



**Memorial to Vlakplaas: Head Crushing
Cradle for Two**

Steel and leather
42 x 381 x 76 cm

Memorial to Vlakplaas: Head Crushing Cradle for Two was created as a response to the testimonies of victims who were tortured at Vlakplaas during the 1980's. Vlakplaas, a remote farm in Pretoria, served as the headquarters of the apartheid government's Secret Service and as an interrogation venue.

The work is potentially interactive, designed to take the weight of two adult men lying with their heads at opposite ends of the structure with their feet touching. When the cradle is rocked back and forth with force, the heads of men strapped to this cradle would be severely damaged, almost always resulting in a head wound, as the weight of one man is used to create momentum to injure the other. This 'instrument' that specifically wounds the head is significant, as head wounds were a common cause of death for many who were involved in the struggle against apartheid and suffered torture at the hands of the state.

This sculpture serves as a memorial. It is created from mild steel with an anti-corrosion coating, the same material and coating used for farm equipment, fences and, ironically, braais. The cradle is designed to be rocked by foot, standing less than 300 mm off the ground at its highest point, to reference the shallow grave mounds scattered over the 99 hectares of land at Vlakplaas.

