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Making Freedom: Apartheid, Squatter Politics, And The Struggle For Home



Making Freedom

Apartheid, Squatter Politics, and
the Struggle for Home

ANNE-MARIA MAKHULU

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Synopsis

In *Making Freedom* Anne-Maria Makhulu explores practices of squatting and illegal settlement on the outskirts of Cape Town during and immediately following the end of apartheid. Apartheid's paradoxical policies of prohibiting migrant Africans who worked in Cape Town from living permanently within the city led some black families to seek safe haven on the city's perimeters. Beginning in the 1970s families set up makeshift tents and shacks and built whole communities, defying the state through what Makhulu calls a "politics of presence." In the simple act of building homes, squatters, who Makhulu characterizes as urban militants, actively engaged in a politics of "the right to the city" that became vital in the broader struggles for liberation. Despite apartheid's end in 1994, Cape Town's settlements have expanded, as new forms of dispossession associated with South African neoliberalism perpetuate relations of spatial exclusion, poverty, and racism. As Makhulu demonstrates, the efforts of black Capetonians to establish claims to a place in the city not only decisively reshaped Cape Town's geography but changed the course of history.Â

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