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*Slide* (2017)

Site specific installation, Eucalyptus tree bark, mutton cloth, wooden shelves

'We are witnessing a paradigm change, an unchecked slide into an era in which the scale of global forced displacement as well as the response required is now clearly dwarfing anything before.'

Antonio Guterres, UN High Commissioner for refugees, 18 June 2015.

<http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/press/2015/6/55813f0e6/unhcr-warns-dangerous-new-era-worldwide-displacement-report-shows-60-million.html>

Constructed from bark, once the skin of a massive Bluegum tree which had to be chopped down to make way for an indigenous garden and to protect the structure of a home, the installation *Slide* is a direct reference to this tree's status in South Africa. The Eucalyptus grandis is considered an alien, the start of its invasion coinciding with the arrival of colonialists at the southern tip of Africa. Due to its huge water consumption (it is said up to 1000 litres of water a day), legislation in South Africa prevents the planting of new Eucalyptus trees near waterways. In addition, folklore labels the Eucalyptus as a 'widow-maker' because it sometimes sheds big branches unexpectedly.

In a way, therefore, chopping down this age-old Eucalyptus tree could be considered a xenophobic act, a forced removal or political cleansing.

In *Slide* it is attempted to employ the Eucalyptus bark as a meaning-making substance, to explore connotations of this tree's narrative to that of the displacement of people. The use of mutton cloth as wrapping material allude to several open ended readings: could these be parcels hastily collected before fleeing a site, or could they represent vessels or boats on which to travel to the new home? Some of the parcels could even evoke bandaged limbs, suggesting physical wounds and psychological trauma. In addition, by using visual strategies such as shelving, stacking and spilling, *Slide* comments on bureaucratic attempts to officially regulate the mobility of people, a futile effort against the surge of global forced migrations.