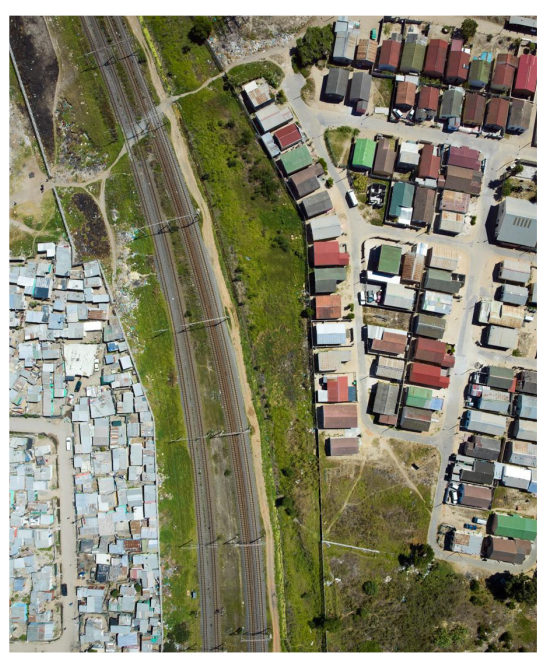


UNEQUAL SCENES

J O H N N Y M I L L E R



UNEQUAL SCENES



ABOUT UNEQUAL SCENES

Unequal Scenes uses a drone to illustrate the inscribed history of the world in a new way. The scars within our urban fabric, so apparent from above, can provoke a sense of surprise, at the same time they reveal our complicity in systematic disenfranchisement. By placing a non-human photographic actor – in this case, a remote-controlled drone – above these liminal spaces, a new vantage point is reached, previously reserved for the government and the very rich. The drone distances the photographer and the viewer of the photograph, both physically and mentally, and provokes an analysis of the distant gaze. It forces us to confront the ethics of representation, and the limitations (and freedom) of using technology in image-making.

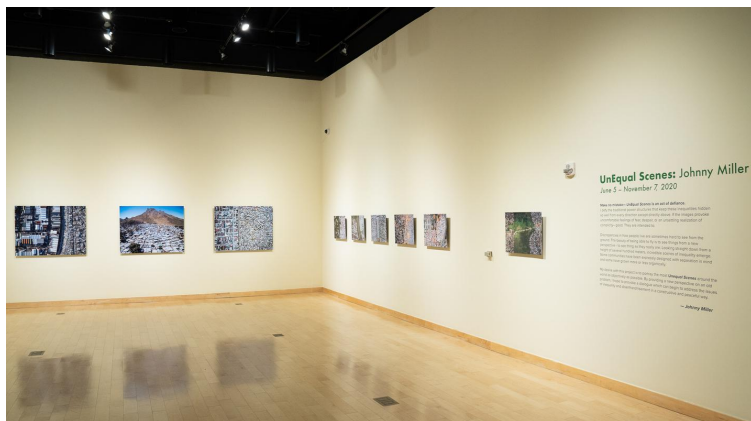
[CLICK HERE FOR A GALLERY WALKTHROUGH VIDEO](#)

ARTIST STATEMENT

Make no mistake-- Unequal Scenes is an act of defiance. I defy the traditional power structures that keep these inequalities hidden so well from every direction except directly above. If the images provoke uncomfortable feelings of fear, despair, or an unsettling realization of complicity – good. They are intended to.

Discrepancies in how people live are sometimes hard to see from the ground. The beauty of being able to fly is to see things from a new perspective - to see things as they really are. Looking straight down from a height of several hundred meters, incredible scenes of inequality emerge. Some communities have been expressly designed with separation in mind, and some have grown more or less organically.

My desire with this project is to portray the most UnEqual Scenes around the world as objectively as possible. By providing a new perspective on an old problem, I hope to provoke a dialogue which can begin to address the issues of inequality and disenfranchisement in a constructive and peaceful way.



ABOUT

ARTIST JOHNNY MILLER

Johnny Miller is a journalist, photographer, activist, and multimedia storyteller based in Cape Town, South Africa. He is interested in exploring architectures, displacement, urban issues, and climate justice from the ground and from the air. Miller attended Dickinson College in Pennsylvania in the United States of America and the University of Cape Town in South Africa. He is currently a News Fellow at Code for Africa, a Senior Atlantic Fellow for Social and Economic Equity at the London School of Economics, and a BMW Responsible Leader. Johnny Miller is also the co-founder of africanDRONE, a pan-African organization committed to using drones for good. He was awarded both a Project Launch grant from CENTER and a M. Reichmann grant in 2017 and a Lens Culture Emerging Talent Award in 2016. Miller has exhibited his photographs in South Africa, India, Great Britain, Australia, Germany, Italy Greece, Norway, Belgium, France, Israel, Nigeria, and the United States.



One of his images depicting inequality in South Africa was on the cover of the May 2019 international *Times* issue. This issue of the magazine labeled South Africa as the 'World's Most Unequal Country' and the image is of the city of Johannesburg and two suburbs side by side showing the apparent differences that is captured by flying overhead.

ABOUT ARTIST JOHNNY MILLER - CON'T.

Miller's work focuses on cities and countries around the world including Johannesburg and Cape Town in South Africa as well as Mexico City, Nairobi, Detroit, Los Angeles, Tanzania and Seattle. Within these cities, he focuses on adjacent neighborhoods such as Hout Bay and Imizamo Yethu in Cape Town. Hout Bay is an affluent area nestled in the mountains where homes are surrounded by lush greenery. An adjacent neighborhood Imizamo Yethu, is described as "informal housing" and consists of shack homes. The contrast between the two areas is astounding and they are only separated by a strip of greenery.

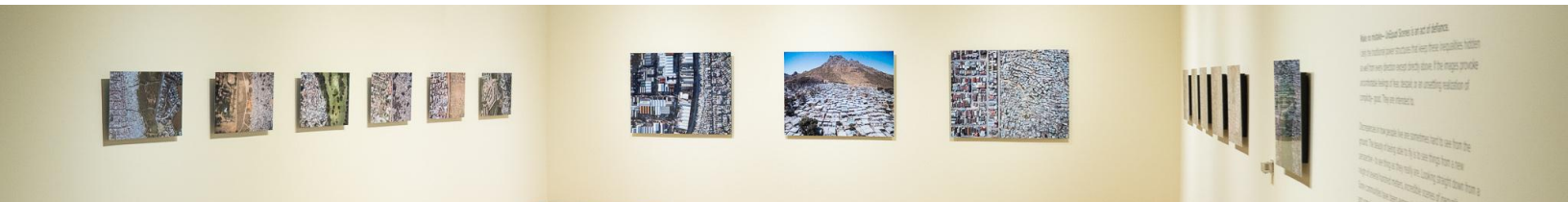
"Discrepancies in how people live are sometimes hard to see from the ground," photographer Johnny Miller writes online. "The beauty of being able to fly is to see things from a new perspective – to see things as they really are."

The idea of not being able to see reality from the ground is a reoccurring theme in his work. In 2017, he presented at TedxJohannesburg and emphasized how neighbors are made to keep people in and that there are

boundaries such as fences, roads and greenery to keep us grouped with people who look like us, have the same lifestyle as us and have similar jobs. He mentioned in his Ted Talk that some people are confused with how this affects them since they do not live in these places he photographs or in the more marginalized communities. His response to this is that you should care and that to not be aware of the inequity happening is to not be human or not to care for humankind. He tells a story of a girl he met on one of the "informal settlements" and how thousands live there but they only have access to 10 bathrooms. Those bathrooms are often out of order so they must use the bush and people have gone missing by doing this. These are basic necessities that every human should have and Miller's photographs show cities that are organized in a way that marginalizes these communities at the profit of others.



UNEQUAL SCENES



This is what inequality looks like | Johnny Miller | TEDxJohannesburg.



UnEqual Scenes



Q&A with Johnny Miller: Visual Arts Exhibition and ARTtalk

VIDEOS

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- In his Ted Talk, Miller discusses how cities can be built to separate. Think about where you live-- do you see this happening? Consider why or why not you think that.
- The "UNEQUAL SCENES" video shows some of Miller's images. How do you think his use of drones and technology impact his work and how people view it?
- In the Q&A video Miller answers a lot of questions about his work and about the impact of COVID-19 on his observations about inequality. If given the opportunity, what other questions would you like to ask him?



COLLAGE YOUR CITY

Are you inspired by Johnny Miller's *Unequal Scenes* but don't have access to a drone? Here's a fun way to create something similar:

TRY IT OUT!

- Find online images of maps of your area and print them out.
- Go around your town and take pictures! Capture different buildings, rivers, landmarks, and things that pique your interest.
- Now create a collage by attaching the images you took to the the maps you printed out.
- Do you notice anything related to inequity in your town? Are there differences in how people live or separation by roads or natural areas?



UNEQUAL SCENES



THANK YOU

FROM THE TURCHIN CENTER FOR THE VISUAL ARTS

The Turchin Center for the Visual Arts at Appalachian State University engages visitors from the university, community, nation and beyond in creating unique experiences through dynamic and accessible exhibition, education, outreach and collection programs. These programs inspire and support a lifelong engagement with the visual arts and create opportunities for participants to learn more about themselves and the world around them.

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