

ONE MILLION DOLLARS FOR AFRICAN DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKERS



Chris McDonald

DOCUMENTARIES

ON 4 May 2011 Hot Docs announced a \$1-Million Production Fund for African filmmakers in their newsletter.

THE fund was initiated by Blue Ice Productions, a film and television business in Canada. According to Chris McDonald, Executive Director of Hot Docs, both principals at Blue Ice are South African-Canadians who would like to see more films about Africa being made by Africans. The Shaw Media Hot Docs Fund has been very successful in Canada and Blue Ice hopes to replicate this success in Africa. Chris says Hot Docs is thrilled that Blue Ice has

shown confidence in their ability to deliver and that they aim to do exactly that.

Chris says that it has never been easy to make documentaries, but nowadays it is particularly challenging. This is why Hot Docs is being aggressive about assisting filmmakers to finance their films.

Neiloe Khunyeli, Junior Production and Development Executive at the National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF), says the fund is exciting because it makes the development of more ambitious documentary films viable.

Elizabeth Radshaw, Hot Docs Forum and Market Director, points out that the announcement in May was an early announce-

ment. The nitty gritty of the fund needs to be ironed out, but they hope to have the details available for us in September. She says it will be a five year fund that aims to promote social, cultural, political and artistic docs in the region.

The fund is more than cash-in-hand as it hopes to involve the Canadian production community "... in a non-proprietary way," says Chris.

African filmmakers who may benefit from the support of a mentor will be partnered with filmmakers from the greater Hot Docs network. Funded filmmakers could also attend Hot Docs as part of the fund. They would be exposed to market and networking opportunities the festival offers

and meetings with international buyers, who offer complementary fund injections.

Denis Lillie, of the Cape Film Commission (CFC), was upbeat about the fund, saying it will have a positive impact as it will help emerging and established filmmakers to access international commissions.

Making the connection between funding and distribution, Neiloe says the Foundation is committed to showing that film is a viable economic activity. Their understanding of the filmmaking landscape as Neiloe indicated, is that by making more films we can grow the industry and encourage investors to come on board. While the NFVF is thinking about quantity, the CFC is thinking about quality. Denis thinks that greater investment into documentary films will improve the quality of the films, which in turn will boost the level of interest to acquire the films.

Lauren Groenewald, Co-chair of the South African Documentary Filmmakers' Association, who attended Hot Docs in May this year, saw a lot of the international content South African filmmakers

are competing with. She thinks that more equitable financing will improve the chances for success both locally and globally for South African documentary filmmakers. As we currently produce films at a fraction of international budgets, we cannot compete internationally. Lauren urges local

financiers to recognise and support the economic possibilities of local high end documentaries.

Although documentaries appear to be losing support from broadcasters around the world, they also seem to be growing their audience. Chris points to the fact that the Hot Docs audience doubles every three years and in 2011 their festival attendance totalled 150 000 people. "They have an insatiable appetite for these types of stories," he says of the Hot Docs festival goers.

Elizabeth refers to this situation as a market disconnect. TV is no longer connecting the growing market for documentaries with the films it wants to see. This market for documentaries is therefore forced to ferret out the content it wants to see through other avenues and today this means at festivals, online, or elsewhere.

In South Africa, Denis thinks that because the SABC is short on money, they need to consider that documentaries are cheaper to produce than other content. By focusing on investing in documentary film they can empower the local film community.

The buzz words around documentaries nowadays is creative financing. The Hot Docs fund promises some respite for documentary filmmakers from this worn refrain and will allow them to focus their creativity on making their films.

Tina-Louise Smith

CATCHING UP WITH SAFTA WINNER RINA JOOSTE



DOCUMENTARY

THE Callsheet's Tina caught up with filmmaker Rina Jooste following her SAFTA for Jammer as ek so Bitter is.

After only four years as a filmmaker Rina Jooste has received the highest recognition for a documentary filmmaker in South Africa.

At the 2011 South African Film and Television Awards (SAFTA) her documentary, *Jammer As Ek So Bitter Is* won Best Director of a Documentary Feature and Best Overall

Documentary.

Rina's path to filmmaking seems roundabout, but it landed her propitiously amongst the characters and stories she would draw on for her films.

She first worked as a musician and then entered the air force as part of their band. Her work at the air force led to her organising events and eventually managing industrial theatre for the Department of Defence in 1995. It was then that she started studying history at UNISA. Her love for storytelling developed through the industrial theatre work and alongside this, her research skills

were honed as she explored theatre content and became immersed in her academic studies. She also met Josias Moleele, who later became her partner in Kika Productions, through their work in the theatre.

Josias spotted the 2007 SABC Counting the Booty brief and drew Rina's attention to it. Rina was uncertain, but Josias persisted, saying the brief to explore the development of the new South African society was right up Rina's alley. He suggested they work with experienced filmmakers, from whom they would learn about filmmaking. The two novices formed Kika Productions, made it onto the shortlist and pitched their proposal to the SABC. As payment for their sins, they were awarded four films in the six part series. "I was in trouble," says Rina about the outcome.

They enlisted the help of Ingrid Gavshon as executive producer and Rina started attending every industry event and workshop, she read all the books she could lay her hands on, did a course through Big Fish School of Digital Filmmaking and learnt on the job.

It was sink or swim and Rina, together with Josias and Kika Productions, swam! Rina directed *Betrayed*, *Forgotten*, *Flowers of the Nation* and *Now Generation* for the Counting the Booty series. She learnt a lot over a

short period and attributes the bulk of her training to the SABC as they gave her the chance to be a filmmaker. Ingrid Gavshon mentored her through everything and she also acknowledges that the editing process helped her to understand a lot more about filmmaking. She worked with editor CA van Asswegen on all her films and found him very supportive.

In 2010 Josias decided he wanted to continue working in theatre while Rina chose to focus on making films only. They parted and Rina teamed up with filmmakers Nadiva Shraibman and Nhlanhla Mthethwa to form Full Circle Productions.

Rina's latest project is the 52 minute documentary, *Captor and Captive - The story of Danger Ashipala and Johan van der Mescht*, about the reunion between a soldier for the Namibian liberation movement, SWAPO, and a conscript to the South African Defence Force. She discovered the story while working on *Betrayed*. Her fascination with war stories is connected to her interest in history, politics and the human nature of war. She looks beyond the politics of war to understand how decisions made by politicians affect ordinary people.

The film was self-funded with the pro bono help of colleagues. For economic reasons the film is slightly skewed towards Johan's

story and perspective: Johan lived near Rina, so access was easier. She only made contact with Danger in October 2009, after she had been researching the film since 2007. The fact that Rina and Danger did not speak each other's languages presented a second challenge. Interviews were done with an interpreter, which prolonged the information gathering process. The unfortunate death of Danger in 2010 also meant that she spent very little time with him.

Although the film has been completed, the project continues. Rina is enrolled at Stellenbosch University under a Masters bursary programme within the History Department. Her thesis is titled POWs during the SA Border War with selected case studies: *Captor and Captive - the story of Danger Ashipala and Johan van der Mescht*. The thesis will explore how history is represented in film and how film can add to a written text.

Supporting herself and studying at the same time makes it hard to meet deadlines. She makes sure she does little bits at a time on the thesis to ensure she does move forward.

Captor and Captive - The story of Danger Ashipala and Johan van der Mescht is being distributed by David Forbes of Shadow Films.

Tina-Louise Smith

COMMERCIAL DOCUMENTARY DISTRIBUTION AND FINANCE

Bo Stehmeier



DOCUMENTARY

BO Stehmeier, director of sales at Off the Fence, was the main speaker at a Documentary Filmmakers Association workshop on Commercial Documentary Distribution and Finance.

THE commercial potential of documentary films is unexplored territory in South Africa. The current broadcasting environment in South Africa, with its lack of commissions and a host of new channels looking for content, presents a chance for documentary filmmakers to take control of their work and explore distribution possibilities open to them.

In response to this changing landscape, The Documentary Filmmakers' Association (DFA), in collaboration with The Cape Film

Commission (CFC) in Cape Town and with The Bioscope in Jozi, recently organised and hosted a seminar for documentary producers on Commercial Documentary Distribution And Finance For The International Market.

The main speaker was Bo Stehmeier, director of sales at Off The Fence, an international independent non-fiction distribution company with a local office in Cape Town.

The seminar was initiated by DFA treasurer, Pascal Schmitz, after he met Bo at IDFA in December 2010.

The seminars in Jozi and Cape Town had different panelists, but the learning in both centres was equally invaluable.

Bo allowed both newcomers and old timers of filmmaking to get their heads around the until-now distant world of distribution

and international financing.

He began by encouraging documentary filmmakers to embrace the current uncertainties in the South African filmmaking landscape. He said the situation reminded him of the UK eight years ago, where, within three years, the most profitable export was television shows.

Producers in the UK embraced their intellectual property rights and exploited opportunities to earn from product sales.

"The stars are aligning themselves here in South Africa and it's your responsibility to research the opportunities available," he said.

The lack of broadcaster commissions creates a situation where filmmakers can retain the rights to their work.

This can be lucrative because filmmakers will want to see a return on their investment and will work harder to push their content out internationally.

Filmmakers will be driven to produce quality content that sells internationally. In response, international buyers will return to South African filmmakers and broadcasters for trusted content.

Bo stressed that filmmakers and production companies need to position themselves clearly to identify their niche and market value. Once you know who you are and what you do, it will be easier to find the distributor that trades in your type of

content and who can best market and sell your product.

For South African documentary producers venturing into the international market, Bo shared his acid test for the strength of your ideas:

- If the story came from another country, would you still watch it in South Africa?
- If it is character based, will the character work globally?
- What is the production value of your product versus the production value of the slot you're aiming for? For example, if the slot flights content that uses cherry pickers, make sure your budget allows for a variety of movement to lift the production value of your show.
- What ad would you place 12 minutes into your show? If you are unable to think of a suitable ad, your show's saleability drops.
- Do you have a budget for international deliverables and are these in place? Have all the graphics and technical specifications required by each channel in place and do not lock off only one final version – ensure there is a version for each buyer.

Now that we know all of this, do we still need distribution companies? Well, a distribution company is like a travelling library with a bank of films in its catalogue. Broadcasters prefer to work with distributors because they have access to a library of films and they understand what broad-

casters are looking for.

Distribution companies position themselves in the same way as Bo advised production companies to. This allows broadcasters to approach the distributor they know stocks the kind of content they are after.

Distribution is what distribution companies do, while production is what production companies do. Distribution companies know how to take the rights on a film and turn those into cash as quickly and as smoothly as possible. As specialists in their field, distributors also know the best licence fees for particular genres of content.

Most distribution companies only get involved in a project when it is relatively far down the line. If you are looking for an international distributor, it is best to approach them with a completed product.

Of course, funders often like to see that you have a distributor attached to your project because it increases the chances that your project will travel.

This means you need to explore who the best distributor may be for your projects and build a relationship with that person or company.

Some distribution companies for documentary producers to research include Off The Fence, First Hand Films, Journeyman, Spier Films, and Films Transit International.

Tina-Louise Smith

ADRIAN LOVELAND AND REHAD DESAI DOCUMENT JHB



THE South African fare at Encounters 2010 included two very different films about Jozi. *The Battle for Johannesburg* was a complex and beautiful exploration of urban regeneration by seasoned documentary filmmaker Rehad Desai, while *Unhinged: Surviving Jo'burg* was a more superficial – but no less coherent – caper by first-time documentary filmmaker Adrian Loveland.

Rehad says he wanted to make *The Battle for Johannesburg* because as a home owner he was genuinely enthusiastic about the idea of urban renewal. With the refurbishing and sale of Ponte Tower apartments on the horizon, the film began as an optimistic story about the regeneration of Ponte and the ripple effects on the world immediately around it.

Rehad's experience making *The Battle for Johannesburg*

shows how important it is to be flexible and follow the story that unfolds rather than the one you may have planned to tell. Rehad had wanted to make an observational film about the changes at Ponte and the developers' success, but the film became more investigative and probing as the transformation of Ponte failed and other events and storylines revealed themselves.

Adrian started *Unhinged: Surviving Jo'burg* from a pessimistic space of feeling precarious about life in Johannesburg. The title was the first thing that came to him, as his daily life included reading about and being hyper aware of violent crimes against people living in Johannesburg. Strangely, it was the murder of Anglo-Zulu War enthusiast, David Rattray, in KwaZulu-Natal that eventually prompted him to try to get to grips with feeling unhinged.

Both filmmakers place themselves in their films. For Adrian the film was about how he felt about living in Johannesburg, so he had to be in the film. Rehad says his story was initially meant to be told through what was happening in his characters' worlds, but he discovered that although the stories were inter-related, there was no organic link between them. The separate issues and different approaches to the housing situation required him to insert himself in the film to hold everything together.

Rehad concedes that it is hard to be a character in your own film. One of the problems is deciding when to be on and when to be off camera. "You tread a fine line between self-indulgence and personal story; you have to be in the film yourself to make a personal story, but you have to use yourself in the most minimalist way to focus the viewer's point of view

and your point of view, too. My point of view was that of someone who is involved as an activist and holds the ideal of the city being a place we can all inhabit."

The bulk of *Unhinged* is stills footage, which Adrian preferred to video "because a good still captures a single moment. They're very useful when you're using rapid editing. The viewer doesn't need much time to register what's on screen."

Adrian's library of stills grew over two years while driving around the city on his errands with a small digital camera. He captured scenes that grabbed his attention for the film. He used other stills from people who had taken general skyline shots, obtained the rights to some images on Flickr, and "all of the news stills, like the Lucky Dube and xenophobia stories, were all taken by the same person - a friend of mine

who has some of the best stills I've ever seen. Often I would write script simply to justify getting another of his shots in there."

Financially, *The Battle for Johannesburg* piqued the interest of a number of foreign broadcasters. The filmmakers raised just over R1 million through these broadcasters and local funders like The National Film and Video Foundation, The Gauteng Film Commission and The SABC. As finances have been relatively stable at Uhuru Productions because of the drama series they have been working on, *The Mating Game*, Rehad's company invested another million in the film by deferring costs on camera usage, the edit suite and office costs.

As all directors know, filmmaking is uncompromising and you always come out of the experience richer. Adrian, with the enthusiastic, open manner that guides us through his film, realised that "the learning that came from all the mistakes is too valuable to ever wish away." Rehad says that *The Battle for Johannesburg* helped him to lose his fear of Johannesburg. "It also gave me the understanding that urban renewal is a very contested, complex process. It reminded me that I am a citizen and we all have a responsibility to this place and to the people who inhabit it as well."

Watch the trailers on *The Callsheet* website.

Tina-Louise Smith

16TH MAN WINS AUDIENCE AWARD AT ENCOUNTERS



SOUTH African films fared extremely well at The Encounters International Documentary Festival this year. 14 out of the 29 films by South African filmmakers or about South Africa had their world premieres at the festival.

The most popular South African film was Clifford Bestall's *The 16th Man*, which was awarded the 2010 Audience Award for Best South African Film. The film is based on John Carlin's *Playing the Enemy*, which also inspired Clint Eastwood's *Invictus*. During one of the Q & A sessions, the consensus among the audience seemed to be that *The 16th Man* was a better film than *Invictus*.

Clifford explained that the film had been commissioned by ESPN, the American cable television sports network. He only saw *Invictus* about two-thirds of the way through the edit of *The 16th Man*. He wanted his film to be better than

Invictus, in the sense that there was no structure around the rugby and the games in the Hollywood story. Another challenge of making the film was trying to achieve the right balance between rugby and politics for an American sports audience. Fortunately, he had American producers to guide him.

Friday the thirteenth, the second day of the festival, was an auspicious day for first-time director, Dylan Valley. The world premiere of his film, *Afrikaaps*, was completely sold out that night. So many people wanted to see the film that the organisers let people in despite the fact that there were already bums on all the seats. The over capacity audience was appreciative and, according to Dylan, cheered loudly at the end of the film. This film was in such demand that an extra screening was arranged for the last Saturday of the festival in Cape Town.

Steven Markovitz, one of the founders of Encounters, says that *Thembi* by Jo Mennell was the third most popular local film at the festival. At its world premiere screening in Cape Town, *Thembi* was completely sold out an hour-and-a-half before the screening.

Some films performed better at The Bioscope – the Jozi venue of Encounters. According to Steven, Rehad Desai's *The Battle for Johannesburg* had a respectable attendance in Cape Town, but was hugely popular in Johannesburg. Another film about Jozi, Adrian Loveland's *Unhinged: Surviving Jo'burg*, had already been released in Johannesburg, which led festival organisers to decide against running it. At the director's request, a screening was arranged for the last Saturday of the festival at The Bioscope, which was well attended.

The attendance of some il-

lustrious South Africans, including George Bizos, Graca Machel and Edwin Cameron added extra buzz to the screening of *Here be Dragons*, Odette Geldenhuys' film about George Bizos. The public wanted more and Encounters obliged by scheduling an extra screening with a Q & A session with Odette in Jozi.

The Cradock Four by David Forbes was selected as The Best South African Documentary at Durban International Film Festival this year. Despite the accolade, the film was more popular in David's home town, Johannesburg, than in Cape Town. The Cape Town Q & A session with the director was quite heated. When asked about the screening, David thought it was more important for people to know that had the proposed Protection of Information Bill been passed while making his film, the film could not have been made.

Festival director Mandisa Zitha says they are always cautious of screening films about South Africa made by foreigners. *On the Other Side of Life* by German filmmakers Stefanie Brockhaus and Andy Wolff was one of these films. Some people walked out during the screening and both discussions after the film were fervent. Audience members were unhappy with the depiction of local initiation rituals and challenged the filmmakers on their understanding thereof. Bulelani Mvoto of Snapshot Mobile Cinema in Khayelitsha was initially involved in the production and felt that the filmmakers' process undermined the value of the ritual in his culture. Mandisa feels that the filmmakers' argument was solid and one of the traditional surgeons was present and defended their portrayal of the local tradition.

American filmmaker Yoruba Richen's film, *A Promised Land*, was well-balanced, with well-attended screenings. The panel discussion and Q & A session afterwards, however, proved that emotions around land and poverty in South Africa are not as balanced. Impassioned comments after the film made Steven comment that the presence of a government representative on the panel contributed to bringing the issues out more strongly.

The International Audience Award went to *Of Heart and Courage*, a documentary about the Bejart Ballet's fight for survival.

Tina-Louise Smith

African Market Place



CLIFFORD CHARLES

Taking South African Art to new places and spaces:

by Tina Louise Smith

William Kentridge? Jane Alexander? Penny Siopis? Kendell Geers? So, who are the pioneering black South African artists; the ones taking black South African art, taking South African art, taking art where it has not gone before? Sock with me through the next one thousand and some words and you'll learn about South Africa's most exciting and most exciting artist yet: Clifford Charles!

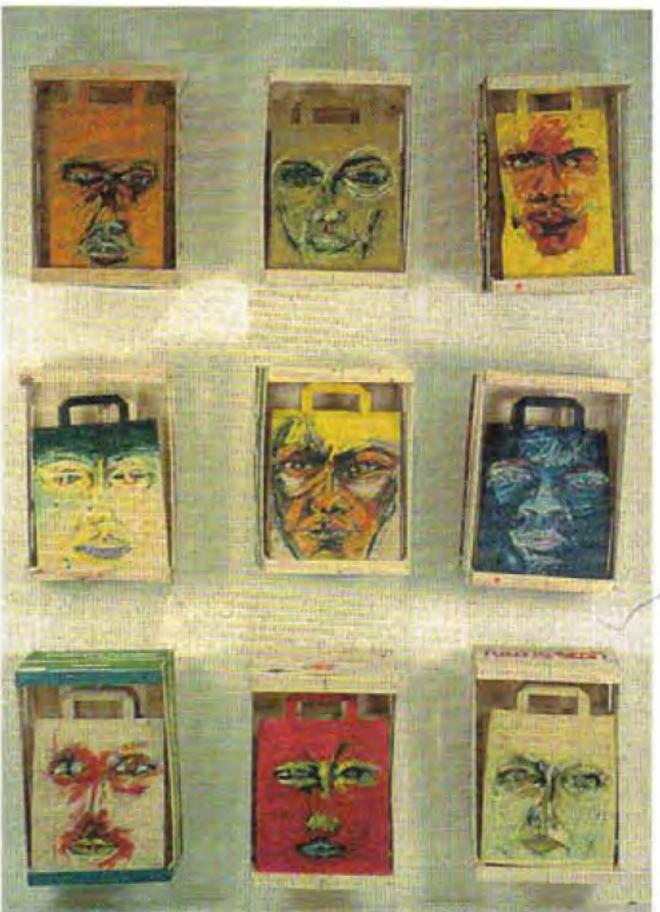
Clifford the artist and Clifford the person. He is his work. His work has never been blatantly political, but it is always political. Sometimes you cannot put your finger on the political in his work because Clifford tends to disengage himself from the popular politics of the

moment (which is a political position). He says that as a young artist in the eighties, he refused to align himself with various ideological battles that demanded membership and loyalty to their 'isms'.

His loyalty and his responsibility "... to quote Miles Davis", he chuckles, was first and foremost to himself and then to his work in terms of what he wanted to do with it. Not aligning himself to the ideologies of the eighties does not mean he wasn't committed to change, he stresses, but that the change he was committed to was more profound than the immediate change of regime, and that was (and is) the liberation of society, of the individual.

In his work from the early eighties, Clifford recognised the violence around South Africa, but he subversively tried to bring a sense of humanity to the images. In the *Fragments* series, for example, there is a sense of something ambiguous and sinister. "Ambiguous" because, at first glance, I cannot tell if the image is violent or not although I sense violence. Then, the more I pick out the violent elements, I find I have to go back in a way, to convince myself that what I see is not innocuous, not something ordinary and everyday. This causes a tension for me because during the 80s (especially), violence was something everyday, almost ordinary but not innocuous. So, in the end, the message of the image is insidious, like the violence of the 80s. Clifford's work did not pander to the expectations of the era that demanded more obviously violent and even predictably violent images that would simply show us what we know, and not force us to question what we know and how we see. In fact, Clifford's work was pioneering because this series was done from 1983 to 1984, before the populist images that arose in response to the State of Emergency and the turmoil of 1985. For himself, he says he did recognise the violence, but he was trying to bring a sense of humanity to the images.

Clifford's attention is continuously focused on the public space, where power plays itself out more obviously. He looks at the public space and then tries to understand the aspect of it that is not public, "... because things that are public easily become soap opera."



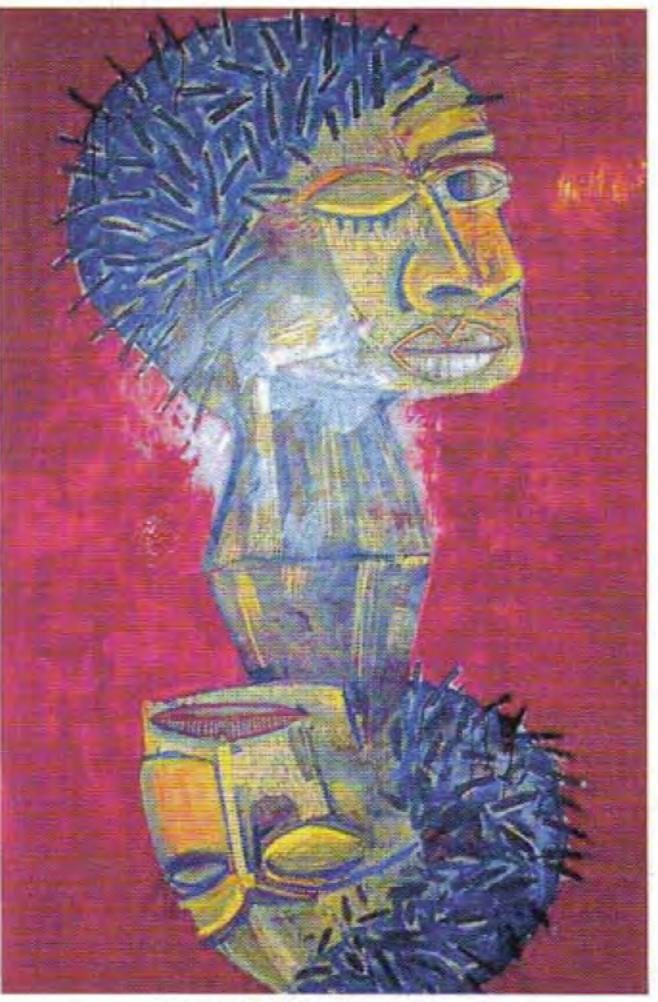
Exploding in bright colours: The Paper Bag Series

He says this is not negating the public, but it is peeling away the layers to get beneath it and to understand it.

As we move out of the 80s, his work continues to focus on that which underlies the 'public', and then it also becomes sensuously bolder, more definite and more colourful. This could be a metaphor for his personal and creative development; it could be a metaphor for the development of South Africa. It is possibly both.

The *Paper Bag* series of the early 90s explodes with bright colour and continues most directly the idea of probing what lies beneath the public. The series of faces on the paper bags have intriguing depth of character. Here, the colour of one eye compared with the colour of the other eye suggests a complex personality, rather than a one-dimensional freak and a one-dimensional image-on-a-canvas. And when you look at one of these faces, you just have to look again, to make sure you have seen all there is to see. For Clifford this is also an exploration of how the notion of blackness is packaged, commodified and transported to Africa. Here colour represents life, not blackness, for him.

This series also reminds me of what Clifford says about there being a wealth of stories and an incredible magnanimity in South Africa, neither of which is done justice by the art world. These faces are filled with a wealth of stories that are dying to be told and that we are longing to hear. Clifford reckons the argument that



Talking to Myself '02 (oil paint on paper)

people do not understand contemporary art is patronising, and that lurking within that argument is the old animal of prejudice. He says people's unwillingness to engage in contemporary art, is an indictment on the art and therefore on the creators of that art. The problem with contemporary art is that we cannot see ourselves in it, we cannot see our experiences in it.

With the Street series of the new millennium he continues his concern with South African identity and, inextricably, with that which is public. He thinks South African society is very young and vulnerable and so opens itself to violation from the commercial world. As young people especially become hypnotised by the media to compensate for a lack of sense of self, the South African identity stems from a lack of sense of self. Who we are as South Africans is largely determined by how the rest of the world sees us. In Street, he reflects on who we are to ourselves. The images in this series are New Johannesburg street images. We see notice boards of public phones and adverts for painters with their cell phone numbers; all images of the visible change in Johannesburg, of who Johannesburgers have publicly become to themselves.

He says people's unwillingness to engage in contemporary art, is an indictment on the art and therefore on the creators of that art.

Now that we have settled into the millennium, he is pioneering the way and taking the public home to examine itself. The public, after all, is made up of you and me; and what we see in the public sphere is partly determined by who we are in private. As an artist, when you peel away the public layers, you are also dealing with and peeling away at yourself. You are dealing with who you really are. That centres you and gives you direction, he says.

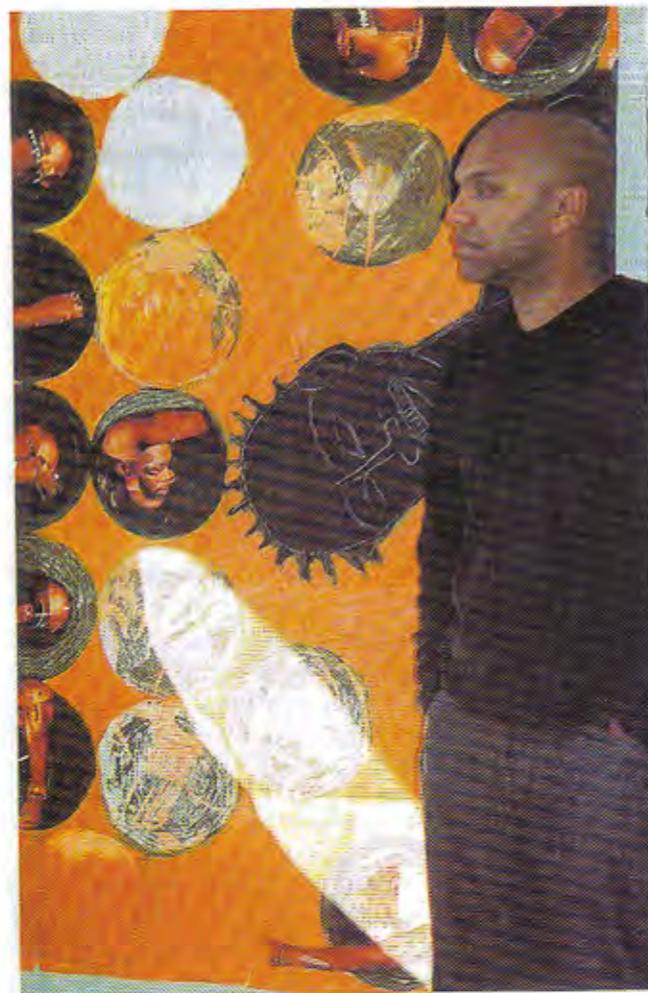
He does this with a dramatic and interesting shift in both the medium and the visual content of his more recent work. Here he uses ink because, he says, he enjoys the contradiction that the medium is both opaque and transparent. These ink works, which he calls *Painting on Water*, like his preceding works, represent his dialogue with himself, he says. He says that you are the ultimate recipient of your own work and having that dialogue with yourself helps you and your work to grow and develop. Your work develops its own integrity, so that when it goes public, it can eventually withstand the winds of public dissent. These ink works are exciting explorations of Clifford's mind. They are minimalist, neat and clear; and although the medium suggests delicacy, there is that unmistakable sensual boldness of the image and of the artistic reach.

He has thirty-one(!) of these works on show at the Venice Biennale from June to November this year. He feels very nervous about this exhibition because though it is an achievement to be exhibiting on this international stage, at the same time it does make you vulnerable. Your work is a personal statement, so you are exposing

yourself; and you also hope that your work communicates itself successfully to those who view it. And I guess he also worries that it will withstand those "winds of public dissent" he mentions.

Despite his anxiety, the response to his work so far has been extremely complimentary. People said things like, "... very watery", "...loved how it flowed", "...emotive", but "... beautiful" was the most common term. And the ultimate compliment was that he got to hang out with Stuart Hall and have him say about his work (amongst other encouraging things), "It's evident that Clifford is marking out new territories." So, there you go, one of the early pioneers of contemporary cultural studies agrees with me!

Be encouraged that Clifford's work is meant for you. He told me that someone he did not know, approached him after viewing some of his works and said, "I don't understand your work, but I find it very peaceful". You do not have to understand his work, but you will experience it. ■



Clifford Charles



MONITOR

A BAROMETER OF GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

MAIL & GUARDIAN
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Breaking the silence

The need for adult education must not be ignored, writes Tina Louise Smith

There has been much silence concerning the adult basic education and training (Abet) sector since 1994, with the result that many do not know what it is about.

Abet has been around for about 60 years in the form of racist and inadequate night schools run by the former department of education and training.

The "basic" in Abet indicates that it attempts to give people essential literacy and numeracy skills to people and to equip them with life skills. You cannot use a map, for example, if you cannot read, recognise symbols or do not know north from south.

After the 1994 elections Abet found itself in a new context. It was no longer the domain of reluctant government officials and the resistance movement, but became a joint project of government, NGOs, business and trade unions.

There is a programme flighted on SABC television on Sunday mornings to inform people on developments in Abet.

Gugu Ntuli, director of adult education in the Department of Education, says the department is aware of the need to break the silence around Abet. The department wants to air more programmes on radio and television to make people aware of what is available to them, she says.

She adds: "We are not discounting print media at appropriate levels and in an appropriate way."

Ntuli says part of the problem concerning Abet visibility is that, according to the Constitution, the national department is

responsible for policies, norms and standards while implementation is done at a provincial level. She says there is a need for the two levels to work together regarding publicity and implementation of adult education plans.

A need for co-operation exists, but Badhole Nong, national co-ordinator of the Adult Educators and Trainers Association of South Africa (Aetas), thinks the need for operation may be even greater.

Nong points out that some provinces, such as the Free State and Mpumalanga, have not been able to launch their multi-year implementation plans (MYP) for Abet education and training.

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Learning curve: Abet attempts to provide literacy, numeracy and life skills to adults

South Africa's primary and secondary education sectors are not perfect and there are bound to be children coming through these systems who would need Abet. Nong demands the abolition of an education system that focuses on primary and adult education together.

She says: "It's been proven in developing and developed countries you can't spend on children to the detriment of adults.

"People are assuming education only takes place for eight hours a day at school. But who's going to help those children at home and who's going to read their reports?"

Abet does admit that strides have been made in the sector: learning materials have been developed and unit standards have been produced in literacy and numeracy by the South African Qualifications Authority.

These advances are useless though without mobilisation tools, says Nong.



Red Bull Music Academy

by Tina-Louise Smith



All photo's courtesy Red Bull Academy

The College of Laidback Knowledge - that's the name that Hugh Masekela gave to the track that he and the students at the College of Laidback Knowledge jammed and produced the first Monday night of November 2003 in Cape Town. The official name of the College of Laidback Knowledge is the Red Bull Music Academy.

Apart from the Red Bull bar fridges filled with the product at strategic watering holes around the Academy and the two-and-a-half by one-point-four metre logo tapestry in the main lecture room, there is no other product placement. Laidback, a product many of us wish there was more of, is more evident here. The main lecture room is spacious and bright, strewn with huge cushions for students to lounge around on while listening to lectures; or there are couches with deep seats that suck you into them for optimum couch sessions; and huge glass windows to stare out of at the western slopes of Devil's Peak while Bob Moog regales you with stories of the early days of electronic music, or Alex Rosner condemns deejays who insist on playing loud music, or Marcus Intalex takes a dig at Intelligent Drum & Bass, or DJ Ritu explains how it became 'cool to be down with the brown'.

If that's not for you today, you can go downstairs to spin some vinyl on the turntables; or another level down

where the rapidly-disappearing food is, and sit your bum at one of the six internet stations to check your email. Of course, if you've flown in from Russia or Estonia or Germany where it's been thirty-two degrees outside, you may prefer to go to the beach and that will also be okay. Those of you at conventional academies may know this as 'bunking', but at the College of Laidback Knowledge, it is part of the experience.

You see, there are no outcomes that students need to meet at the end of their two weeks at the Academy.

Arun Hozack, the South African brand manager for Red Bull, explained that being at the Academy is not a competition, there is no winner, there is no recording contract that you have to meet, no CD that you have to produce. All you have to do is be in Cape Town. Once in Cape Town, you can attend the lecture sessions with the various pioneers and gurus – if you feel like it. You can take what you want from the event and do with it what

you want to. Arun thinks this takes the pressure off everybody and they can absorb much more information this way, AND it makes the entire experience more enjoyable (remember trying to convince your parents of a similar idea related to your education?), which inevitably turns the students into spokespeople for the event and by extension, for Red Bull!



On top of this, after each day's four lecture sessions, there is a programme of clubbing. See where your favourite deejay (Cosmo, or Seiji, or DJ Ritu, or Marcus Intalex) is playing tonight and boogie on over there to shake all the day's information into a coherent pack of knowledge. If you prefer to deejay yourself, then maybe that's on the programme too. You can stay out until five a.m. because the following day's lectures only begin at noon ... and you don't have to go.

In its inaugural year, the Academy happened in Berlin, then Dublin, onto New York in 2000, followed by London in 2001, São Paulo in 2002, and it came to Cape Town in 2003. Red Bull beat the World Cup and the Olympic bids. For the Academy of 2003 there were 2 200 applications from fifty-five countries. The sixty students that were eventually selected to attend come from thirty-eight different countries, including South Africa, Costa Rica, Australia, New Zealand, Austria, Germany, The Czech Republic, Belgium, Brazil, Estonia, France, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Russia, Panama ...

Featured in the line-up of lecturers in the first two weeks of the 2003 Academy were Hugh Masekela, Darshan Jesrani, Cosmo, Alex Rosner, Michael Reinboth, Paul Seiji, Steve 'Steinski' Stein, Patrice, Clive Chin, Bob Moog, Marcus Intalex, DJ Ritu, Anthony Shakir and Chris Palmer! These names may mean nothing to you today, but they (and others) were carefully chosen as either the most knowledgeable in their field or because they were groundbreakers with what they did, and therefore the best to share their knowledge and experience with the students. I guarantee, from my experience as the video editor of the lectures, that none of them were trite. One hour with any of them and you will have no doubt about where they fit into the music world and your own world may look a bit different, a bit larger.

All these people came to TALK about music. The organizers think that as deejays, music producers, musicians and consumers of music, we all listen to a lot of music and rarely talk about the music we love so much. Each lecturer spent one-and-a-half to two hours – four hours in the case of Alex Rosner! – talking about their involvement in music and/or demonstrating how they produce music. There was much talk of Logic and Reason as programmes

used to compose, mix and produce. Apples and PCs were talked about as the instruments of today's musicians and producers. At the same time that the latest technology was being explained, demonstrated and ardently recommended, Steve 'Steinski' Stein swore by his antiquated Pro Tools five-point-one system, and Paul Seiji revealed that he produced most of his works to date on his obsolete Atari and is still grappling with his more sophisticated software. Dr Bob Moog, the inventor of the synthesizer, warned that although musicians and music producers need to stay in touch with the technological advancements, they need to guard against becoming enslaved by technology.

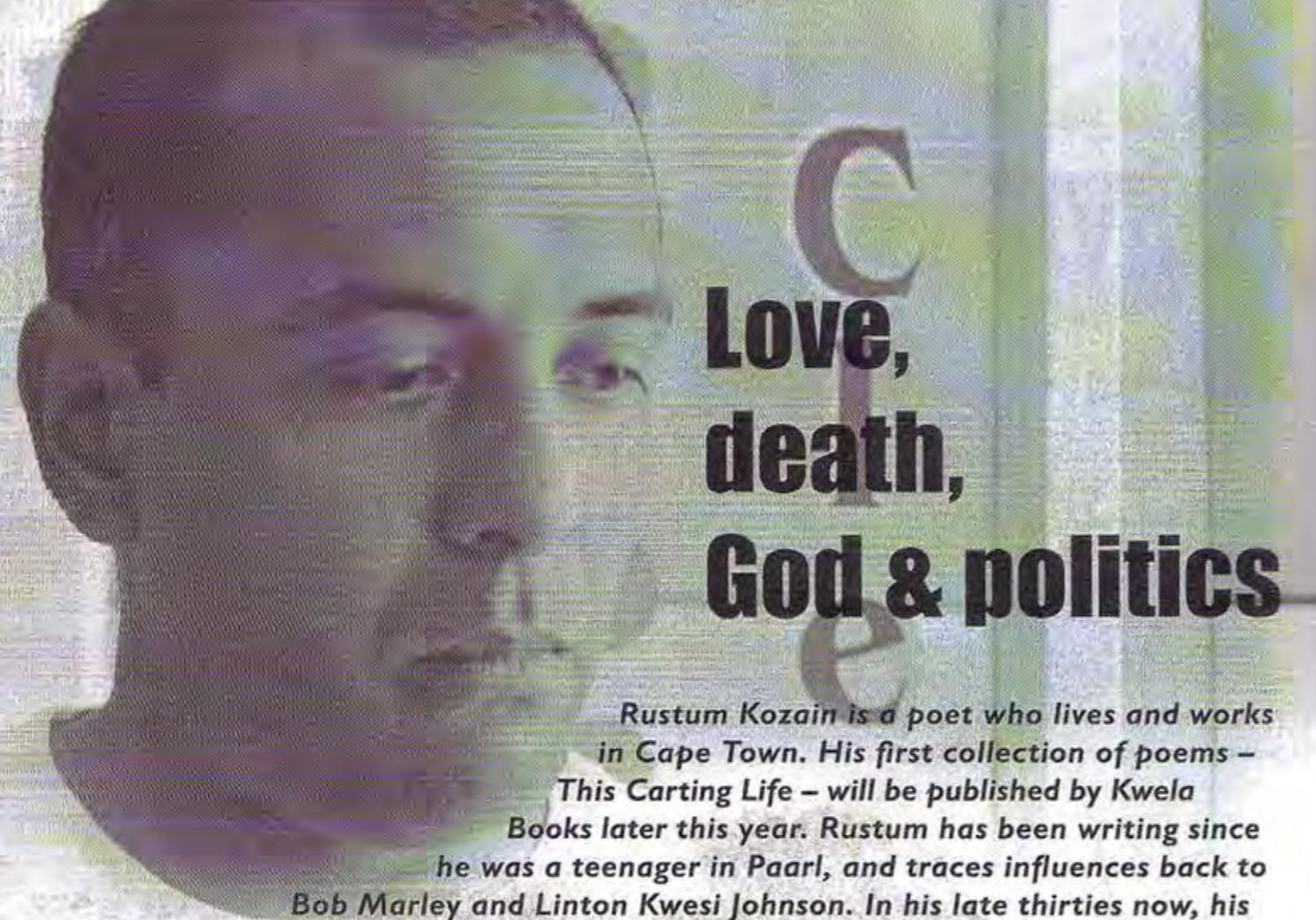
Do you wanna go? First of all the Academy is targeted at deejays and producers of electronic dance music. Wannabes, aspirants, and established. What they look for is: a) your passion for music, b) whether you know what you're doing, and c) whether you have an open mind. An open mind is necessary to be able to get along with the varied cultures you will encounter; to be able to understand and work in the global and boundary-free world of electronic music production; and to keep up with the lightning-fast developments. Arun explains that you could mix a track this afternoon, upload it onto the net from your hotel in Cape Town, and by tonight a deejay in France is downloading it to play at a session. If you are open to this, you can help break down barriers within the world of music.

The boy/girl ratio of students is skewed in the masculine direction, so women don't hold back!

The application form is on the Red Bull internet site. The form is sixty percent of your application and forty percent is a thirty minute mix of your work. Your written application and the mix are each listened to by two separate groups of people who decide whether you should be invited to the next Academy for two weeks, or not. The application form and mix may sound daunting, but they would be the first test (for yourself) to see whether you have the passion and dedication required of the students who do attend. The boy/girl ratio of students is skewed in the masculine direction, so women don't hold back!

Check out edited versions of this year's - and previous lectures at the Red Bull website.





C Love, death, God & politics

Rustum Kozain is a poet who lives and works in Cape Town. His first collection of poems – *This Carting Life* – will be published by Kwela Books later this year.

Rustum has been writing since he was a teenager in Paarl, and traces influences back to Bob Marley and Linton Kwesi Johnson. In his late thirties now, his influences are Derek Walcott and Kelwyn Sole, whose words and phrases can sometimes be found in his poems, when he finds that their words express what he feels better than his own words can writes Akiedah Mohamed

I stand at his bright blue gate and ring the doorbell. It doesn't sound with the first ring and I have to press it again to make sure I can hear it ringing inside. Rustum peers at me through the security gate and through the slats of the bright blue gate. Then he goes back inside to fetch the keys.

There is a narrow passage leading from the front door to the lounge and we have to pass the study to our left. It's a hot day, so the makeshift curtain is drawn in the study and billows softly as the air tries to push into the room. There are books everywhere. Books on shelves, books on the desk, books in boxes, books on the floor, books on top of books.

Rustum says, 'A poet or a writer needs to understand how language works.' Rustum is a rigorous writer and insists on writing (and speaking) in a considered way that shows a care for the language. As a writer, he is a disciplined soldier of words, going through his reps, strengthening his writing muscles with each phrase he commits to paper.

He has locked the security gate behind us, so we continue down the passage. There is a cardboard cut-out on the

wall that says M-O-N-E-Y. The passage is narrow and we have to walk in single file. There's a fluffy round toy on the floor as we pass the bedroom on the left and walk through a beaded curtain of sorts, with 'beads' of glass, feathers and rubber animals (spiders and insects) into the lounge.

Setting himself boundaries when he writes also allows his writing to become more than the sharing of thoughts with his readers and he hopes that by being artful in the way he communicates his ideas.

'I normally invent – in a quite arbitrary manner – some form of stricture. That 'rule' may be informed by how an idea for a poem first appears or comes to me. So if an idea comes to me and I write it out and it is a five-line stanza and it looks and sounds good, then I will try and write the poem out as five-line stanzas, etcetera.' He finds that this way of working often forces the imagination into surprising paths.

In the lounge, 'The Spooks' are telling us about the Things (they've) seen from the speakers. One of these is on the far side of the long bright red couch under the window, and ▶

the other is next to the TV. Opposite the window, Ché Guevara fishing from a boat, hangs framed on the wall and a drawing from a former lover hangs next to it. There is also a kung fu poster on the wall above the TV and a bunch of chillies hanging on the wall where the lounge becomes the kitchen.

He writes about what is important to him at the moment. He laughs when he talks about 'the joy of love' as an example and that a certain feeling he may have is sometimes best expressed, depending on where he is at, within the broader South African political context.

Setting himself boundaries when he writes also allows his writing to become more than the sharing of thoughts with his readers and he hopes that by being artful in the way he communicates his ideas, a reader returns to the poem not only for the content, but because of the craft behind it too.

Rustum has moved into the kitchen area, apologises for the mess and starts to brew us some coffee. Rustum's coffee addiction is legendary. The only time he goes without coffee is when he has influenza; not a cold, but the real gripe and he feels like something his cat dragged in. The cat, called Cat, pads past us into the bathroom.

Despite the controls he imposes on himself when he writes, he tells me he is not a disciplined writer. 'If I were a disciplined writer, I would be developing my craft all the time. I write when there is a build-up and when I am working on a poem and it has to be perfect, I have been known to avoid friends, work, the telephone, to get the work to a point where I think it is perfect.' When he is writing, he is bound to his desk by 'the desire to find the right rhythm, the exact phrase, the perfect metaphor. And then the editing: working on the poem, chipping away until it's smooth.'

What does he write about? 'Love, death, God and politics. There's a rhythm to that. How can you not be preoccupied with it? Just think about it. Those are the four fundamental things in human life? Which human being has not been touched by love, the fear of death, looming death, other people's death? Who has not been affected by the idea of God, whether we accept it or reject it? And politics: who is untouched by politics, anywhere in the world, whether they want to admit it or not?'

He writes about what is important to him at the moment. He laughs when he talks about 'the joy of love' as an example and that a certain feeling he may have is sometimes best expressed, depending on where he is at, within the broader South African political context. 'It would be the same with religion or death', he adds.

Rustum puts on a different CD, a compilation he has made and called 'this is not a party disc'. It starts off with Djana Ross' *Stranger in Paradise*, moves on to Banco De Gaia's *Glove Puppet* and then drops you into the Manhattan Brothers' *Chaka*. 'This is the funniest music compilation I have ever heard,' I tell him and we both chuckle. And I am more surprised as REM's *Rotary Ten* is the next track, but it works because it is jazzy.

To Rustum popular music is another form of poetry, 'but it is no different from other sources of language in that a line of information from a newspaper report may also spur me on to writing.'

I'm about to leave and Rustum needs to go to the supermarket to buy groceries for dinner. He refuses my offer of a lift in my car, claiming he will get to the supermarket faster on foot, than in my car and through the traffic. Having never learnt to drive a car, walking is a big part of his life and also features in his writing. 'Walking brings you closer to your environment; you have to interact with your environment. Driving in a car you don't interact with the environment, you pass through it. I walk everywhere I go.' ■



Rustum Kozain

**ARTICLES FROM
THE TEACHER**

The Teacher, September 1998

FOR DEVELOPING ALL KINDS OF SKILLS



'I do': Two participants in an Imbali art workshop, with their hand-made costumes for a bride and bridesmaid

Art flowers

Tina-Louise Smith

A toddler's heaven: bagfuls of foam, squares of bubble plastic, sheets of foil and enough sellotape to wrap 10 mummies downstairs at the Gertrude Posel gallery on the Wits University campus.

But the child's play here was intended for teachers. Through activities like making costumes out of the various materials, the teachers were there to learn how to teach the critical interpretation of art.

The workshop was run by Imbali (which means "to flower" in Zulu), an educational project in arts and visual literacy started in 1988 that addresses the problem of inadequate teacher training in the arts. Imbali's aims are to enable teachers to develop and communicate visual literacy skills in their classrooms; to make art and art education accessible to as wide an audience as possible; and to promote awareness of South Africa's diverse and varied cultural heritage.

There was huge potential for fun in the bubble plastic and masking tape — but before the games could begin there was grown-up fun to be had.

The workshop participants gathered around the *Clothing and Identity* exhibition in the Gertrude Posel gallery. On display at the exhibition were various costumes from

central and Southern Africa. Some costumes raised a few eyebrows, like the incongruous traditional beadwork on modern takkies and the display of Xhosa traditional wear on a white mannequin. Despite our lack of expertise in the arts or around "traditional" clothing, there were many questions about whether garments were functional gear, or could be seen as art.

Joni Brenner, an Imbali facilitator, says as an ongoing process, the workshops will gradually equip teachers to teach art and integrate it with other subjects. They have reached thousands of children through training an average of 50 teachers per year, each of whom teaches approximately 80 learners per year.

Nicky Sekete, head of the human and social sciences department at Thaba-Jabula Secondary School in Soweto, said this was only his third visit to a gallery in his 49 years. He attended the weekend workshop because he wants to introduce arts at Thaba-Jabula.

He says he was never given the chance to develop his taste in art, but through the workshops, "I have learnt that I can develop my artistic appreciation and my scope has broadened." Sekete's next task is to negotiate art periods at the school with his principal. Imbali can be contacted through the co-ordinator Grania Oglive on (011) 486-2305.

How to make toothbrushes from a tree

Tina-Louise Smith

The preservation of our environment has always been a concern.

As part of environment studies at school it was drummed into our heads not to litter. Apart from being unsightly, how does litter impact on the environment and how does one make sure the message is understood by pupils?

The Freeme Rehabilitation Centre, situated in Paulshof outside Johannesburg, runs an interactive education programme that certainly helps get the message across. Israel Motswana, the deputy education officer, took the grade 1 group from Beaulieu Preparatory through photosynthesis, energy transformation and the food chain. The seven-year-olds had an impressive knowledge of photosynthesis and could name all the indigenous birds. Their teacher, Kenda Melville-Smith, explained: "Most of them live on large plots in Kyalami and are familiar with the wild." She also explained that their subject for the month was trees, hence the knowledge on plants and energy transformation.

Having brought a group the previous week, Melville-Smith praised the programme: "We bring them here to make them more environmentally aware and to see the conservation side. The last group learned so much."

A large pyramid of the food chain made



This way to paradise: exposure to nature's wonders goes a long way towards learning to care for the environment.
PHOTO: MAGRIET THERON

from big black pot-plant pots towers at the front of the education room. Each pot represents a link in the chain. Children are allowed to upset and destroy the food chain and then experience the challenge of rebuilding it.

After Motswana's talk, Susan Slotar, director of Freeme, spoke about rehabilitating wild animals. She stressed the importance of making sure a young animal was abandoned by watching it for a while, before moving it.

And what about littering? A plastic wrapper carelessly thrown on the ground out of the car window could be the trap that ensnares a bird in a branch. Its wings would be damaged and it would be unable to find food for itself and its young. The food chain then breaks down, and the bird and its young die along with the early morning songs we take for granted.

The next part of the programme consists of a walk around the 60-acre Rietfontein Nature Reserve. The children learn how

people in rural areas make toothbrushes from the Blue Guarri tree; how to use a Baboon's Tail as a torch; that the Sugar-bush grows on the eastern slope of a kopje; and how to trap birds with the Mistletoe berry.

The programme is slightly different for older children, and includes a slide show and a tour of the centre. Slotar says: "The younger children don't understand how important it is to keep quiet around injured animals, so we can't take them to see them."

Freeme is run by 14 volunteers and one full-time staff member who always needs to be around to help with transportation of animals. Slotar says they get up to 30 calls a day from the public for help for injured animals. The animals are not pets but are urban wildlife, mostly birds.

Slotar says the centre's biggest problem is young animals. Often the public brings in baby animals and birds they think have been abandoned or orphaned when they have simply been left alone while the parents are out feeding. Sometimes the young stray from their homes on their own and need to learn to find their way back.

The centre provides a valuable free opportunity for city children to experience the wild, gain an understanding of how it works and hopefully develop a sense of responsibility towards it.

For bookings contact Diane Sheard on (011) 803-9132 or 082-9907583.

MEDITATION HELPS LEARNERS TO FOCUS

Close your eyes, breathe deeply and learn well

Tina-Louise Smith

Twiddling thumbs does not have to be futile. Especially if you are between six and eight years old and learning how to concentrate. Some children play with their fingers while thinking through the words of a song - a mantra to themselves; others colour in pictures and some sit silently with their eyes closed. These are exercises in meditation for the children at Skeen Primary School in Alexandra township, Gauteng, where tranquility floats through the corridors before lessons start in the mornings.

Meditation has taken off in other schools in the area, which were approached by the Community and Individual Development Association, a non-profit organisation founded in 1979.

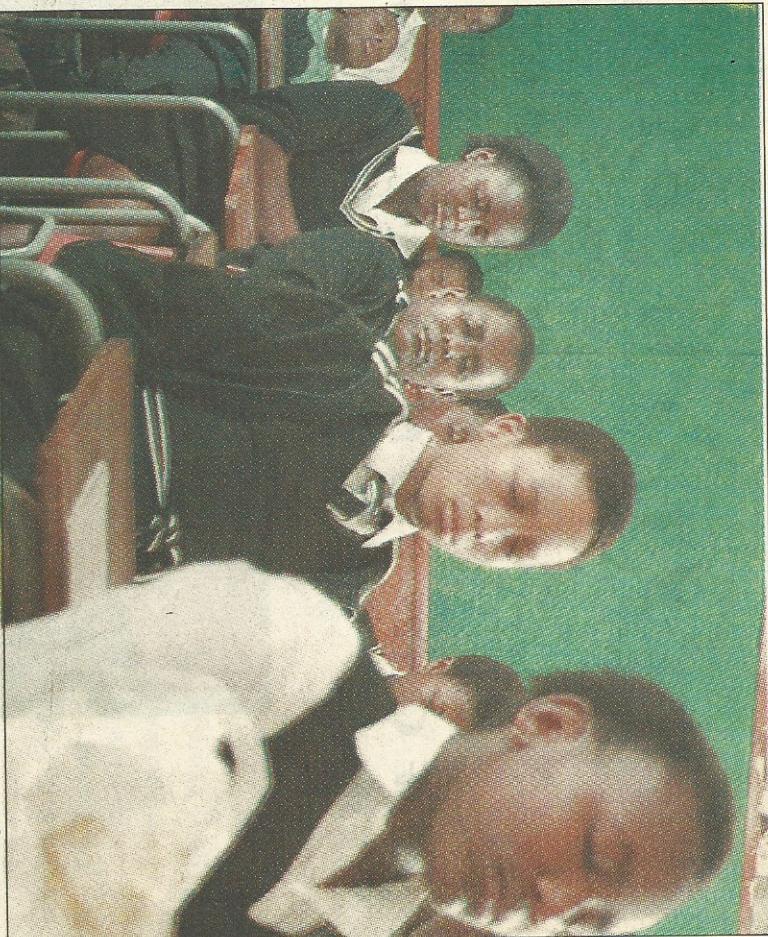
At Skeen and Kwa-Bhekilanga High school the teachers underwent training to experience the stress-relieving effects of meditation before it was introduced to the children.

Meditating helps Comfort Ramahnta, a teacher at Skeen, cope with the pressures

results have also improved since meditating. "In class I used to be position 10, but since meditating I'm position two or three. It makes me feel fine and calm."

The Gauteng Department of Education is unaware of this unusual development in schools. People spoken to were impressed and interested, but knew nothing about it saying it "was not a policy".

Lepule says the department would not be critical of meditation, as long as it is used positively and shows results.



Deep in concentration: These students may look like they're asleep, but actually they're preparing for a day of calm and learning.

PHOTO:MAGRIET THERON

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She says it has also "improved the relationship between the pupils and the teachers. We're friends now and the children respond to the teachers."

Victor Seanego, a teacher at Bhekilanga, says while he meditates he has "a deepening feeling". Despite this he does not meditate regularly. Because no one is compelled to meditate, he has to keep an eye on the children who do not participate during the sessions to make sure they do not disturb the meditators.

Abner Modiba, the principal of Skeen, says they experienced problems in the beginning when some of the teachers and parents thought the meditation was part of a religion. A similar situation arose at Bhekilanga and some people still think meditation is satanic. At Skeen, the idea behind meditation was explained to the teachers, while at Bhekilanga all are encouraged to participate, but no one is forced to.

Michael Lepule, principal of Bhekilanga, hopes more teachers will be convinced of the benefits when they see their colleagues' improved coping skills and performance.

Statistics from both schools show marked improvements in academic results and social interaction after the introduction of meditation, to which the improved pass rates at both schools have been attributed. Modiba says the meditation assists children to use their potential to the fullest.

At Bhekilanga they did not do much meditation at the beginning of this year and the June results were poor. The school has since recommitted itself to meditation at the start of and in the middle of the school day.

Lepule says their school was previously plagued with suicides. They used to attend a funeral every weekend for a pupil, but that has become something of the past. Elijah Seemela, a grade 11 pupil says meditating makes him feel good inside. His

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**ARTICLES FROM
RECONSTRUCT**

Welcome reprieve: the poor of Hillbrow wash their clothes and enjoy a hot shower



PHOTOGRAPHS: NEIL SPENCE

Homeless get to wash and scrub – for free

BY TINA LOUISE SMITH

Themba Mkoana lives on the streets of Hillbrow. Keeping clean is essential to him. "A normal person always tries to be clean. If you don't wash yourself you're going to stink," he says.

Mkoana is one of scores of homeless people who take advantage of the free public baths on Edith Cavell Street in Hillbrow. The cleanliness of the baths is a welcome relief from the filth of the streets from which the bathers have come.

The spotless showers, toilets and laundry area are there for homeless people to use between seven in the morning and eight at night on weekdays. For many, the baths, which were

opened in 1996 by the Eastern Metropolitan Local Council, offer the only possibility of maintaining a modicum of dignity.

People using the baths appreciate them and like the way they are run – in fact, they were instrumental in establishing the rules. Ivan Baniwa, the supervisor at the baths, says the municipality asked homeless people for recommendations on bath rules.

"They don't obey the public, but when they come in here they obey our rules. They don't smoke dagga, they can't sniff glue. They don't want that. Free soap and towels was their idea."

Dan Manakane has been using the showers since the end of last year. He does not come every day like other

bathers. Occasionally he showers at Hillbrow Recreation Centre, a facility some people prefer, he says. "There are also small boys who don't want to be clean. I always want to be clean because dirty is not good," he says.

Tuff Moya, who uses the showers every day, says some homeless people are misinformed. "Some people think they would be lowering their dignity by coming here. They don't know what's going on here and think it's a dirty place. I bring friends to show them and they always come back because they don't have to pay anything."

Most people hear about the baths from friends like Tuff. Sybil Claesen heard about them from her boyfriend

two months ago. Since then they both come every day. Standing in the shower with a cigarette dangling from her lips she says the facility affords her some independence. "I used to sometimes go to a friend's place, but it's better to shower here. It's free."

The facility is well maintained, with staff keeping strict, yet friendly, watch over everything. They control the taps: bathers may not spend longer than ten minutes in the shower.

The rules contribute to a calm, comfortable atmosphere. People come here for a reprieve and not only to wash away the indignity of the streets. "When I come I wash my body, my clothes and I relax. Sometimes I sit here for the whole day," Manakane

points to a corner in the laundry where two men crouch, their absent-minded gazes scanning the area. This space is theirs, even if it is only until eight o'clock.

An average of 9 000 to 10 000 people use the baths every month. The total for March was 12 839.

Angela Mathee, urban environmental management executive officer, says: "The number of people who use the baths, especially the one in Hillbrow [there is another on Albert Road in downtown Johannesburg] is a demonstration of its usefulness. We need more."

The poor of Hillbrow, who value the baths as a means to restore their dignity, would surely agree.



Model debates give pupils a taste of the UN

BY TINA LOUISE SMITH

Themes of global concern, including the US-imposed trade embargo on Cuba and the civil war in Sri Lanka, were uppermost on the minds of selected Gauteng school-goers this month.

Seventy-three schools participated in three South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) and Model United Nations of South Africa (Munsa) debates at Wits University.

Schools are randomly assigned a country to represent at the Model United Nations Security Council debates and are expected to do research and interview embassy staff to learn about their adopted country's policies.

Lee Scholtz, a teacher from Barnato Park High School - which represented Russia in the Cuban debate and won first prize - said the Cuban and Russian embassies had visited and held discussions with her pupils. Munsa tutors from Wits and Rand Afrikaans University helped pupils with general research and teachers were encouraged to help with research and motivation.

Diana Serrurier, SAIIA director of schools liaison, said much depended on whether teachers supported their pupils, although pupils from Helpmekaar private school were so enthusiastic that they entered without a teacher and still won a prize.

The debate on the civil war in Sri Lanka was one of the more reserved. Russian representatives, walking around in traditional attire and introducing themselves, seemed to be doing all diplomatic work. Representatives from Nigeria, the United States and China also dressed for the occasion, while other schools wore their uniforms.

Interviewed before the debates began, Britain's representative, Anastacia Makgato, said her team was confident because their research had included the Internet and visits to the Sri Lankan and British embassies. Makgato, from Maryvale College in

E Gumede and B van Biljoen from Parktown boys' high representing the United States at the mock Security Council meeting



PHOTOGRAPH: NEIL SPENCE

Orange Grove, said of the experience and the opportunity it presented: "It broadens your mind. I was not interested in outside matters before, but now I wake up at five o'clock in the morning to watch international news on television to know what's happening in the world."

Intervened before the debates began, Britain's representative, Anastacia Makgato, said her team was confident because their research had

included the Internet and visits to the Sri Lankan and British embassies.

Makgato, from Maryvale College in

up the corporate ladder. "I agreed to participate because it looks good on my CV."

Serrurier said the programme and the research it involved should "prevent rigidity in pupils' outlook when hearing other countries' arguments".

Formal arguments were followed by an informal caucus, which was abuzz with persuasive, earnest discussion as countries tried to convince others of their arguments.

Oranje Grove, said of the experience and the opportunity it presented: "It broadens your mind. I was not interested in outside matters before, but now I wake up at five o'clock in the morning to watch international news on television to know what's happening in the world."

Kerwin Martin appears to have learnt a lot more about the workings of the rat race and saw the exercise as an opportunity to enhance his progress

Serrurier noted a change in the demographics since the programme was launched in 1994. "The representatives have changed from predominantly white to predominantly black, with a predominance of females."

Now that pupils know how the UN

works, do they think the existence of

the organisation is worthwhile? How

critical has their thought become?

Thobile Dlame, from Barnato Park

high school, said: "The UN is a good or-

ganisation because it tries to get people communicating."

But the debate on the Cuban trade embargo ended with the United States vetoing a majority decision of the Security Council to lift the embargo and begin negotiations with Cuba and this frustrated her: "I don't understand this right to veto. What's the point, if all the countries agree? How can one country have so much power?"

Developmental theatre tackles social issues

Ceasefire has an arty solution to violence

BY TINA LOUISE SMITH

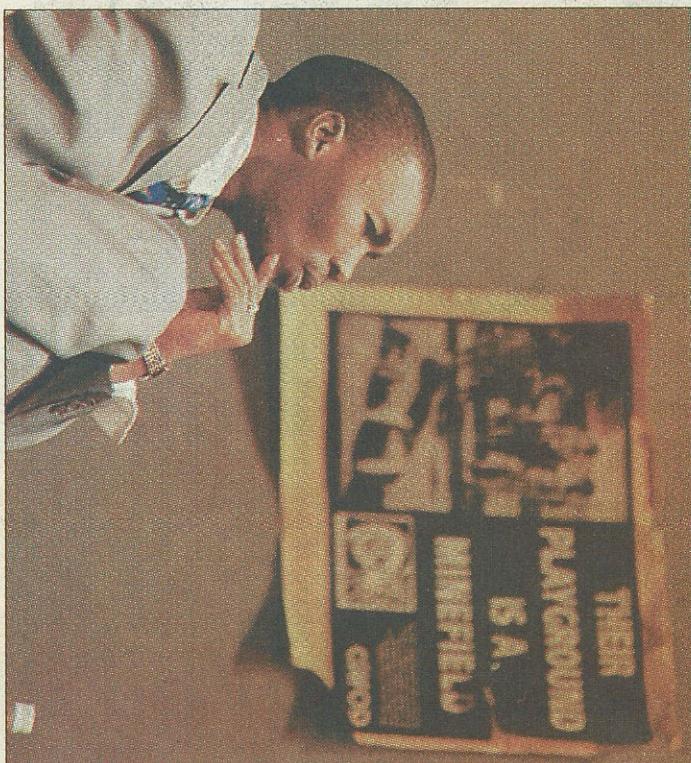
Talk of violence and crime in South Africa seems inescapable. But talk leads to hot air and hot heads.

Ceasefire Campaign, a non-governmental organisation that sprang up out of the End Conscription Campaign in 1993, on the other hand, is doing more than just talking.

The organisation that once urged the country to "use the ballot not the bullet" now concentrates its efforts on international demilitarisation and resistance to war. One of Ceasefire's latest projects is a stage production called *The Other Side of the Coin*, written and directed by Kennedy Mabasa. As part of his research, Mabasa attended a "defence management" course with members of the South African National Defence Force and delved into the country's defence and foreign policies.

Mabasa uses the play to comment on and criticise South Africa's highly militarised society. He wants to raise public consciousness and encourage community debate around arms manufacturing and the militarisation of society. The play has been performed at schools, churches and trade unions in the past two months. In the play, he depicts violence as a product of greed. Nandi, one of the characters, says: "If there's no war, we'll create a war so we can sell weapons." Nandi is actively involved in peace campaigning, while Thami hides his arms dealings from her. One day he forgets his files at home and Nandi discovers his secret. Thami tries to appease her with feigned agreement and sarcastic comments. When Nandi says: "I thought you were committed to life," Thami's frivolous reply is: "I am committed to life. Don't take the pill tonight, baby."

The play carries the audience with jokes and puns and the bulk of



Michael Sishanga in *The Other Side of the Coin* PHOTOGRAPHS: NEIL SPENCE

After the performance the cast (Nosipho Malotana, Michael Sishanga, Bheki Vilakazi and Sipho Radebe) and Helike Spiegelberg, Ceasefire's co-ordinator, invite questions from the audience. This week's audience in Vereeniging was a group of local drama students.

Two members of the audience expressed concern about the authenticity of the information in the play, but Mabasa confirmed its accuracy.

Another concern was that people employed in arms manufacturing would continue manufacturing at home if the industry was shut down. Ceasefire members said that stopping arms production did not necessarily decrease job opportunities.

In the play, Nandi frequently suggests that the money spent on weapons manufacturing would be better

structure" are constant messages.

Thami argues: "A lot of money was spent by the past regime on the training of these guys (scientists). Imagine, if we don't use them and the equipment they built, how much money would be wasted."

Nandi's response is to convert from an industry that kills people to one that benefits civilians: "Spend money on manufacturing books, on giving people water and schools."

An audience member stood up and declared passionately: "We need

arms before and may still need them now."

Another responded: "The reality is we must decide what kind of culture we want to build. We are not free until we destroy the culture of war." He was cheered and applauded.

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The only way is up for Abet student

BY TINA LOUISE SMITH

As a child, 40-year-old Annah Lekwape dreamt of being a social worker to help people in her community, but her parents could not afford to send her to university.

She found employment at Automatic Systems Manufacturing (ASM) in Johannesburg and decided she wanted to be a leader. At the time, she recognised a need for change within ASM in certain areas, but she was too scared to say anything.

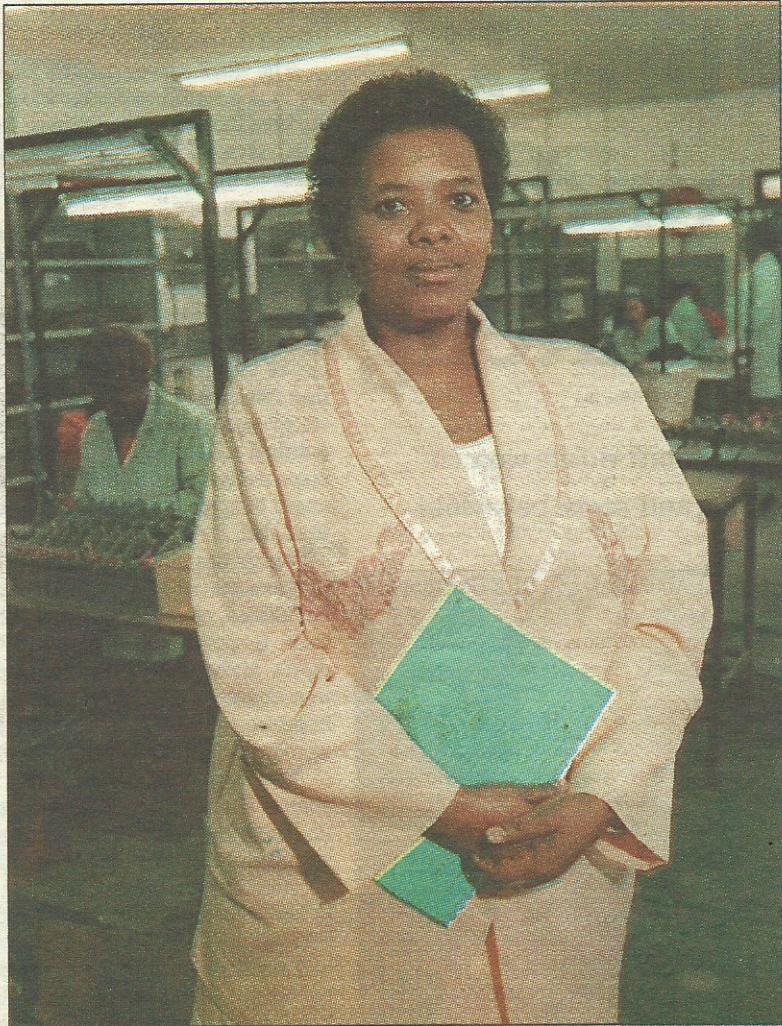
Unsure about her English skills, Lekwape felt unable to express herself. But she was determined to overcome her insecurities and follow her vision of a leadership position. She enrolled in a "production and supervision" course at Damelin College.

She soon realised that she needed to improve her English. So last year she enrolled in ASM's Adult Basic Education and Training (Abet) programme at level four. The course gave her the confidence she needed and not long after enrolling, she began speaking out at meetings with management.

Taking the Abet course has affected all aspects of her life, not only in the workplace. "Before I wasn't interested in the news, but because of Abet, I read the newspaper and watch the news on TV. And with shopping and hire purchase I didn't know my rights. I would just sign contracts, but Abet taught me to read before I sign."

Reading contracts is one of the many lifeskills Abet teaches people. Even for literate people, contracts are a chore, but for those who do not know how to read, contracts are a bewildering array of words and letters.

Since graduating from her level four course, Lekwape was selected



Annah Lekwape, a supervisor at Automatic Systems Manufacturing, has set her sights on a management position

PHOTOGRAPH: LORI WASELCHUK

from three ASM employees to attend a women's supervisory course. She believes the Abet course equipped her with the skills she needed to motivate her application in a covering letter. Her confidence in her skills enabled her to articulate her understanding of the company's mission and values and her desire to help the company grow. Lekwape says she always had a vision of her role in the company, "but I am not sure I would have expressed myself [without having done the Abet course] the way I wrote it in the letter."

Lekwape is enthusiastic about the level five course and hopes the company will sponsor her. For her, the only way is up. "If I know English it can help me apply for a management posi-

tion, and actually my career does not end there. Maybe I can be a director one day," she says, her eyes sparkling.

Lekwape believes as a production supervisor she can help colleagues, because "I can guide and motivate them". She says Abet teaches people to know themselves. The patriarchal culture she grew up in determines that decisions about one's future were made by the husband, father or grandfather. Women are not allowed to think about who they are and what they would like to do. "They only teach us to go to the field and carry a bucket in our culture. But it [Abet] opens your eyes, opens your ears – it makes you think about what you can be in life. It opens everything to you."