

BORN FREE



INSIDE
THE SPECIAL
REPORT OF
Black Dean

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Explanation of the artwork

Born Free: My Title

The generation given the luxurious title of “Born-free” is privileged enough to not have witnessed the atrocities of Apartheid, yet unfortunate enough to only experience a “healing” South Africa. Often deemed out of touch and ungrateful for the many battles for freedom fought by those before them, they are a generation that carries the hopes and aspirations held by those once oppressed (especially in black families), they have adopted this role of being a beacon of hope.

Growing up as a black born-free exposes one to the truths and horrors of Apartheid in their rawest forms. Desperate warnings and teachings taught about the truly racist regime, become the daily bread for this generation. This becomes a form of therapy to those telling the stories yet new guilt and trauma, seeds planted in the developing minds of those listening. It is a fact that each story is intrinsic by nature, placing itself in the nestles of our delicate history as a country.

In any household and environment, when approaching the topic of Apartheid or racism, an opportunity to tell those a part of this generation of the overwhelming events arises. Hearing of the racial slurs, the missed opportunities due to the Bantu Education system, running away from police, peaceful protests that end with fatalities – or rather a mother, father, daughter, brother, sister, son, and so on losing their lives – and even nightly necklacing of people in the community, has become the norm. Although, these stories are traumatic in nature they are held dear by those who witnessed them first-hand.

Born Free: My Title depicts a black grandfather who was born and raised during the Apartheid regime telling his grandchildren of his personal experiences during this time, the recipients of this story display a mixture of emotions upon hearing the horror he has experienced. These emotions can be read as disgust, pain, and frustration. This artwork dabbles in the disconnect between the two generations and yearning attempt of the” born-free” to grasp the pain of the older generations. It speaks on how as a young born free South African we are made aware of apartheid through the stories of what our own parents and grandparents endured. As well as highlight that although we were born free we experience apartheid through these heart breaking stories that are deeply entrenched in our community yet so poorly decompressed.

The foreground of this artwork is littered with true horrific events on the back of the grandfather, this is a depiction of the burdens carried by those who were oppressed during the regime. Although the viewer is first made to address the horrors of apartheid, they are then made aware of the looming title of “born-free”. As a Born free one is expected to bring drastic changes and reform South Africa forming the South Africa hoped for by the drafters of the constitution.

This artwork is a parallel display of the disconnect between generations yet being an accurate depiction on how disturbing these events were. It tells a story of the burdens and expectations beared by the entirety of South Africa as a community.

