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***Legacy of the Mine* looks at scars mining left on SA landscape**

UCT Vice-Chancellor to speak at book and exhibition launch on 17 August 2013, 11h00, at Irma Stern Museum, Cape Town

While mining in South Africa has made huge profits for mine owners and created wealth, it has also left indelible scars on this landscape. Photographer Ilan Godfrey's new book and exhibition, *Legacy of the Mine*, makes the central point that people paid a price to work on these mines. Godfrey, winner of the Ernest Cole Award, which is managed by the University of Cape Town Libraries, will launch *Legacy of the Mine* at the Irma Stern Museum on Saturday, 17 August 2013, at 11h00. UCT's Vice-Chancellor is scheduled to speak.

In his foreword, Professor Sakhela Buhlungu, labour expert and newly appointed Dean of the Humanities Faculty at UCT, contextualises the history of mining in South Africa, while Godfrey's images explore the social depths of the industry beyond its profit and economic contribution.

The Ernest Cole Award is named after the South African photographer who published the book *House of Bondage*, about life under apartheid in 1967. Many images from this book are of the gold mines around Johannesburg. Nearly 50 years later Godfrey's images pick up the story where Cole left it off. They deal with a legacy that was once the backbone of South Africa's economy. In *Legacy of the Mine* Godfrey weaves his narrative through the South African countryside, bringing to the fore the hidden stories never mentioned when statistics and numbers are quoted in directors' boardrooms.

"The inspiration for choosing my subjects and the space in which I worked was not defined by statistical or scientific evidence," says Godfrey. "Rather, it was the product of personal experience, ongoing investigation and knowledge gained through long hours of travel along potholed roads, following the trail of wind-blown mine dust carried, overwhelming vast landscapes, dotted with townships and mining communities across South Africa," says Godfrey.

This visual journey comes appropriately in the year commemorating 100 years after the passing of The Natives Land Act, as well as increasing labour upheaval in South Africa's mines. Professor Buhlungu writes: "For the industry to construct a cheap labour system based on migrancy, the livelihoods of rural communities had to be destroyed so that members of these communities had no other option other than wage labour on the mines.

For the workers migrant labour was (and for some, still is) an experience characterised by violence, humiliation and loss of dignity and gross exploitation.”

Godfrey’s eye roams the country in search of stories and people who are in one way or another affected by the legacy of the mines. It takes one from the poisoned rivers polluted by mine drainage, to the platinum belt where Marikana took place, to the ghost towns and communities that were once the heartbeat of the mining culture. He says: “Exploitation, corruption and greed threaten the land, the very thread that connects all South Africans. Once a symbol of wealth and a formidable force in the development of South Africa, the mine today reveals the scars of neglect and decay, and as such poses an irreversible threat to our society.”

For Godfrey the project sets out to offer a fresh examination of how South Africans see their wealth and resources, giving insights and raising questions about profit and loss and all that lies between. “Ultimately I hope that this body of work ignites discussion about how as a society we need to stand together in bringing about a broader understanding of our shared resources.”

The *Legacy of the Mine* exhibition will be on display at the Irma Stern Museum, Cape Town, from 17 August 2013 to 21 September 2013.

ENDS

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