

Michael Blum's 57-minute film follows the documentary mode, unfolding the story of a condominium in Cape Town, South Africa. Blum interviews present and former tenants in the building, neighbors, and an architect, and through their fragmented stories compiles a comprehensive picture of the house. Due to Blum's reputation as a professional creator of stories (in the recent Istanbul Biennale he invented a fascinating figure of a Turkish-Jewish-feminist-Marxist woman named Safiye Behar), the doubt occasionally arises as to the house on 17 Aandbloem Street: Is it real or fictive? Documentary or pseudo-documentary?

Jean Meeran is a young Muslim of Indian origin. Lyn, fourth generation South African, complains about the noisy parties he organizes. A couple from the adjacent building admits that they don't know their neighbors, and the woman speaks with distaste about the man in the wheelchair and the flower vendor on the corner, who is, apparently, a drug dealer. Zaria is a real-estate agent. Only her voice is heard, but her figure remains unseen. The film ends with a picnic on the grass, on a traffic island, next to the black flower vendor, with the black man in the wheelchair. All the film's characters sit there, eating and drinking, dancing to the sounds of music. If Jeff Wall's *The Storyteller* is a displacement of Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* from 1863 to the socio-cultural reality of late 20th-century North America, then Blum creates yet another variation on *Déjeuner*. The two Parisian men in black suits sitting on the grass next to a naked woman are replaced by storytellers who form a blend of cultures, colors, accents, and lifestyles.