



Thirty Minutes

Installations by nine artists



Robben
Island
Museum

CAPE TOWN

Lionel Davis

My art piece is from personal experience as a political prisoner on Robben Island. The visiting booth, a confined impersonal space, gave no privacy. Bouncing off the walls all over that passage with its open visiting booths was a cacophony of sound - everyone shouting to be heard in different languages and very little to be heard. Every word spoken was carefully monitored by prison warder: a language not understood was summarily stopped and so was anything political. We had to confine ourselves to family matters and mundane affairs.

In that booth every political prisoner appeared to be impotent - not the person the visitor had known yesterday. This, however, was deceptive. Every word spoken by a political prisoner was carefully calculated because a wrong word spoken or an angry outburst could mean the end of a long-awaited 6-monthly visit. Beyond the prison walls the fight against the atrocious treatment and appalling prison conditions continued unabatedly.

Untitled

Mixed media

