was, however, decided that the artworks would be monochromatic etchings with a landscape orientation. In reference to the format of a book, these etchings would be inserted as folios<sup>36</sup>.

The typeface selection was the next topic to be accorded attention. For each folio, the two interior pages were designed as a double page spread<sup>37</sup> (DPS) with the most prominent aspect being a hand-illustrated display type as heading typeface. The intention was that the design of the illustrated type should reflect the Redan rock engraving site's *idem*-ity. For this purpose, keywords were identified for the description of the landscape, namely *African*, *female* and *industrial*, based on the background of the site provided in Chapter Three.

The foundation of the hand-illustrated display type is DinC. Typefaces are designed with a specific application in mind and most classic font families carry with them a history that contributes to their aesthetic and personality. This is particularly true of the DIN 1451 typeface, which was originally designed for industrial application. This history made it suitable for this project's purposes. DinC is a republication of the DIN 1451 MittelSchrift font. Its broader form,

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<sup>35</sup> A book object is a class of artist's book that references the format of a book in the production of an artwork entirely produced by the artist. It is not synonymous with a bookwork, which is a class of artist's book that makes use of and alters an existing published book in the production of the artwork (V&A Museum, 2016).

<sup>36</sup> In book structure terminology, a folio is a sheet of paper folded in two to produce four pages – two pages on each side of the sheet of paper.

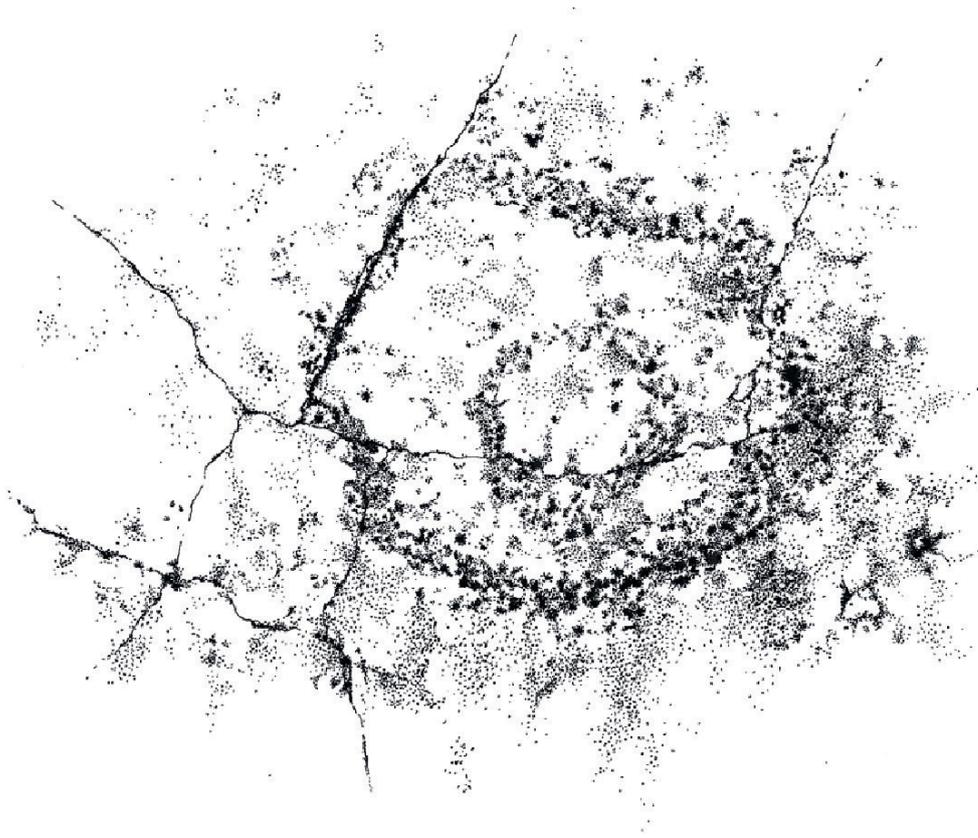
<sup>37</sup> A double page spread is a single side of a folio represented by two adjoining pages.

in comparison to its EngSchrift companion, softens its appearance, affording it a more gender-neutral aesthetic. Figure 5.7 provides a visual comparison of these three DIN font variations. Although the DinC font is not specifically feminine, the intention was the representation of a female site as opposed to femininity per se. Therefore, DinC was identified as the better solution for the representation of the Redan site in comparison to the harsh condensed form of EngSchrift.

<b>Din 1451 EngSchrift</b>	<b>DIN 1451 MittelSchrift</b>	<b>DinC</b>
<b>1234567890</b>	<b>1234567890</b>	<b>1234567890</b>

**Figure 5.7:** Visual comparison of DIN 1451 EngSchrift, DIN 1451 MittelSchrift and DinC. Compilation of samples by researcher.

Stippling was selected as the illustrative technique for the production of the display type in order to most accurately reflect the texture of sandstone. The technique lent itself well to both the illustration of the engravings and the text, as is evident from the samples depicted by Figure 5.8 and 5.9. The integration of the engravings with the typography began as an aesthetic hunch generated through creative practice and was responded to by means of theoretical research. This was appropriate considering the dialectic between creative practice and theory that is characteristic of PLR. In his book, *Afrikan Alphabets: the story of writing in Afrika*, Saki Mafundikwa (2004) emphasises the glyph-based orientation of early African writing systems. This theoretical resource supported the notion set forth in Chapter Three of non-mimetic rock art sites as cultural texts written in a language that is as yet indecipherable – a glyph-based typeface of sorts. It also conceptually supported the conversion of the engravings into a display type through their integration with the base font, of which Figure 5.10 is a sample. This integration also lent an African element to the display type and provided a system for the integration of imagery into the design. Each illustration was assigned an exhibit number in order to identify the engraving of which it was a graphic representation.



**Figure 5.8:** Test image produced using stippling as technique for the illustration of the Redan rock engravings. Image reduced by researcher (cf. Addendum 4).



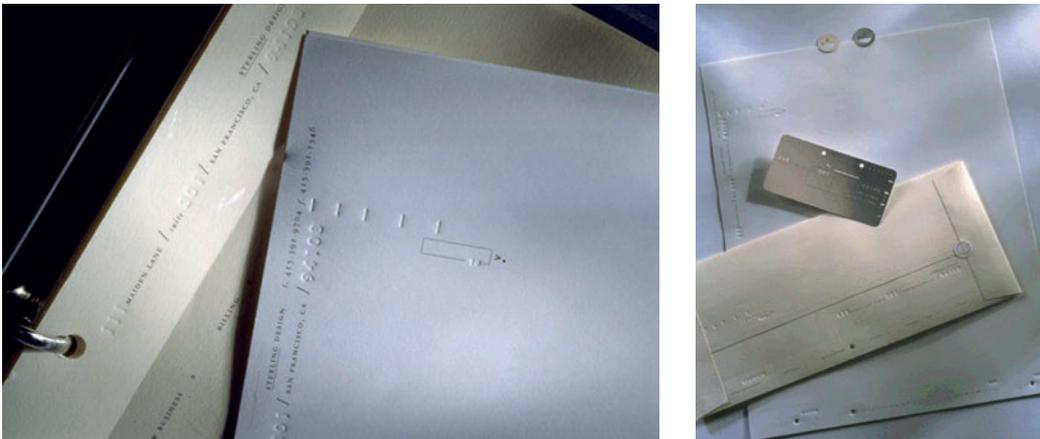
**Figure 5.9:** Test image produced using stippling as technique for the illustration of the typography. Image reduced by researcher (cf. Addendum 4).



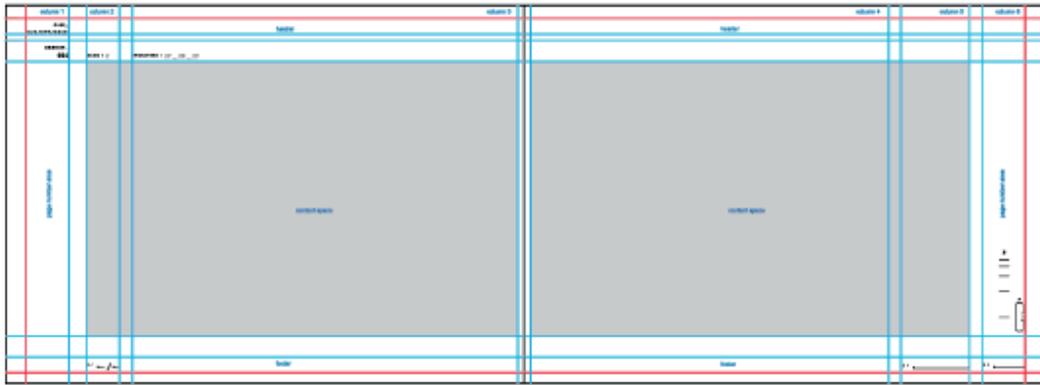
**Figure 5.10:** Illustration of the first working sample of integrated type and engraving

A heading typeface is typically accompanied by a body copy typeface. In this case Akzidenz-Grotesk BQ Condensed Light was selected. The light weight conveys a sense of elongation as opposed to the harshness of compression. The character of Akzidenz-Grotesk Light is considered to be neutral and ideal for combination with distinctive display typefaces (Samara, 2005:143). This neutrality appealed to the analytical nature of forensic anthropology and provided a sense of quiet amongst the busy-ness of the display type.

The appeal to forensic anthropology was also a requirement for the layout style. An artistic audit identified the analytical aesthetic of Jennifer Sterling's work as a valuable and applicable reference. Figure 5.11 illustrates a sample. The use of blind embossing, also evident in her work, would provide a layering of narratives, as is characteristic of narrative identity, and would thereby enrich this project's aesthetic and the engagement of its audience. The nature of blind embossing also resonated specifically with the situation of the Redan rock engraving site in the sense that both are present although not immediately visible. These influences were combined in the development of the layout grid, depicted in Figure 5.12, which allows for consistency in the minimalist header, footer and page numbering columns, while leaving the centre of the DPS open for exploration.



**Figure 5.11:** Sterling, J. 1990? *Corporate stationery for Sterling Design.*



**Figure 5.12:** Layout grid guidelines (cf. Addendum 4). Image produced by researcher.

In summarising this production cycle, both the form and aesthetic approach were designed to provide a degree of flexibility, thereby allowing for the exploration and serendipitous emergence and action advocated by practice-led research. The artist's book was selected as the genre for the artwork as it appeals to narrative identity and resonates with the project aim. The overall aesthetic of the etched monochrome folios of this artist's book, as established in this production cycle, embodies a mediated position between the scientific nature of forensic anthropology and the organic nature of an African rock art landscape. This balance was achieved through the combination of a flexible layout style bearing a clean, analytical aesthetic and a display typeface intended to reflect the physical identity of the site. The display type also addresses the issue of a visual system for the incorporation of imagery. Production cycles two to six were required to work within the constraints established here. Before discussing production cycle two, it is necessary to note the significant overlap of cycles in Addendums 2, 3 and 4. This is evidence of the simultaneity of this cycle and the next, as briefly mentioned in the previous section. This occurred due to the subject matter applicable to production cycle two being used for the practical exploration of ideas in this one.

### 5.3.2 Production cycle two: an introduction

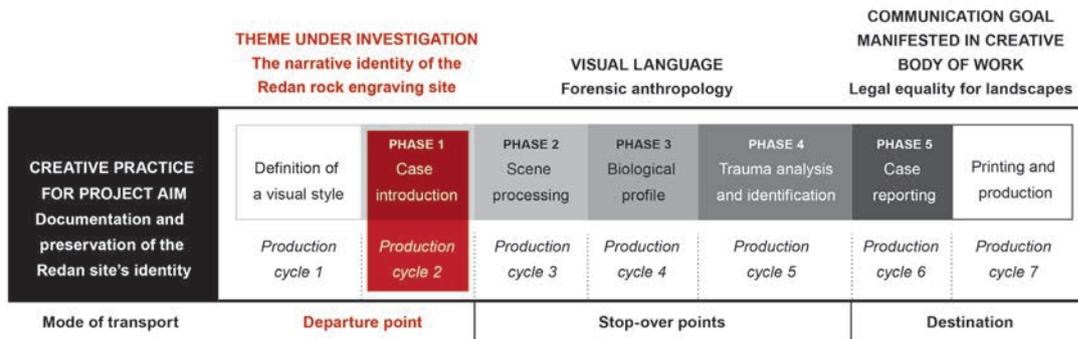
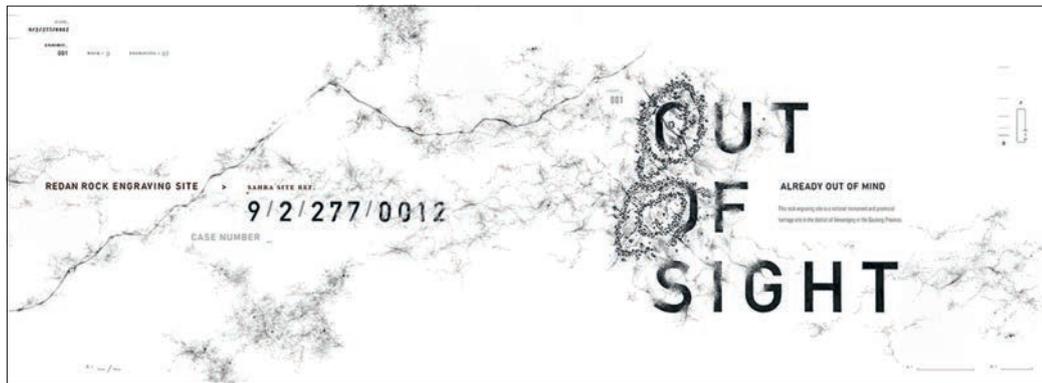


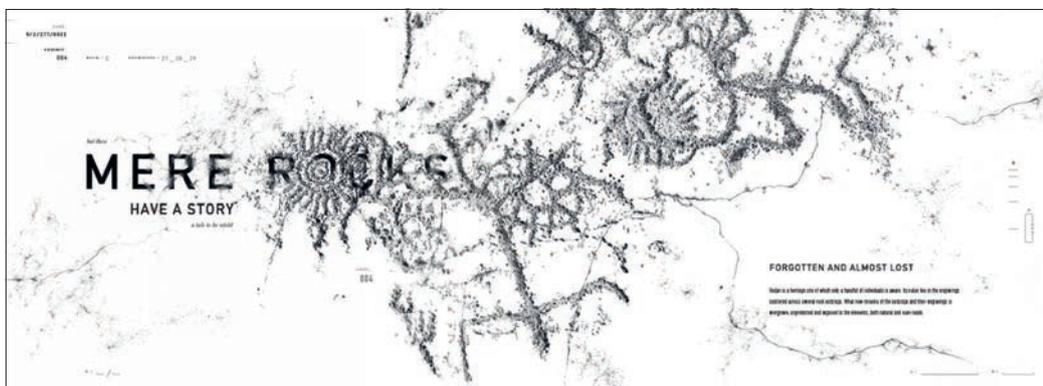
Figure 5.13: Production cycle two in the context of the planned route as marked in red.

Production cycle two draws together the activities entailed in the production of the digital draft of *Book one of five: an introduction*. This book was designed to represent the first phase of the forensic anthropologist's workflow, which is the introduction to a case. It was also intended as an introduction to the narrative embodied in the completed body of work. Therefore, this production cycle had three aims. The first was aligned with the role of the forensic anthropologist: to determine whether the case being introduced does indeed fall within his/her purview by following the practices and principles described in Chapter Four. The second aim was to provide an introduction to the project and the Redan rock engraving site as its subject matter while the third was to produce a proof of concept related to the visual style defined in production cycle one. The ideation and practical exploration that took place for this purpose is documented in Addendums 2, 3, 4 and 6.

The digital drafts of five DPSs and a cover page were the outcomes of this production cycle. *Out of sight* (Figure 5.14) and *Mere rocks* (Figure 5.15) offer a brief background to the Redan rock engraving site. The identification number assigned to the Redan site by the South African Heritage Resources Association provided a relevant case number in the designing of the former; consequently the data was repositioned for the conceptual direction of this project.



**Figure 5.14:** Digital draft of *Out of sight*. Image produced by researcher.



**Figure 5.15:** Digital draft of *Mere rocks*. Image produced by researcher.

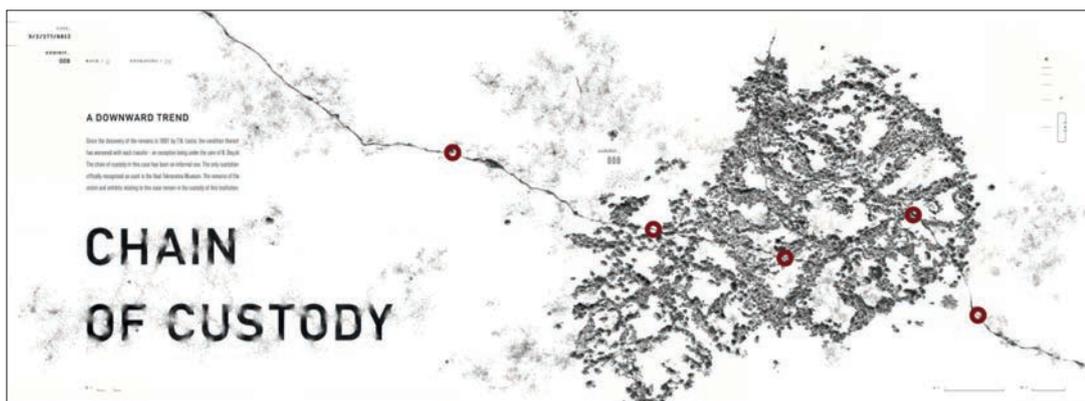
*Into obscurity* (Figure 5.16) offers a current inventory of the component parts of the site alongside a possible past inventory of items meant to be present. In the context of forensic anthropology, this was the equivalent of a skeletal inventory. As presented in Chapter Four, this task forms part of the second phase of the forensic anthropologist's workflow as opposed to the first. However, in the interest of introducing the Redan site in a visual manner and thus providing a coherent and intelligible narrative, it was decided to include it here. The historic inventory is an amalgamation of three sources: Prins (2005), Willcox and Pager (1967) and Kovacs (1988), as none is simultaneously comprehensive and current. The current inventory was compiled through visits to the site in 2015 and 2016, although the majority of the components were only visible after the overgrown surroundings had been levelled by an annual veldfire. An attempt to generate a current count of the engravings for this inventory was set in motion but was

subsequently abandoned due to the likelihood that the search and documentation process would in itself take a number of years. Furthermore, while forensic anthropological practice may require it, an incomplete engravings count would not hinder the project's aim of preserving the narrative identity of the Redan rock engraving site.



**Figure 5.16:** Digital draft of *Into obscurity*. Image produced by researcher.

In the context of forensic anthropology, the custody of evidence and human remains is a formal process. This is not true of the custodianship of the Redan rock engraving site and this is the focus of *Chain of custody* (Figure 5.17). As mentioned in Chapter Three, individuals could be identified throughout its documented history as having taking a particular interest in its preservation, although none but the Vaal Teknorama Museum officially held the title of custodian. The chain of custody for a single item of evidence is typically documented on a single card. However, for the purpose of illustrating the impact of each of the five custodians on the condition of the site and thereby narrating a part of the site's history of interactions, individual cards were designed for each custodian. The condition of the site is tracked by a crack in the illustrated engraving and the punch hole of each card aligns with a point on the crack, indicating the moment in time when the Redan site was released from that individual's custody. Where imagery associated with the custodians' interactions with the site could be found, it was included on the backs of the cards. The majority of the images and information was sourced from visits to the Vaal Teknorama Museum's archive depot.



**Figure 5.17:** Digital draft of *Chain of custody*. Image produced by researcher.

Chronologically, Thomas Nicholas Leslie (1858-1942), a paleobotanist, with an interest in archaeology and the Stone Age sites in the Vereeniging area, is the first informal custodian. He is credited as the discoverer of the Redan rock engraving site and made numerous attempts to garner local and international publicity for it and its preservation (Plug, 2014; Prins, 2007:44). The back of the corresponding custody card features the diary entry he made in response to its discovery.

Clarence Van Riet Lowe (1894 – 1956) was the second custodian and held the position of honorary secretary of the Historical Monuments Commission<sup>38</sup> between 1935 and 1955. In that capacity, he conducted a survey of all known rock art sites in South Africa, which included the Redan site. By this time, the responsibility for the maintenance of the site was split between the Vereeniging Town Council and the Historical Monuments Council, neither of which were willing to cover the associated costs. In light of this impasse and in an effort to preserve a portion of this rapidly deteriorating prehistoric site, Van Riet Lowe commissioned the removal of one of the larger geometric engravings from the Redan site by and to the University of the Witwatersrand in the 1950s (Mason, 1989:127; Prins, 2005:56; 2007:41). This engraving is currently housed at the Origins Centre museum, although no indication of its source is provided in the exhibit. While Van Riet Lowe worked on prehistoric and San rock art sites in a formal capacity, the Redan site was not specifically assigned to him and he is thus classified as an informal custodian for the purpose of this project.

<sup>38</sup> The Historical Monuments Commission was the heritage authority established in accordance with the *Natural and Historical Monuments Commission Act* (Act No. 6 of 1923, section 1, cited by Deacon, 1992:2) and charged with the identification and conservation of San sites. This body was later replaced by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA).

B.D. Malan<sup>39</sup>, a South African archaeologist, succeeded Van Riet Lowe as honorary secretary of the Historical Monuments Commission. He was instrumental in the upgrading of the now-absent fence at the Redan site and set into motion a series of investigations and surveys that contributed to it being declared a national monument. Unfortunately, this status did not improve the situation as hoped. Financial and human resource constraints continued to hamper the maintenance of the site and it gradually fell further into disrepair (Prins, 2007:42). As in the case of Van Riet Lowe, B.D. Malan's custody card identifies him as an informal custodian for the purposes of this project.

J.W. Deyzel (died 1999) was the individual to have had the most pragmatically positive impact on the site since its discovery. In her role as museum section curator to the Vereeniging public library, Deyzel ensured that funding was made available by the National Monuments Council for the preservation and maintenance of the site. She also arranged and supervised regular tours to the Redan site. She continued to do so in her later position as director of the Vaal Teknorama Museum. Unfortunately, this level of care and dedication ceased at her retirement in 1997 (Prins, 2005:67-72). The photograph on the reverse side of the corresponding custody card is of the Redan site whilst in her informal custody.

The Vaal Teknorama is the site's current official custodian in the capacity of local museum and tourism body responsible for supervising visits to the site. The name board of the institution features a Redan site engraving. However, the weathering of the board was interpreted as a reflection of the condition of the heritage site that this institution attempts to manage. This is the subject of the image on the back of the Vaal Teknorama Museum's<sup>40</sup> custody card.

*Hypothetically* (Figure 5.18) is the final folio of this book. It introduces the project concept and aim and provides a synopsis of the narrative told through this artist's book. It also attended to the details of human classification and the establishment of the number of victims – a single one in this case. Due to the site being prehistoric and the engravings being of uncertain age, I elected not to include an assessment of their antiquity, as would typically be required of forensic anthropologists at this point. Prehistoric remains would not fall under the purview of the forensic anthropologist.

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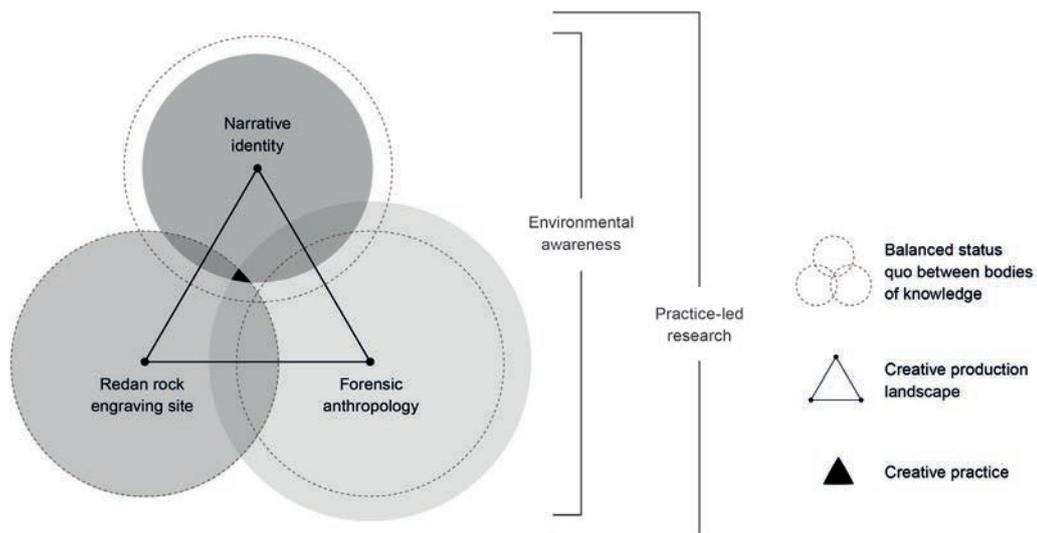
<sup>39</sup> In the published material on the history of Vereeniging and the Redan site reviewed for this project, the full names of J.W. Deyzel and B.D. Malan were not used but rather the nicknames "Baby" and "Berry" respectively. Subsequent searches for the full names and complete birth and death dates were unsuccessful.

<sup>40</sup> *The Vaal Teknorama Museum*. Address: 1 Beethoven St, Duncanville, Vereeniging, 1939; Contact number: 016 450 3031.



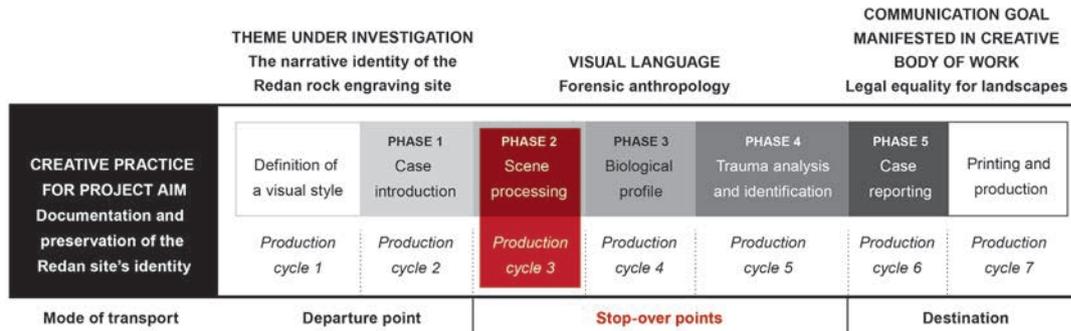
**Figure 5.18:** Digital draft of *Hypothetically*. Image produced by researcher.

In summary, digital drafts for five DPSs and a cover page were produced as the outcomes of this production cycle. Preference was given to the construction of a narrative's beginning as opposed to rigidly abiding by the requirements set forth by forensic anthropological practice. The result is the adaptation of the forensic anthropology workflow to meet the narrative requirements of the book. This is in alignment with the project aim of documenting and preserving the narrative identity of the Redan rock engraving site. Therefore, as an overview of the knowledge triangulation process and chain of reasoning reflected in the process designs of this production cycle, Figure 5.19 is provided. Furthermore, this production cycle offered viable examples of the application of the aesthetic and layout style defined in production cycle one, which informed the subsequent production cycles by serving as exemplars.



**Figure 5.19:** Graphic representation of knowledge triangulation in production cycle two, wherein creative practice is skewed towards narrative identity – the range and limitations of forensic anthropology are stretched in order to accommodate the principles of narrative. Diagram by researcher.

### 5.3.3 Production cycle three: scene processing



**Figure 5.20:** Production cycle three in the context of the planned route as marked in red.

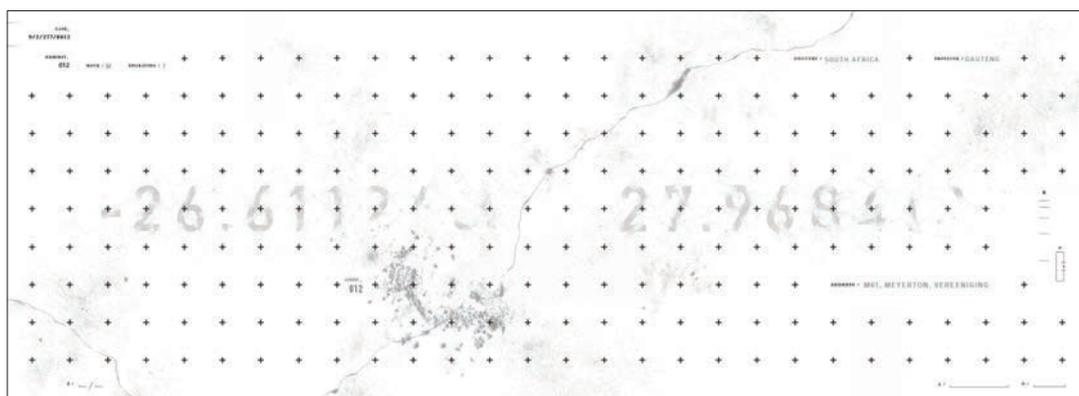
This production cycle consisted of the aspects of creative practice attached to the development of the digital draft of *Book two of five: in situ*, which is a representation of phase two of the forensic anthropologist’s workflow. As detailed in Chapter Four, this is the processing of the crime scene. The aim of this production cycle was thus the documentation of the Redan rock engraving site landscape. The objectives of this production cycle included 1) the establishment of a distinctive visual style that was unique to this book while operating within the constraints defined in production cycle one and proven viable in production cycle two<sup>41</sup>; and 2) the documentation of the *idem*-ity of the Redan landscape through photography and mapping. In service of these objectives, further visits to the Redan rock engraving site were necessary as well as ideation and practical exploration, all of which is documented in Addendums 4 and 5.

The development of a distinctive visual style for this book’s DPSs influenced the representation of the scene processing and was accordingly dealt with first. The processes associated with the excavation and documentation of the crime scene and the retrieval of the evidence remain central to this phase of the forensic anthropologist’s workflow. As these processes are focused around the gridding of the area, square crosses were incorporated into the layout style to signify the intersections of a grid. A point worth noting is that an actual physical gridding of the scene was not done due to the number of investigators that would have been necessary to cover such

<sup>41</sup> This objective was not set prior to the commencement of this production cycle. It was the result of noting through creative practice that the similarity in focus across the DPSs in Book two would facilitate a distinctive aesthetic.

an extensive area. Therefore, the locations of these crosses in relation to the images on the relevant double page spreads stemmed from aesthetically driven decisions as opposed to being factually significant.

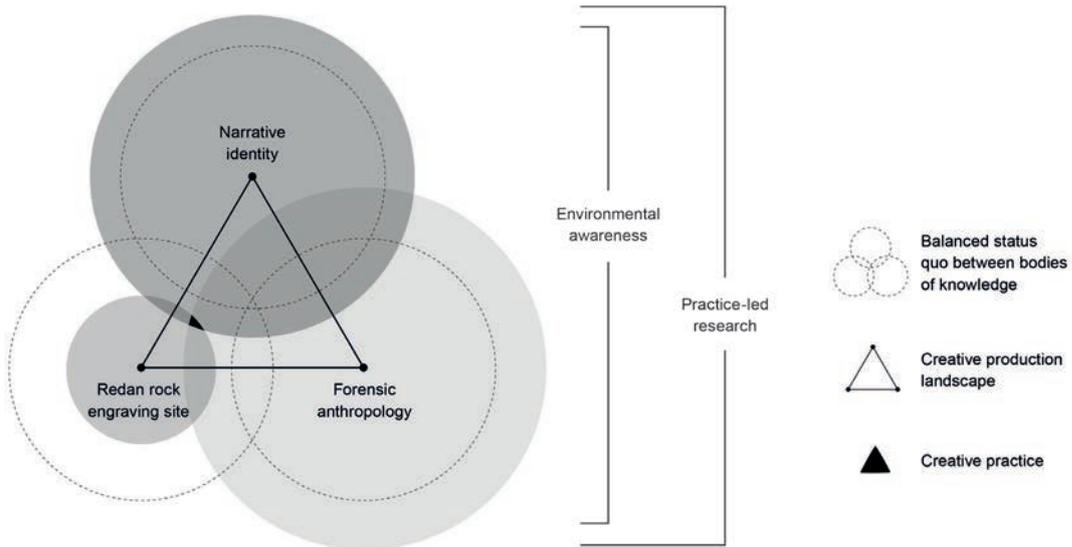
The first digital drafts to which this visual style was applied, dealt with the physical location of the Redan rock engraving site. These are *Co-ordinates* (Figure 5.21) and *Out of place* (Figure 5.22). Due to PLR following a dualist interactionist model wherein creative practice and theory influence one another, an earlier iteration of *Co-ordinates* raised an important question. It was noted that in the articles and published material on the Redan site to which I had access, its location was consistently vague; none were specific enough to identify the precise location of the site if one had not visited it previously. Further research revealed that specific guidelines govern the naming of and public knowledge surrounding rock art sites that do not feature appropriate access control, such as the Redan site. One guideline, in particular, was applicable to the chain of reasoning behind the current design of *Co-ordinates*. It specifies that the specific location of rock art sites should not be made publicly known without the necessary protective measures in place, such as walkways, supervision by someone trained for that purpose, access control, and public education surrounding compartment at these sites (ICOMOS, 2010:7; Ndlovu, 2014:236-239; Deacon, 1991:234). The GPS co-ordinates were shortened and illustrated in such a way as to make the numbers less legible in order to make the location less specific and to comply with the ethics of rock art research as I understood them. The knowledge triangulation evident in the design of this DPS is illustrated in Figure 5.23.



**Figure 5.21:** Digital draft of *Co-ordinates*. Image produced by researcher.



**Figure 5.22:** Digital draft of *Out of place*. Image produced by researcher.



**Figure 5.23:** Graphic representation of knowledge triangulation of *Co-ordinates*, wherein creative practice is skewed towards rock art research as represented by the Redan rock engraving site; the range and limitations of forensic anthropology and narrative identity are stretched in order to accommodate the principles of rock art research. Diagram produced by researcher.

The securing of a rock art site is as important as the securing of a crime scene. In the context of a crime scene, this is typically effected through the use of a police line or chevron tape. Running lines of blind embossed text were used in the primarily photographic spreads (Figures 5.24 and 5.25) to mimic this. The police line format is used in both, while chevron lines were added to the DPS in Figure 5.25 to indicate the danger posed by the annual fires and nearby sinkhole.



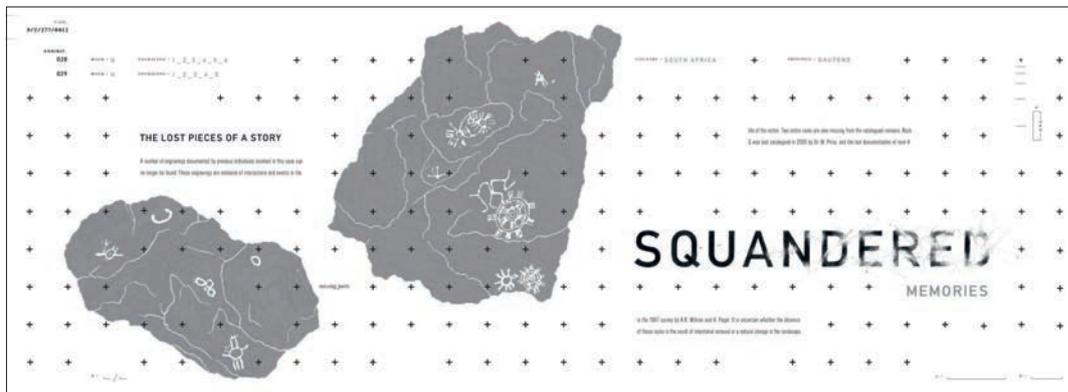
**Figure 5.24:** Digital draft of *Photographic overview*. Image produced by researcher.



**Figure 5.25:** Digital draft of *Sinkhole and fire*. Image produced by researcher.

Blind embossing played an important role in the development of the digital draft of *Squandered memories* (Figure 5.26). In my attempt to generate a current inventory of the rock engravings, it was noted that two rock surfaces – rocks G and H – are missing in their entirety. The absence of rock H was noted in Prins' study, although in 2005, rock G was still present. The documentation

carried out by Willcox and Pager of the rock engravings particular to those two surfaces was used in combination with photographs retrieved from the South African Rock Art Digital Archive to produce the illustrations on this DPS. Blind embossing was utilised to communicate their absence considering that an embossing can be compared to the ghost of the positive form that produced it.



**Figure 5.26:** Digital draft of *Squandered memories*. Image produced by researcher.

The final DPS that is afforded attention in this section is *Site Map*. Rock art sites and crime scenes are both documented, with a focus on specific details, many of which are similar, thus allowing an accommodation of the principles of both rock art research and forensic anthropology. The correlating aspects of the two fields' requirements were combined to produce the table on the right hand side of the DPS, depicted in Figure 5.27. Another requirement of both fields was the graphic representation of the layout of the scene. Google Maps was unable to provide an image clear enough to produce the site map illustration. As a solution, a rough three-dimensional model of the site was produced using photogrammetry<sup>42</sup>. This was carried out with the assistance of Adrian Lamour, a freelance 3-D visualiser, business owner<sup>43</sup> and architectural visualisation lecturer at Learn3D in Johannesburg. While this execution did not exploit the full potential of photogrammetry, it did open up pathways for exploration with regard to the three dimensional documentation of the engravings in later production cycles.

<sup>42</sup> Photogrammetry is a technique used to survey and determine measurements of a real-world object or scene from a series of digital photographs. The resulting data can be applied in the production of maps, drawings and three-dimensional models.

<sup>43</sup> Adrian Lamour is the owner of GrowMotion (<http://www.growmotion.co.za/>). Email address: info@growmotion.co.za

## CRIME SCENE RECORD FORM

Case number > _____	Access control agency > _____
Crime scene address > _____	
Property/land owner > _____	
Recorded by > _____	on _____
Capacity > _____	Accompanied by > _____

Access point > \_\_\_\_\_

Walking time from access point > \_\_\_\_\_ Vehicles permitted >  Yes  No

Clear path to main area >  Yes  No  Part-way

Terrain >  sandy  gravel  stony  rocky  low vegetation  
 bushy  thorny  easy  moderate  difficult

cordoned off area > width \_\_\_\_\_ height \_\_\_\_\_

Natural screening of scene > visibility on approach \_\_\_\_\_  
visibility from crime scene \_\_\_\_\_

Exposure of remains to natural elements >  Covered  Partially covered  Uncovered / unprotected

Immediate removal: Required >  Yes  No Passable >  Yes  No

Estimated number of victims >  1  2  3  > 3

Artefacts accompanying remains >  Present  Absent

Post-mortem trauma to remains >  scratches  chipping  burning  
 vandalism \_\_\_\_\_  
 other \_\_\_\_\_

Recording >  colour photography  monochrome photography  illustrations

Scene previously on record >  No  
 Yes Record/s detail > \_\_\_\_\_

Can crime scene be opened to public >  Yes  No  Only with agency escort

A / \_\_\_\_\_ D / \_\_\_\_\_

**Figure 5.27:** Table element of the digital draft of *Site map*. Image produced by researcher.

In summary, this cycle's outcomes consisted of the digital drafts of nine DPSs and a cover page. The integration of square crosses into the layout style created a visual language able to distinguish this book from its four companions without disrupting the unity of the overall body of work. In response to the success of this, it was decided that each subsequent book also ought to have an aesthetic that unifies its DPSs while distinguishing it from the other books.

On reflection, the development of the DPS *Co-ordinates* drew attention to the notion that every field of practice has its own body of debates and systems in place, of which the layperson is seldom aware. Rubbings were explored at an early phase in the first production cycle as part of the establishment of a suitable visual style (see Addendum 2). The intention was to document the engravings and surrounding rock texture, considering that rubbings are evident in the studies by Jeffreys (1953:16-18) and Prins (2005) and that the texture of a set of bones can be used in forensic anthropology as a means of identifying previous illness and disease. However, this avenue of creative practice was abandoned due to research undertaken in this production cycle, which revealed that rubbings and plaster casting were no longer ethically acceptable as a means of documentation (Woodhouse, 1991:12). These methods damage the

rock surfaces, particularly in the case of sandstone which is highly friable. As an alternative to casting, photogrammetry was explored as a means of creating an accurate three-dimensional document of the engravings, also with the help of Adrian Lamour. However, it was determined that this creative execution was not relevant to this particular production cycle, despite it being in support of the project aim; it would thus be revisited in a later production cycle.

### 5.3.4 Production cycle four: a biological profile

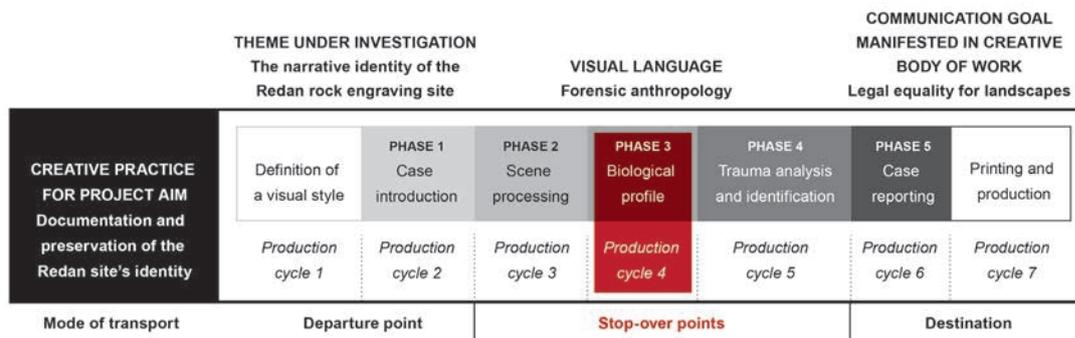


Figure 5.28: Production cycle four in the context of the planned route as marked in red.

Production cycle four focussed on the development of the digital draft of *Book three of five: biological profile*. This book represents the determination of the victim's biological profile, which constitutes the third phase of the forensic anthropologist's workflow. The two aims of this cycle were 1) to document the *idem*-ity of the Redan rock engraving site with specific focus on sex, ancestry, age at death and stature; and 2) to establish a distinct aesthetic for this book while adhering to the visual style defined in cycle one. The ideation and practical process work produced in response to these aims was documented in Addendums 6 and 7.

This book consists of four DPSs and a cover page, the digital drafts of which are the outcomes of this cycle of production. The visual style of these pages makes use of a consistent layout formula (Figure 5.29), stamping and a faked spot varnish. Various options were provided for the incorporation of the headings without a merged illustration (Figure 5.30), from which Figure 5.25b was chosen. A faked spot varnish would be used to subtly indicate the outcome of the analysis of each aspect. The method identified for faking the spot varnish entailed the application of a laser cut transparent vinyl sticker. The production test indicated viability at this juncture. The

possibility of the application of liquid vinyl as a means of enhancing the spot varnish was also explored. This was applied to a clear laser cut vinyl sticker of the image or glyph in order to accurately dictate the shape it would take. However, the result was a rigid transparent form that did not adhere well to the paper, while the application of the liquid vinyl directly onto the paper left oil marks behind. Therefore, this strategy was not employed.



**Figure 5.29:** Layout formula for the double page spreads of *Book three of five* (cf. Addendum 6). Diagram produced by researcher.



**Figure 5.30:** Various options provided for the heading style of *Book three of five*.

Each profile aspect populates a dedicated page although only *Ancestry* (Figure 5.31) is discussed here. As mentioned in Chapter Four, the determination of ancestry is largely excluded in contemporary forensic anthropology practices due to the debates surrounding the existence of race, and the topic being a socially sensitive issue. However, art is a manifestation of a culture and the removal of art from its cultural and geographic context removes it from the interpretative context in which it functions. In the case of the Redan rock engraving site, its African origin exercises a significant influence on its physical identity, interactions and life experiences – all of which are important aspects in the construction of a narrative identity (cf. Chapter 4). Therefore, this biological profile aspect was included despite forensic anthropological practice insisting otherwise. The knowledge triangulation evident in this design decision is depicted in Figure 5.32.

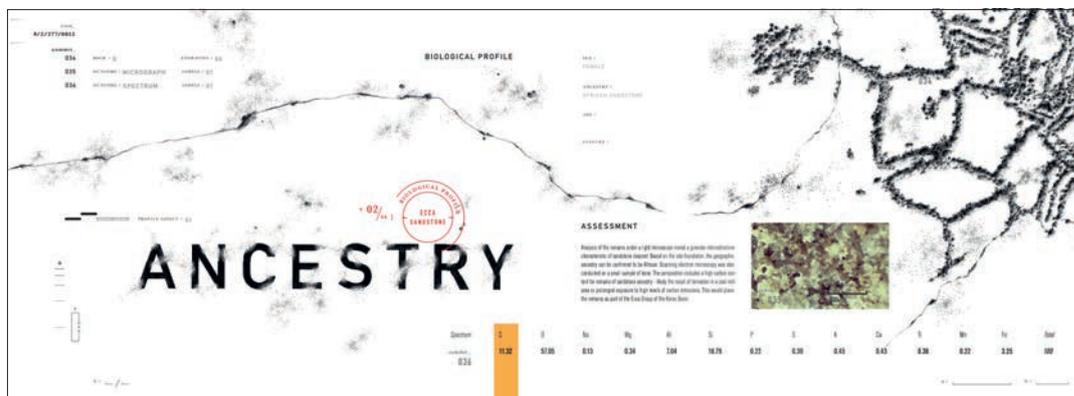


Figure 5.31: Digital draft of *Ancestry*. Image produced by researcher.

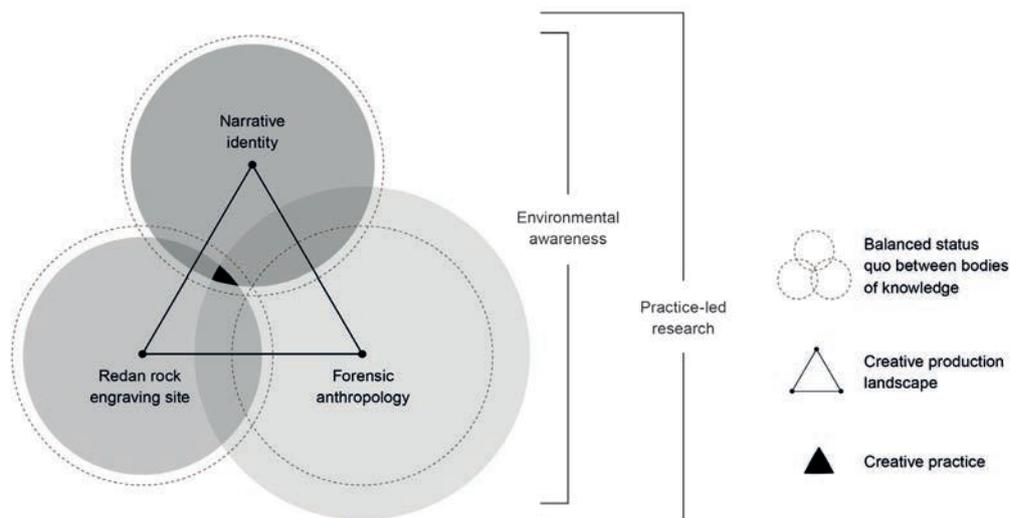
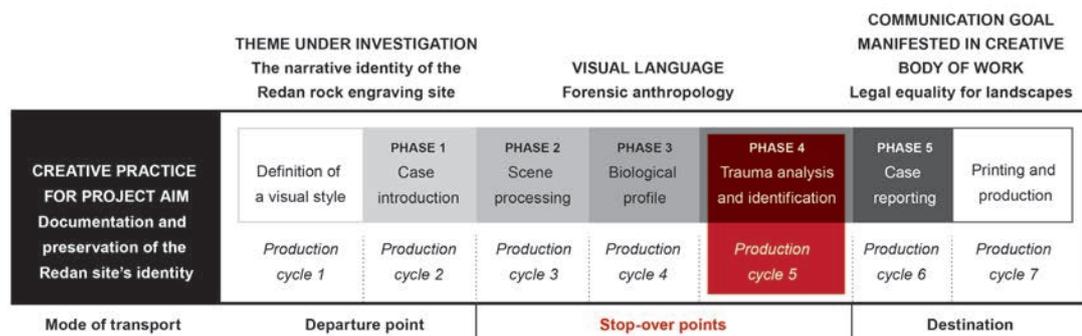


Figure 5.23: Graphic representation of knowledge triangulation in *Ancestry*, wherein creative practice is skewed towards rock art research (represented by the Redan site) and narrative identity – the range and limitations of forensic anthropology are stretched in order to accommodate their principles. Diagram by researcher.

Dr Louwrens Tiedt, a researcher at the NWU Faculty of Natural Science and head of the electron microscopy laboratory<sup>44</sup> at the North-West University's Potchefstroom Campus, produced close-up images of the top and underside of a small sample of the sandstone outcrop that had flaked off from the main body. The imagery of the underside was selected as the better solution for the representation of sandstone as genetic ancestry. A scanning electron microscopy analysis of the sample's top and underside was also conducted. The formation process of sandstone allows its physical makeup to provide clues as to its broad geographic ancestry. According to Dr Tiedt, the high carbon content may be indicative of it being formed in a coal-rich or industrial area. Meyerton in the Gauteng Province meets both these descriptions, although Dr Tiedt was not originally informed of the sample's origin.

In summary and reflection, forensic anthropology continued to provide the broad framework for the digital drafts of the four DPSs and cover page, although the manner in which it was applied was adapted as necessary. The DPSs of this book applied a layout grid adapted from the one applied to the artist's book as a whole. These spreads also did not make use of the display type system established in production cycle one. Despite this, this grouping of folios still functions within the project's visual style. In combination, production cycle three and four provided examples of how a visual style can be expanded on and adapted while remaining coherent.

### 5.3.5 Production cycle five: trauma analysis and identification



**Figure 5.33:** Production cycle five in the context of the planned route as marked in red.

Production cycle five was constituted by the activities aimed at the development of a digital draft for *Book four of five: between label and body*. This book represents the fourth phase of the forensic anthropologist's workflow: trauma analysis and identification. This phase of the forensic anthropologist's workflow is based on comparison. The remains are analysed in the search for

<sup>44</sup> NWU Laboratory for Electron Microscopy. Contact number: (018) 299 2525.

any individuating factors that may be compared to records of an individual's life. In so doing, the said anthropologist is dealing with the intangible experiences and autobiographical memories that fill the space between the physical body and the name by which one is referred to. Forensic anthropology relies on this close association of the physical body with the life experiences of an individual for positive identification, akin to narrative identity. Therefore, the aims of this cycle of production were 1) the documentation of the *ipse*-ity of the Redan rock engraving site as can be represented through manifestations or marks of memory; and 2) to identify an individual unifying aesthetic for this book as was done for the previous books. The practical process work and ideation necessary to produce the final digital drafts were documented in Addendum 8.

The deliverables of this production cycle initially included fourteen folios and a cover page. Following a review of progress (Addendum 7), it was decided to reduce this proposed folio output to seven, which later became six, in the interests of a realistic time schedule and efficacy of communication. The aesthetic of this book is more organic than the previous ones and makes significant use of blind embossing to represent past records or experiences for comparison.

The digital draft of *Pecked into bone* (Figure 5.34) is focussed on the engravings as a means of individuation. Macro-photography of the marks pecked into the sandstone to produce the engravings provided the impetus to describe the process by which these marks were made. Production cycle three had highlighted the need for me to immerse myself, not just in the Redan landscape, but in the field of rock art research too, in order to build up an appropriate repertoire of knowledge with which to respond to the situations that creative practice presented. In response to this, I accepted an invitation from Professor John R. Botha, an Honorary South African National Parks (SANParks) Ranger engaged in rock art preservation in the Golden Gate Highlands Reserve in the Orange Free State, to accompany the Honorary SANParks Rangers on a guided tour of the Bosworth rock engraving site<sup>45</sup>. This is acknowledged to be a San rock art site although it includes pecked non-mimetic images similar to those at Redan, amongst the more representational artworks. On this tour, a plausible means of production for the pecked imagery was discussed. This was illustrated in blind embossed images in this double page spread as four stages.

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<sup>45</sup> The Bosworth rock engraving site is a provincial heritage site located on the Bosworth Farm in the North-West Province. Tours are arranged on an ad hoc basis by the owner of the property and are presented by local individuals of San heritage. It is an open-air rock art site, as the Redan site is, with a combination of mimetic and non-mimetic engravings, although the former are better represented. The rock surfaces are also scattered across a widespread area as opposed to the tightly grouped location of the Redan site. Contact details for arranging tours of the Bosworth rock engravings follow. E-mail: bosworth@gds.co.za; Contact number: 018 468 7527.

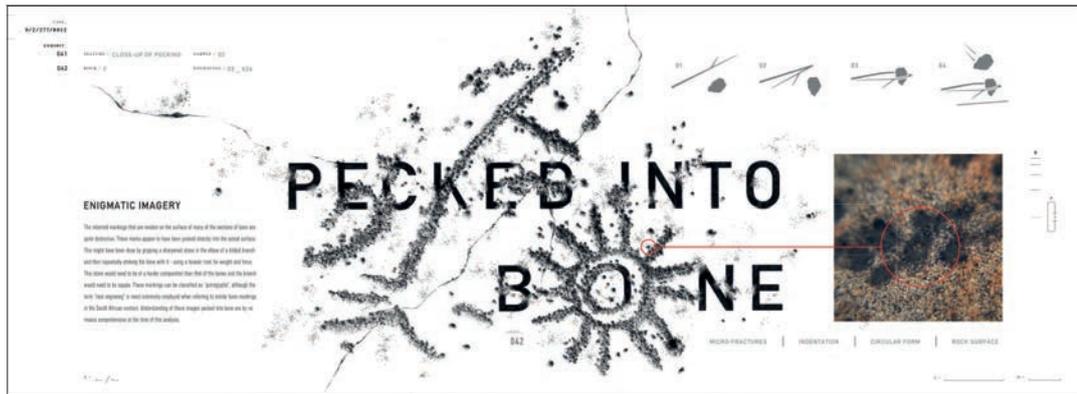


Figure 5.34: Digital draft of *Pecked into bone*. Image produced by researcher.

Blind embossing also played an important role in the DPS *Entoptic imagery* (Figure 5.35). As established in Chapter Three, there are a small handful of perspectives of the Redan rock engraving site regarding its *raison d'être*, which are invariably linked to authorship. These range from degenerate art and herder's doodles to shamanistic practices by the San and rites of passage ceremonies by the Khoekhoen (cf. Chapter Three). It is the last two perspectives mentioned that were identified as the most current and relevant and are represented in *Entoptic imagery* and *Marks of adolescence* (Figure 5.36). Forensic anthropology searches for a single interpretation of the remains – which these two contrasting perspectives are not. However, narrative identity acknowledges discordance and draws contrasting perspectives into a coherent, albeit not seamless, whole, by means of the narrative function. The knowledge triangulation regarding the decision to include both perspectives is similar to that of *Ancestry*.

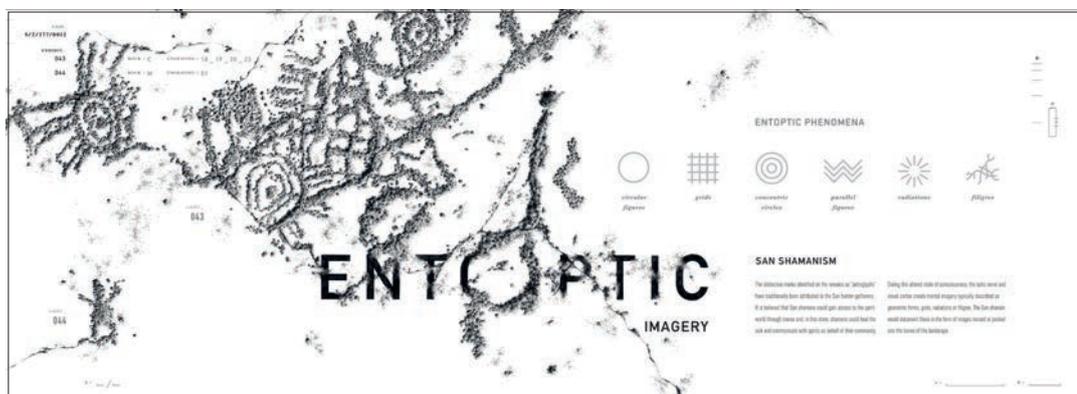


Figure 5.35: Digital draft of *Entoptic imagery*. Image produced by researcher.



**Figure 5.36:** Digital draft of *Marks of adolescence*. Image produced by researcher.

Lastly, the photogrammetric documentation of the engravings was revisited in this production cycle. Plaster casts are often used by forensic anthropologists as a means of documenting marks in bone, for comparison to possible tools capable of making those marks and events that may have caused them. As casting is no longer accepted practice within rock art research, the three-dimensional printing of the photogrammetric file was explored with the help of Adrian Lamour. Agisoft™ PhotoScan<sup>46</sup> software was used for the compositing of photographs into a three-dimensional model after which the file was exported into Autodesk® Meshmixer<sup>47</sup> for refinement. The file was then uploaded onto the Shapeways™ website for full colour printing in sandstone, in order to stay true to the original canvas. The model required colour test prints before progressing to final print. A white flexible plastic was also explored as an alternative in the hopes of better revealing the contouring of the rock surface but was deemed unsuccessful. Three-dimensional printing of the rock engravings could also be likened to a facial reconstruction used for identification, and represents an adaptation of forensic anthropological practices to accommodate the principles of rock art research.

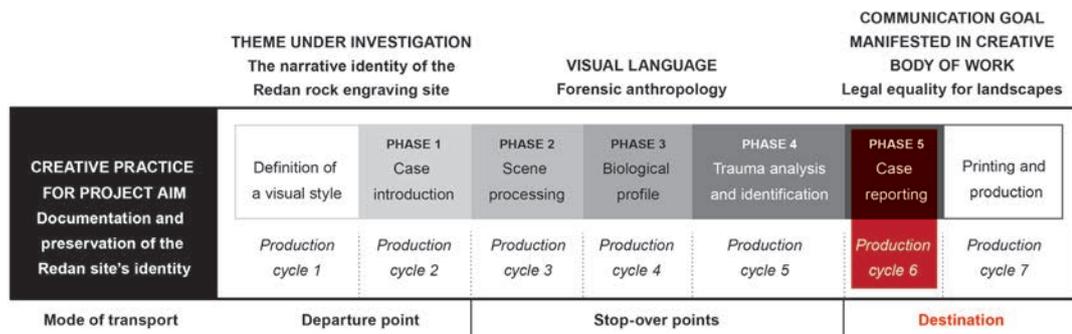
In summary, this production cycle dealt with the *ipse*-ity of the Redan rock engraving site, its interactions and experiences, in particular. The most significant of these hypothetical memories, evidenced by physical manifestations, were afforded a folio. The visual style used to represent them makes use of blind embossing to incorporate explanations of actions, comparisons and

<sup>46</sup> This software is commonly used for cultural heritage documentation can be downloaded on a trial basis at <http://www.agisoft.com/>

<sup>47</sup> Autodesk® Meshmixer is open source software developed by Autodesk® Incorporated and a common use thereof is the cleaning up of three-dimensional scans. It can be downloaded at <http://www.meshmixer.com/>

past records, particularly by Willcox and Pager (1967). Blind embossing remained a conceptually relevant execution that resonates with the essence of this particular phase of the forensic anthropological workflow. There were, however, instances where the principles of narrative identity and rock art research were accorded primacy, such as the contrasting perspectives on authorship and the site's *raison d'être* and the three-dimensional printing of the engravings. Regardless, the combination of the narratives presented by each execution served as the forerunner to positive identification, which was reserved as content for the following production cycle.

### 5.3.6 Production cycle six: case report



**Figure 5.37:** Production cycle six in the context of the planned route as marked in red.

Production cycle six consisted of the artistic practice surrounding the development of a digital draft of *Book five of five: a past and present reconnected*. This book represents the final phase of a forensic anthropologist's workflow: case reporting. This typically includes the thorough documentation of the analyses, interpretations and conclusions arrived at throughout the workflow, much of which, in the instance of this study, was already represented in books one to four. It can thus be noted that, in combination, all five book objects serve as the case report. With this mind, this production cycle had two aims, neither of which is entirely aligned with forensic anthropology's phase five aims, but rather an adaptation thereof in the interest of a coherent narrative. The first was to provide a brief conclusion to the narrative presented through the five book objects in the form of positive identification while the second was to briefly report on the case as a whole. The ideation and process work attached to the development of this last book can be found in Addendum 8.

The positive identification of a set of remains is a reconnection of a past with its present – a history of acts and involvements reconnected with a set of remains – through nominal identity<sup>48</sup>. Therefore, the cover page of book five (Figure 5.38) features, in blind embossing, the documentation of the Redan site done by Willcox and Pager, as the victim's past. These images required redrawing in order to reproduce them on the scale needed for the final cover page.



**Figure 5.38:** Digital draft of the front cover of *Book five of five*. Image by researcher.

The link of a present with a past is also evident in the single folio of this book, *Positive identification* (Figure 5.39). Three representations of the identity of the Redan site were used in this DPS – a photograph of the site drawn from the South African Rock Art Digital Archive, a blind embossing of the illustration created by Willcox and Pager of engraving K13 and a stippled illustration of the same engraving based on its current appearance. These images sit above the summary and conclusion of the case. The blind embossing of the engraving over the photograph was intended to mimic the practice of superimposition used by forensic anthropologists in matching a skull to a photograph of a potential candidate. The choice of engraving for this particular spread was informed by the numerous visits to the site. On stepping onto the outcrop, this was always the

<sup>48</sup> Nominal identity refers to the label or name assigned to a subject (Anon., 2009:1002).

first engraving that caught my eye. It is admittedly not the first engraving that one walks past but its scale and clarity make it prominent and immediately visible. This positioned it as the “face” of the rock engraving site, from my personal perspective. An individual’s face is the first image one notices, as well as one of the most identifiable interfaces one has with another person. This engraving fulfilled the same role on my visits.

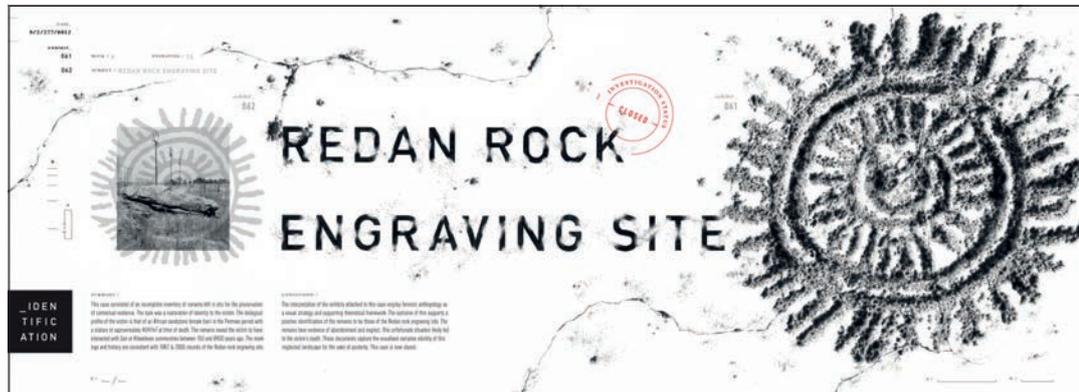


Figure 5.39: Digital draft of *Positive identification*. Image produced by researcher.

In sum, this production cycle provides a summary of and conclusion to the narrative embedded in the five book objects, which in combination serve as the case report required of forensic anthropologists. On reflection, narrative structure is given preference over the strict requirements of phase five in the workflow. However, these requirements are met through the printing and production of the artist’s book as a whole, which is the last cycle of production.

### 5.3.7 Production cycle seven: digital review, printing and production

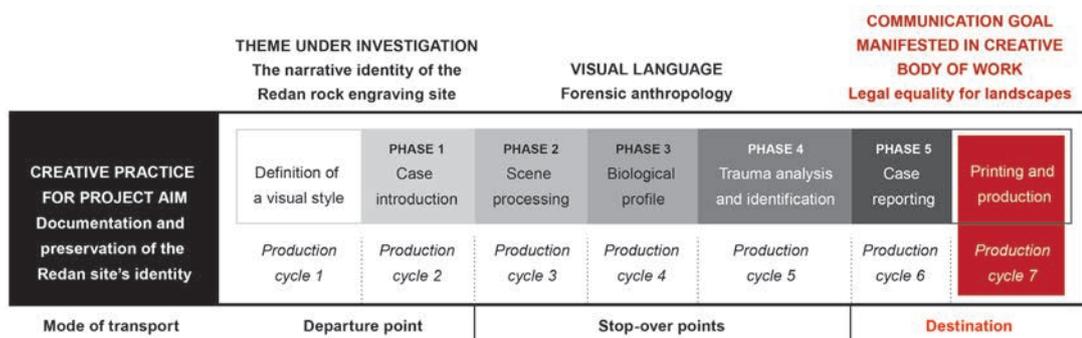


Figure 5.40: Production cycle seven in the context of the planned route as marked in red.

The final production cycle of this project was the printing and production of the design work that was the focus of the previous six cycles. Four aims are present here. The first was a final review of the digital drafts of the cover pages and DPSs. The second was the production of the printing plates. The third entailed the printing and embossing of the etchings and the production of the final covers and folios through stamping, folding, spot varnishing and handwritten notes. The final aim consisted of the production of the Plexiglas® boxes or book covers. The outcomes of aim one are documented in Addendum 9 in the form of to-scale digital prints. The process work attached to the remainder of the aims is documented in Addendum 8.

In reviewing the overall design of the folios, the blankness of the exterior pages became problematic. In response, a series of stamps (Figure 5.41) were designed. The largest stamp and primary information section is compiled from a combination of the information areas from archival and forensic anthropology forms. The key aspects of the data documented in archival practices were identified as the foundation and these were then replaced with and supplemented by data typical of an evidence log used by forensic anthropologists.

The figure displays a form layout for a book cover stamp. At the top, there are two fields: "Case number >" and "Case descriptor >". Below these is a larger form with several sections:

- A section with "Accession number >" and "Item name >" fields.
- A section with "Item description >" and a blank line below it.
- A section with "Book >" and "Book sequence >" fields.
- A section with "Page >" and a blank line below it.
- A section with "FOR CLOSED CASES ONLY" and "Archived (date) : \_\_\_\_\_, by \_\_\_\_\_, at \_\_\_\_\_" fields.

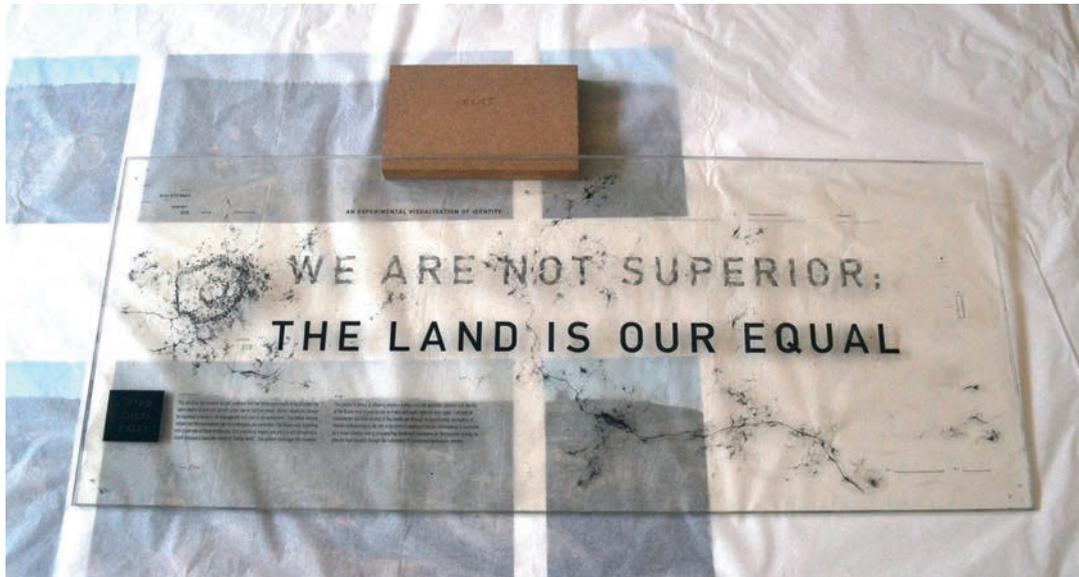
Overlaid on the form are two stamps:

- A red rectangular stamp on the left that reads "Certified a true copy of the original" at the top, "MAR. 2017" in the center, and "Signature line" at the bottom.
- A black rectangular stamp on the right that reads "BOOK" at the top, "01" in large digits in the center, and "/05" at the bottom.

**Figure 5.41:** Stamp combination for the folio exteriors of *Book one of five*. Image by researcher.

Concerning the second aim, the printing plates (Figure 5.42) were produced from Plexiglas® sheets of three millimetre thickness that were laser-engraved with the DPSs discussed in the previous production cycles. Due to the limited range of pressure adjustment in the printing press to which I have access, a three millimetre thickness was selected. The engraving was carried

out in collaboration with Adri Benade, the manageress of the NWU Engineering Faculty's fabrications unit. She was instrumental in developing a working strategy for the production of the printing plates. As part of the process, a series of technical tests were conducted to establish the appropriate speed, frequency and power settings needed to produce the desired effect and to determine the viability of using laser engraving as a means of producing etchings. The results indicated that two specific groups of settings were necessary – one for embossing templates and another for printing plates. These technical tests ran in parallel with production cycle one (see Addendum 4). The decision made, based on the results of these tests, is that the embossing and printing plates for each DPS were to be produced as a single unit to ensure accuracy of registration. Blind embossed elements would be masked out in the inking process to keep the embossing blind.



**Figure 5.42:** Plexiglas® printing plate of the double page spread *Hypothetically*. Photograph by researcher.

A second set of technical tests was necessary in production cycle four (see Addendum 6). The decision was made to scale down the dimensions of the DPSs as the solution to a consistently uncomfortable visual balance that had not been evident prior to the scale prints in Addendum 6. Despite the smaller scale, very little detail was lost in the printing; thus, only minimal adjustment of the DPS designs was necessary, primarily to accommodate the blind embossing of text. These tests also identified 298gsm Fabriano® Rosapina as the paper to be used.

Having successfully identified a working selection of settings and materials, the production of printing plates commenced. An issue that became prominent in this phase was the issue of software conversion. The digital drafts were designed using Adobe® Illustrator® software, while the TROTEC™ Speedy flatbed laser machine required an AutoCAD® file format, such as DXF™. The exportation of an Adobe® Illustrator® file format to DXF™ format results in everything being converted to unfilled vectors and the removal of any JPEG image from the file. The implication of this was that all files needed to be re-compiled on the fabrication unit's computer prior to engraving. Adri Benade managed this task on my behalf with my input, as I am unfamiliar with the Autocad software environment. The separation of blind embossing templates from the print-destined elements was necessary to apply the different sets of laser settings. In order to facilitate my absence during the plate production process following recompilation, author sheets were drawn up for each plate detailing cut lines, registration lines, speed, power and frequency settings, materials and measurements (see Addendum 11).

Following the engraving, final plate preparation included the filing of edges and re-etching into the display type. The need for the latter was revealed through the production of working prints (see Addendum 10). The display type transferred the texture produced by the laser's path. This was addressed through the introduction of a cross-hatched texture in combination with the hand painting of any remaining problematic areas. The working prints which were produced had an additional tendency to buckle and warp. My study leader suggested the solution of cutting the paper to the size of the printing plate and letting the prints dry under pressure. This unfortunately meant that the edge of the plate would not be visible on the final prints, particularly once framed. However, the flatness and uniformity of the sheet was deemed a higher priority.

Another set of problems revealed by the working prints was less technical. The printing of a small handful of the plates did not meet the expectation created by the digital draft and called for the readjustment of the approach taken. In Book Two, these adjustments primarily included the solid printing of blind embossed elements to correct visibility and masking issues (see Addendum K). In Book Three, the texture produced by the printing did not accommodate the vinyl sticker in the same manner that as well as the flat surface of the test paper had. To rectify this, the negative template of the cut vinyl stickers was used as a stencil to apply a clear spray-paint as an alternate method of faking a spot varnish.

The inclusion of an index also became necessary, particularly in response to the issue of the unclaimed authorship of the Redan rock engravings upon which the illustrations are based. In the research process, it was found that there is a level of disdain evident in rock art research

towards the appropriation of rock art imagery, both for decoration and by contemporary artists (Shaafsma, 2013:61-70; Quinlan, 2007:144, 145). The commodification of a culture appears to be the central issue of the controversy. While this project does make use of imagery from the Redan rock engraving site, this is in the interest of preservation and documentation. Therefore, the index sheets were designed to mimic evidence logs and photographic logs employed by forensic teams in the documentation of crime scenes. Photographs of the original engravings were also included as addendums in the artist's book in order to give credit to the original artists, despite authorship being unconfirmed. The addendums were contextualised as exhibits and also include digital prints of imagery generated through the documentation process but not used. A specific slot was added to the box covers to accommodate the inclusion of the addendums and index pages.

The structure of the box covers was based on the elongated form of the traditional archival box and designed to enable organised access to the folios. Plexiglas® was chosen as the medium to appeal to the scientific and contemporary nature of forensic anthropology. However, it was found that the individual folio dividers hampered the ease of access; as a result they were removed. Only the dividers for the addendums and index pages were retained.

In summary, the iterative cycles of creation or emergence, reflection and reframing were prominent in this production cycle. The ethics related to rock art research exercised a significant influence on the chain of reasoning near the end of this cycle but, for the most part, designs were made on the basis of practicality and aesthetics. On reflection, a notable benefit of using Plexiglas® as medium for the printing plates is that they could be repurposed as artworks in their own right. The failed printing plates, test plates, original illustrations and digital test prints also provided the resources for experimentation through the combination of these elements by means of combined framing and layering. These additional experiments concluded the creative production process of this project.

This final production cycle concluded the practical dimension of this PLR project. Five book objects (Figure 5.43) were the primary outcome. Each book object consists of a series of monochromatic etchings inserted into Plexiglas® book covers as loose folios or, in the case of the front covers, a single sheet. Also included in each book is a set of digitally printed addendums and index pages. In combination, the five book objects constitute the final artist's book. This is supplemented by supporting artefacts in the form of three-dimensional sandstone prints and multi-layer or multi-part artworks created from the printing plates, test plates, digital photographs and original pen illustrations.



**Figure 5.43:** The completed five-part artist's book. Photograph by researcher.

#### 5.4 Summary

In summary, the final body of creative work consists of an artist's book of five free-standing book objects that mimic archival boxes and supporting artefacts, such as three-dimensional prints and pieces in multiple media created from the by-products of the artist's books' production process. The conceptual and practical reframing of the subject matter functioned collaboratively to facilitate the creative development of this project. The subject matter, concept and theoretical foundation of the PLR project constitutes a system of knowledge triangulation that guides step four of Scrivener's Model – the creative production process. In this particular project, that system consists of two overarching mechanisms or structures: a roadmap and a route. The landmarks on this roadmap are forensic anthropology, narrative identity and the Redan rock engraving site, inclusive of its rock art research context. The creative practice of the practitioner-researcher is indicated by the overlap of these anchor points. This overlap represents the narrative identity of the Redan rock engraving site as represented by forensic anthropology through creative practice.

The route that the creative production process follows is an action plan. As such, the departure point of this exploratory journey is the identification of a visual strategy and the theme of narrative identity. The latter is represented by workflow phase one, wherein the hypothetical task is assigned to provide a positive identification of the Redan rock engraving site as victim. The destination is represented by workflow phase five, during which the case is reported on and the artefacts are printed and produced. The completed artist's book and supporting artefacts wherein the communication goal is manifest, thus constitute the case report. In proceeding

towards this destination, the practices and principles of forensic anthropology informed the visual representation of the Redan rock engraving site's narrative identity and provided this project's design methodology while creative practice provided the means of communication, or metaphorical mode of transport.

The phases of the forensic anthropology workflow specify the division of creative practice into smaller, more manageable cycles of production. The first cycle consists of the development of an aesthetic and form for the artefacts. The second production cycle engages with the first phase of the forensic anthropologist's workflow and provides the proof of concept. Cycle three includes the processing of the scene as phase two of the workflow; this is followed by the determination of a biological profile as cycle four. Cycle five represents the analysis of trauma and hints at a positive identification while cycle six provides a confirmed positive identification as the conclusion to the narrative. The seventh cycle is the final one, constituting the printing and production of the artist's book as a case report.

The chain of reasoning in each production cycle takes the principles of forensic anthropology, narrative identity and rock art research into account. As this project is an attempt to experimentally construct the narrative identity of a non-human subject using bodies of knowledge that are exclusively applicable to human beings, differences in the stances held by the bodies of theory were to be expected. In response to situations of this nature, a mediated position between these anchor points was motivated in reference to the project aim.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the triangulation of knowledge in PLR supports the rigour, validity and credibility of the research. In defining the position of a creative decision based on its relation to the bodies of theory and the project aim, inconsistencies between theoretical frameworks can be accounted for. In this particular project, the chain of reasoning and the cycles of production that both initiate and respond to it comprised a process of knowledge triangulation, while an understanding of the dynamics at play ensured that choices were made in support of the project aim. This chapter supplied a reflection on the cycles of production. The following chapter reflects on the project as a whole.

# CHAPTER 6

## Post-production reflection and conclusion

**Table 6.1:** Chapter 6 in the context of Scrivener’s Model as indicated in red

STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5	STEP 6
Identification of issues, concerns and interests	Theoretical review and artistic audit	Reframing of identified issues, concerns and interests	Cycles of production	Post-production reflection on project	Post-post-production reflection for dissemination

### 6.1. Introduction

This practice-led research project comprised a thematic exploration of the narrative identity of the Redan rock engraving site through the appropriation of forensic anthropology as design methodology. The aim of this experimental creative practice was the documentation and reconstruction of the aesthetic and narratives of the said site for posterity. The process of fulfilling this aim resulted in a five-part artist’s book and supporting artefacts. The communication goal was to convey the need for landscapes to receive a degree of legal care, respect and concern which is equal to that of sentient beings. Therefore, this exploration took place within the interpretative context of environmental awareness.

Chapter One briefly introduced the above-mentioned aspects and the study as a whole. In Chapter Two, an exploration of practice-led research as the research context within which this study was conducted, took place. Thereafter, Chapters Three, Four and Five reported on the creative development of this project in accordance with the interactionist dualist stance on practice-led research discussed in Chapter Two. Chapter Four marked the conclusion of the creative production portion of this study. As such, the first two chapters served as an introduction to this study while the following three chapters engaged with steps one to four of Scrivener’s Model.

This Chapter engages with step five by providing a reflection on the project as a whole in the form of a post-production reflection. This begins with a discussion of the relation between the embodied creative practice, the project aim and the associated communication goal. This is followed by a reflection on the creative process as practice-led research. Lastly, concluding remarks are offered as a consolidation of the detailed reflections.

## **6.2. Creative practice, project aim and communication goal**

As mentioned above, the communication goal of this project was the conveyance of the need for legal equality between landscapes and human beings. This reflects a biocentric perspective as opposed to the currently predominant anthropocentric view. The primary aspect of the creative practice that facilitated the manifestation of this communication goal in the body of creative work was the selection of the bodies of knowledge – the Redan rock engraving site, forensic anthropology and narrative identity. The first served as the subject matter of this project and as a representative of the landscapes threatened by the extraction and processing of resources for financial gain. The value and importance assigned to the said site by heritage authorities and associations, in the form of legislation and national monument status respectively, has not resulted in tangible and sustainable efforts at preservation. The result is a derelict provincial heritage site whose condition continues to deteriorate (cf. Chapter Three). This disappearing heritage value made the Redan rock engraving site a strong candidate for the vehicle of the communication goal.

The selection of forensic anthropology and narrative identity as theoretical frameworks (cf. Chapter Three) as part of step two of Scrivener's Model was also strategic. These are a field of practice and concept ordinarily reserved for application to human beings – post-mortem in the case of the former and, in the case of the latter, during the span of one's lifetime. The communication goal was achieved by applying the principles and practices of two anthropocentric frameworks to the Redan rock engraving site. As such, the landscape was reframed as an entity that is equal to humanity. The result was a symbiotic system of knowledge triangulation that facilitated the reframing of the issues, interests and concerns identified in Chapter Three.

This process of reframing, which is step three of Scrivener's Model, consisted of two phases. The first was the conceptualisation of the project in explicit knowledge formats as detailed in Chapter Four. The second phase tapped into tacit ways of knowing in the form of the cycles of production as described in Chapter Five. These were guided by the project aim of documenting

and reconstructing the aesthetic and narratives of the Redan rock engraving site. The fulfilment of this aim was also facilitated by the theoretical frameworks. Both forensic anthropology and narrative identity follow an interactionist dualistic model wherein the dimensions of physical identity (tangible aesthetic) and psychological identity (intangible memory and character) are intimately linked in such a way as to constitute a personal identity that produces or requires a narrative.

Through the cycles of production described in Chapter Five, these were documented in the DPSs of the book objects; first as digital drafts and finally as printed etchings. The project aim and the importance of narrative in this project positioned the artist's book as both the objective of the study and the means of thinking, *through* my creative practice. Furthermore, the design, hand-illustrated display typography and digital photography, played a prominent role in the capturing of the aesthetic of the Redan site.

While the creative body of work adequately meets the project aim, it is neither a comprehensive documentation of the Redan rock engraving site's aesthetic nor its narratives. Many of the engravings are not represented in the final artefacts just as many of the smaller narratives, such as the engravings being the work of idle herders minding their flock or being classified as degenerate art, are not visualised. This was largely due to the significant time requirements for such a comprehensive documentation being more than could be accommodated within the credits of this Master's Degree.

### **6.3. Reflection on practice-led research as research context**

The creative development of this PLR project (cf. Chapter Two) means that theoretical research and artistic practice dovetail with one another in such a manner as to allow each to influence the other. This project's success in addressing the project aim and communication goal, as discussed above, was dependent on this symbiotic relationship. As will be evident from the chain of reasoning behind the cycles of production (cf. Chapter Five), creative practice and theoretical research were parallel processes encouraged by reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Creative practice, in the form of illustration and design, was able to direct the theoretical research. Likewise, the theoretical investigation, in the form of a review of the principles, practices and ethics attached to forensic anthropology, narrative identity and rock art research, was accorded space to influence the nature of creative practice.

The interdisciplinary nature of this project had a significant impact on the creative process as a whole and two aspects thereof are worth mentioning in greater detail. The first of these is the relevance of the project. By engaging with multiple bodies of knowledge, this relevance was extended beyond creative practice and practice-led research to rock art research, narratology and identity studies. With regard to the selection of theoretical frameworks, a more current theory of identity (narrative identity) was selected as opposed to the modernist one (Lockean personal identity, cf. Addendum 1 and 2) with which this project began. By virtue of narrative identity being a contemporary theoretical framework, it is better aligned with the understanding of identity currently acknowledged within the fields of philosophy and art history. Furthermore, being rooted in a post-modernist worldview, this theory better accommodated the multiplicity and uncertainty surrounding the Redan rock engraving site. Another influential aspect of this project with regard to its importance is the issue that was engaged with: the dereliction and potential loss of the Redan rock engraving site. This is not a new issue in the field of rock art research: the plight of open-air rock art is a longstanding one, both nationally and internationally. However, in the current South African socio-political discourse, the selection of an African rock art site as subject matter and issue, contributes to the search for an authentic African voice and afforded this project further relevance.

The second aspect on which the interdisciplinary nature of this project exerted an influence, is represented by the design decisions that were made. The interdisciplinarity of this project resulted in a broad knowledge structure as opposed to a deep one, which is typical of practice-led research and lent conceptual strength to this project. As its practitioner-researcher, I was required to fulfil multiple interpretative and reflective roles, for many of which I was not readily equipped and for which it was necessary that I approach subject specialists for assistance. As an example, an individual with a rock art research background would require less time than I to understand the implications of a design decision, concerning the ethical representation of a rock art site and being able to judge a creative option's appropriateness as a solution. As an illustrator and graphic designer, this project also required me to come to grips with historical and philosophical art perspectives that, on previous occasions, I had merely touched on superficially. As such, the critical iterative process needed to be understood in order to facilitate a degree of reflection that was appropriate to my level of knowledge.

The reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action and reflection-for-action evident in the iterative cycles documented in the reflective journals (Addendums 1 – 9) substantiated the chain of reasoning in a tacit knowledge format. In arguing the same chain of reasoning in explicit formats, the system of knowledge triangulation with its two overarching mechanisms was particularly valuable. The roadmap provided each iterative cycle with a miniature structure in the form of a series of stances against which to measure a design or illustration. This revealed discourses and ethical concerns in the fields of rock art research and forensic anthropology of which I was initially unaware (cf. Chapter Five). As far as possible and within the scope of my knowledge and understanding, I attempted to adhere to ethical practice as found in rock art research when proceeding through the various cycles of production as set out in the planned route and explained in Chapter Five.

Scrivener's Model served as a particularly functional overarching methodology for this project. As mentioned in Chapter One, my study employed a research methodology with a design methodology embedded in it at step four. This research methodology resulted in a three-part project report in order to satisfy the requirements of practice-led research as set out in Chapter Two. The final body of creative work (a five-part artist's book and supporting artefacts) and the reflective journals constitute the tacit knowledge portion of the project report. These are made available by means of the exhibition titled *Visualising the voices of Redan*, that will be hosted at the North-West University's Botanical Gardens Gallery between 15 and 29 June 2017. This is accompanied by this mini-dissertation as a textual exegesis of the project in answer to the explicit knowledge requirements of practice-led research. The dissemination of these three elements concludes this research project.

#### **6.4. Concluding remarks**

In conclusion, the creative body of work met the project aim set for it and aptly conveys the communication goal. The final artefacts include an artist's book as a series of etched folios in Plexiglas® box covers, which captures the experimental application of forensic anthropology and narrative identity to the Redan rock engraving site, as a disappearing landscape. This is supplemented by a small range of images and experimental artefacts produced throughout the exploratory creative production process which were compiled from the process sketches, printing plates and test rounds of the production cycles. In combination, these artefacts, the reflective journals and this mini-dissertation and the exhibition attached to this project, address step six of Scrivener's Model, which is a reflection on one's reflections for the purpose of dissemination.

On reflection, the exploratory nature of practice-led research may make it difficult to accurately predict the artefactual outcomes of a project. In this context the theoretically informed workflow and project aim helped to demarcate the extent of the project in order to adhere to the requirements of the degree. This being so, just a limited number of engravings and selected narratives could be represented.

In reflecting on this project for future practice, further engagement with this landscape might be considered. It can only be hoped that my interactions with the various individuals through the resource gathering and creative production process have highlighted the need for a tangible effort at preserving some portion of the Redan rock engraving site's narrative and visual identity. At this juncture, considering the advances in technology and the limited resources available to adequately manage this site, a photogrammetric survey of the Redan rock engraving site as a whole and/or its engravings should be considered. As the engravings are, by nature, three-dimensional artworks, an appropriate and non-destructive means of documenting them on a limited budget would be the production of digital photogrammetric models that could be printed at a later stage if necessary. In the span of the twelve years between Prins' study and this one, many of the engravings have already diminished in visibility or faded altogether. This project has hopefully shed some light on the dilemma facing this rock engraving site and may be useful to individuals beyond the field of graphic design and practice-led research who might be interested in its preservation in the future.



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