

## the CapeTowner INFORMATION i

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■ Hundreds of images taken by the Movie Snaps studio will be on display at the District Six Homecoming Centre.



■ Siona O'Connell has spent months gathering the images which will form part of the *Movie Snaps: Cae Town Remembers Differently* exhibition.

# A future remembered

CARL COLLISON

In putting together the exhibition *Movie Snaps: Cape Town Remembers Differently*, curator Siona O'Connell has, it seems, had her fair share of detractors.

"People would sometimes ask me what the point is to want to exhibit these old photographs. But these pictures have everything to do with how we are living today.

"These pictures matter because they indicate to us that 'other' lives are and were human too. These pictures speak to a time that preceded it and the future beyond it."

The images Ms O'Connell is speaking about were taken by the Movie Snaps photographic studio.

The studio, which operated from the 1930s to 1970s, was based in Darling Street and tasked its photographers with capturing people dressed in their Saturday-morning-in-the-city finery going about their Saturday-morning-in-the-city business.

This conceptual simplicity has, over four decades since the last Movie Snap photographer captured the last such image, yielded telling insights into the complexities of memory – particularly in a city as socio-politically complex as the Mother City.

After months gathering these images submitted by people across Cape Town, "and even some from the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Johannesburg and Durban – the number of responses we got was crazy," Ms O'Connell says with dumbfound pride.

She adds: "During my interviews with people I found those who had their Movie Snaps photograph taken in either the 1930s or 1940s spoke completely differently about their experience compared to those who were photographed after the city and country really started changing, around the 1950s and 1960s – after the Group Areas Act came into effect.

"People we interviewed who were from Mitchell's

Plain or Kensington, for example, would, without me even raising it, start speaking about Apartheid and forced removals. They'd start speaking about the impossibility of returning to that period and their glorious, free lives living in the city."

*They would speak of the impossibility of returning*

By contrast, Ms O'Connell, a senior curator at the University of Cape Town's Centre for Curating the Archive, says: "Those who had photographs from either the 1930s or 1940s spoke with a shared nostalgia.

"You know," adds Ms O'Connell, "those photographers used to draw a chalk line in the road or pavement so whenever people they wanted to snap got to it,

they'd know exactly when to press the shutter. So, to me, given how people from these different decades remember differently, it's almost as though that chalk line is a symbolic one that forever divides future lives.

"These images really make you think about how profoundly different the country and city would have been today if it weren't for things such as the Group Areas Act."

In addition to the photographs, a documentary, produced and directed by Ms O'Connell – and the result of these numerous interviews – will be screened.

Coming back to the deluge of responses she received after a call was put out for submissions, Ms O'Connell says: "We were invited into people's homes, where they spoke about the photographs, and these were people from all over the city: from Sea Point to Mitchell's Plain to Hout Bay ... everywhere. These are people from across the racial

and class divide."

What has she learned from this experience, I ask?

"This showed me many Capetonians, regardless of where they come from or what their social standing is, in some way share exactly the same experience. I see this as some kind of promise ... A promise that we can find a way of not only understanding and recognising each other's experiences, but also what it means to live today."

Smiling in a manner that is at once coy and proud, Ms O'Connell adds: "So you see, these photographs and the stories behind them allow us to look into the past but also, more importantly, to look forward."

● *Movie Snaps: Cape Town Remembers Differently* will run at the District Six Museum's Homecoming Centre, 25a Buitenkant Street, from Saturday January 31, at 11am, to Saturday February 28. For more information, call 021 466 7200.

## What's On

### Hikes

The Meridian Hiking Club will have a late afternoon circular hike around

Lion's Head on Saturday January 17. On Sunday January 18 they will going up Table Mountain in the cablecar,

then doing a circular hike.

Call Dolores on 021 785 2191 or you can email Dolores@projectreport.co.za

The cost is R20.

For more information, you can visit [www.meridian.org.za](http://www.meridian.org.za)



## Celebrate Cape Town Pride with us

Booking deadline:  
16<sup>th</sup> February

Advertise your business in the February 2015 issue

## THE PINK TONGUE

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## Word on the street

An ever-persistent 'problem', it is little wonder that issue of homelessness – and the myriad challenges stemming from it – is a common focus area for numerous CBD role-players.

A tough economic environment, a lack of adequate social services and a belief the inner city will offer more opportunities to fill empty stomachs are only a few of the factors that continue to draw many of the Mother City's homeless people to the inner city.

One can only hope the City, in collaboration with other role-players, will indeed find some way to offer these members of our disparate society some dignity through the provision of better services and job-creation opportunities.

Homelessness will in, all likelihood, never be eradicated.

What we can try to eradicate, however, is the dehumanising conditions under which so many of these members of our society have to live.

– Carl Collison



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## Weekend weather

[www.weathersa.co.za](http://www.weathersa.co.za) and [www.sanho.co.za](http://www.sanho.co.za)



### Friday

Min: 16°C  
Max: 26°C  
Hi: 11.59am; --pm  
Lo: 05.48 am; 6.37pm



### Saturday

Min: 16°C  
Max: 26°C  
Hi: 00.50am; 12.55pm  
Lo: 06.49am; 7.26pm



### Sunday

Min: 16°C  
Max: 26°C  
Hi: 01.38am; 1.46pm  
Lo: 07.39am; 8.10pm