

## TRACK

**track**, *Irak*, *n.* a mark left by something that has passed along: to pursue by or as by the track left: to find out and follow: the course of a wound: a train or sequence of thoughts: a continuous line of a pair of rails and the space between them.

Railway tracks first started seriously stitching their way across the landscape of South Africa with the discovery of diamonds and particularly gold. A massive investment in railways by both the Boer Republic and the British Empire in the build up to the Anglo Boer War began in order to connect the ports with the mining fields. At some point along its course between city to port a railway track runs over the Sneeuberg Mountains of the Karoo. Trains stopped moving over this mountain a few years ago. Now grass grows between the sleepers and game paths following older trails intersect with the railway tracks. At one of the more remote railway sidings on the mountain, lie abandoned carriages. Each carriage delineates different periods of South African history. These relics from history that mark time are

over time slowly dissolving back into the impassive Karoo landscape, like the dinosaurs that once roamed that land but whose traces are now rare finds.

In the veld around the carriages lie dust covered debris that the wind and rain has swept away. Collecting the debris and making rubbings from the carriages felt like documenting traces from ancient empires. Tracking memory down by integrating traces of imagined personal stories evoked by the debris, in between or on the other side to that of official history, became an important component in documenting these carriages.

Significant too, is the insistent motif of the engraved springbok head on the train windows. The springbok whose shadow falls over personal memories and through which our vision of landscape is still filtered, so that looking out through the glass of a train window, one can only see that landscape darkly