

Annexure A

Imagined Conversations

Story Approach

Framing principle

This installation uses sound, shadow, and scent to animate three rooms of a historic house around 1708–1709. Rather than telling a single story, it creates a series of overheard, partial moments that reveal how the house functioned as a site of power, wealth, control, and performance.

Van der Stel is still alive; Anna de Koningh and Oloff Bergh are in Cape Town, already visiting the house as future owners and as living proof of entangled histories (enslavement, wealth, respectability). For future room.

Visitors encounter:

- A light, almost playful threshold where children's movement and sound suggest life, curiosity, and belonging — a reminder that this house once had a pulse.
- A drawing room where civility, hospitality, respectability, and refinement are carefully performed, while the sounds of horses, messengers, workers, and trade press in from outside.
- A writing office where authority is exercised through paper, ink, record-keeping, accusation, and dispute — revealing how control and wealth were formalised and defended.
- Nothing is explained outright, overheard moments, not reenactments.
 - Meaning is assembled through fragments: murmured voices, interrupted actions, timed shadow projection of figures, directional sound conveyed (sound move through space/ recede, overlap)
- The house is experienced not as a monument, but as a working system.

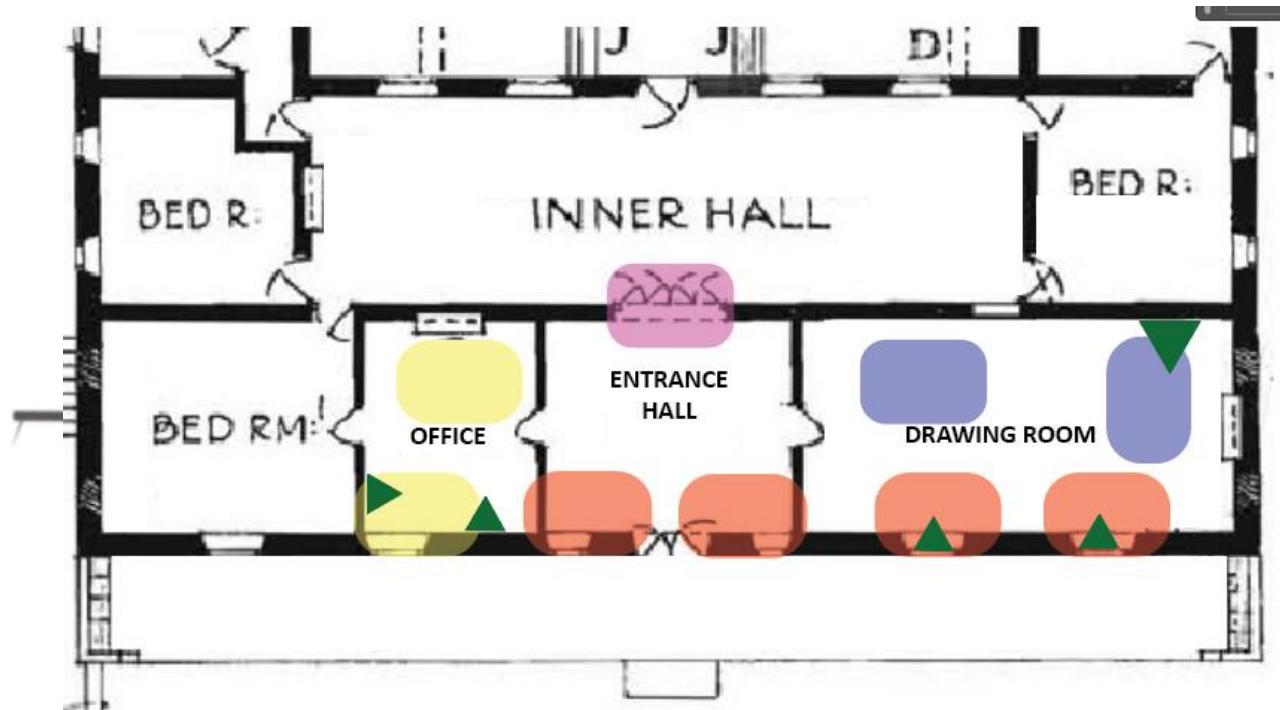
At its core, this work is about how colonial power operated quietly, domestically, and administratively.

- Wealth at the Cape was not accidental or benign.
- Civility and comfort were performances built on exploitation.
- Control was exercised as much through paperwork, accusation, and routine as through violence.
- The Dutch East India Company's presence was not abstract — it lived inside rooms, habits, gestures, and everyday decisions.

Spatial logic (very important)

- **Entrance / threshold** = transition, movement, arrivals and departures.
- **Drawing room** = performance, civility, wealth, outward-facing life.
- **Writing office** = control, anxiety, record-keeping, accusation, ownership.

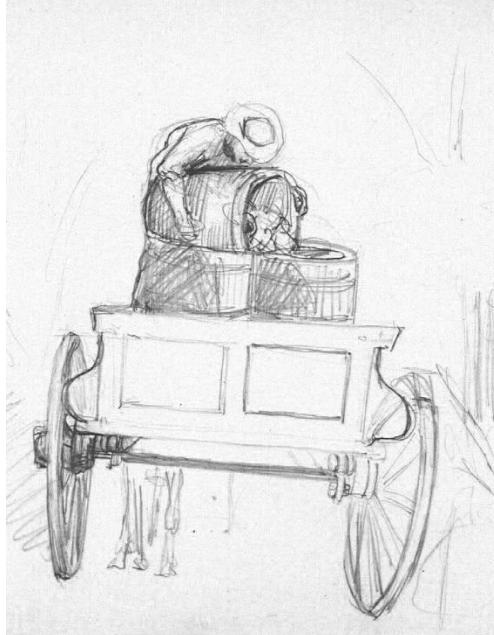
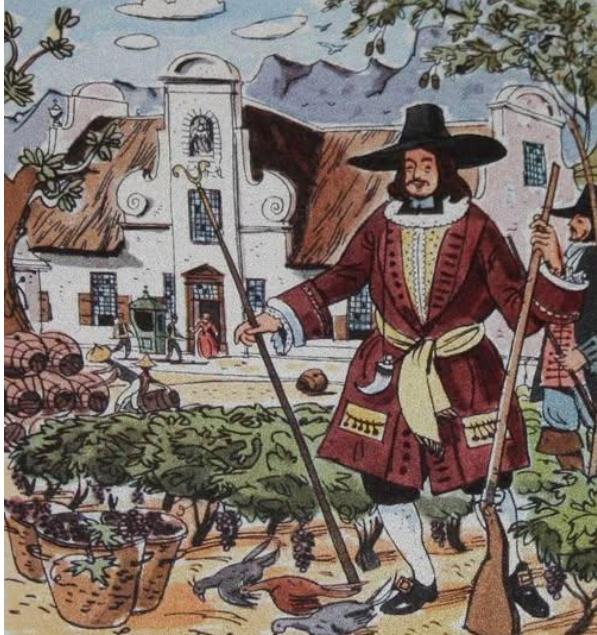
Sound should **leak but never fully resolve** from one room to another



KEY	VISUAL AREAS	AUDIO ZONES			
		Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 1	Zone 2
	 Office x2 Drawing Room x3	Zone 3 Office	Zone 4 Children	Zone 1 Outside activity	Zone 2 Drawing Room



ENTRANCE	(Museum front desk / foyer — light, welcoming, gentle movement)
Core idea	Implied narrative pressure
Threshold, curiosity, early story hints — playful and subtle	This house has a heartbeat
Shadow / Projection Moments	Soundscape (directional & timed)
None.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distant laughter of children, footsteps running lightly across a hallway. Perhaps a single, distant soft sound of a child running outside to join the others—introducing Penguin's presence without showing him. Occasional muffled voices, indistinct and playful.
Scent TBC pending discussion with front of house colleagues.	At key moments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link to bookkeeper walking into office Sound of activity in avenue heard louder due to the open door



Drawing Room	<i>Windows to the avenue, curtains suggesting arrival/departure, piano, coffee service, receiving space</i>
Core idea	Implied narrative pressure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The tension between calm domestic performance and the wider, complex world outside Performance, 'civility', wealth, outward-facing life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refinement, civility, and comfort built on unseen labour The distant activity of the avenue evokes: Ships arriving, Goods being traded, Slaves moving through the estate, gossip circulating
Shadow / Projection Moments	Soundscape (directional & timed)
1. Figures drinking coffee and serving coffee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stationary near the tray, serving two people tea/coffee, glancing occasionally toward the windows. Could subtly shift a small tray, adjust sugar Two figures are being served. Gestures suggest gossip and anticipation — maybe someone arriving or leaving outside. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Porcelain cup placed gently (or softly clinking). Low murmured conversation — polite, indistinct, floating in the air. Chair scraping once in a while, almost unnoticed.
2. Curtain shadows (min 2 scenes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A shadow cast on the curtains shows the commerce outside. Horse and messenger later carriage arriving or departing along the avenue, outside. Stiff posture, small movements, pauses — just enough to charge the imagination. 	Outside the windows (directional / timed to match shadows): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Horses approaching, pausing, then moving on. Carriage wheels creaking, fading down the avenue. Distant voices of farm workers — never close, never intelligible, just hints of activity.
Scent	At key moments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Murmurs then silence, listening. Chair scrapes back. Footsteps cross the room toward the window (timed to shadow against curtains)
Abstract link to interpretive content.	Story links
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who benefits from this performance of wealth? What labour, lives, and silences make this refinement possible? 	



ROOM Writing Office	<i>Desk, books, record-keeping, control, and tension</i>
Core idea	Implied narrative pressure
The mechanics of power Authority, anxiety, accusation, and record-keeping.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bureaucracy, ownership, control, conflict Injustice is often enacted through systems
Shadow / Projection Moments	Soundscape (directional & timed)
Writer at desk: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hunched, quill scratching, page turned, paper crumpled. Stops suddenly, looks to the doorway (as if hearing something outside), but does not leave. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pen scratching, pages turning, paper crumpled.
Secondary figure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only briefly at the doorway or window, maybe carrying a book or ledger, suggesting assistance or supervision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key sounds: drawer opened/closed, ledger slapped down, faint chair scrape. Murmured voices (unintelligible), hinting at accusation, disputes or negotiations. Distant, soft footsteps fading as someone leaves the hallway outside.
Scent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ink and paper, slightly acrid from stress Old books Faint fish 	At key moments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writer and secondary figure
Abstract link to interpretive content.	Story of....
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A sense that injustice is often enacted through systems, not spectacles. That domination can look like paperwork, calm voices, and closed doors. Authority is exercised through paper, ink, record-keeping, accusation, and dispute — revealing how control and wealth were formalised and defended. 	Van der Stel and Abraham de Vijf court dispute





Simon van der Stel

