

Editorial

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In this issue of *Image & Text* the topics range from zombie-like spectatorship to the asylum. The media covered includes magazines, film, photography, art installation and digital interfaces. The South African cultural landscape is particularly framed with contributions on the local film industry and women's magazines, the archive and remembrance. In an attempt to make the transition from a print-based journal to an exclusively online version, readers may notice a slight change in the layout and look of this issue of *Image & Text*. The new appearance, which will be finalised in the next issue, enhances the topics and themes covered by the journal. The six articles presented, although varying in tone and approach, confirm the quality of contemporary and local research in visual cultures.

The first article, 'The cinema of Willie Esterhuizen: the quest for sex and hegemonic masculinity' by Chris Broodryk sets the scene for a critical discussion of how the populist films by Willie Esterhuizen explicitly present an affirmative heteronormative hegemonic masculinity despite the possibilities readily available to destabilise, even queering, dominant masculinity. Broodryk reads Esterhuizen's films in terms of their consistent safe-making of homoerotic possibilities by investigating his comedies: *Lipstiek Dipstiek* (1994), *Poena is Koning* (2007), *Vaatjie Sien Sy Gat* (2008) and *Stoute Boudjies* (2010). In his analysis Broodryk presents a provocative interpretation of post-apartheid white masculinity and how threats to heteronormative masculinity are consistently trumped by hegemonic masculinity.

In Landi Raubenheimer's 'Spectatorship of screen media; land of the zombies?' the cinema is exchanged for an investigation of spectatorship of screen media. Raubenheimer challenges the assumption that the advent of digital media has re-formulated spectatorship as more active than earlier screen spectatorship in terms of meaning making. The main argument put forward is that screen spectatorship is not in fact as active as it appears to be. In fact, Raubenheimer suggests that spectators are often performing what she terms 'dialectical zombie-like spectatorship', which may appear active but in fact is more distracted. She proposes that active spectatorship is in fact simulated and to some extent just as programmed and as reliant on sensual over-stimulation as the antiquated 'cinema of attractions' was.

The third article by Hettie Mans and Jenni Lauwrens, 'Christian-Afrikaans women under construction: an analysis of gender ideology in *Finesse* and *Lééf*', explores the nature of a particular kind of femininity, which they coin as 'Christian-Afrikaans femininity'. Lauwrens and Mans propose that the

rise of glossy magazines over the last two decades, specifically post-apartheid, aimed particularly at Christian-Afrikaans women in South Africa, may be linked to a so-called crisis of cultural identity facing (white) Afrikaans speaking people. They narrow their focus on the way in which 'Christian-Afrikaans femininity' is constructed in *Finesse* and *Lééf*. The article ultimately exposes the naturalised and normative construction of Christian-Afrikaans femininity by these magazines and so contributes to the growing field of research on the relation between Afrikaans and national Christianity.

James Sey exposes another type of obfuscation in 'Sublimation and reversibility: technologies of vision, the X-ray, and looking at paintings', by examining the use of X-rays in art. His analysis moves beyond the mere revealing of layers of paint and other materials during the process of restoration of paintings to suggest a more complex layer of meaning making. Sey suggests that the X-ray also reveals a temporal dimension to the works, by showing that which has gone before and this unseen dimension may ultimately become part of the painting's meaning. He inquires: 'Is what we see when we look at the works the primary image, or can the obscured image recaptured by the machine come to replace the 'finished' work in terms of time, space and meaning?' By making the link between the different time layers, Sey problematises the link between vision and aesthetic meaning itself.

The local political and cultural landscape is addressed in Rita Swanepoel's, 'Kuns en die verwerking van die verlede' (Art and coming to terms with the past), the fifth article in this edition. Swanepoel assesses the state of the South African democracy after apartheid and the continued burden of a past characterised by racial tension. She then tasks herself to explore the role art could play in order to make peace with a difficult past, by interpreting two works of Willem Boshoff, namely *Panifice* (2001) and *Writing in the Sand* (2000). The theoretical assistance of Paul Ricoeur and his plea for a new perspective through an imaginative engagement with history, as well as on Giorgi Verbeeck's insights on looking at the past from a contemporary perspective and *milieu*, are called upon to enable her analysis.

Finally, Rory du Plessis shares his research on the Grahamstown Lunatic Asylum under the medical superintendency of Dr Thomas Duncan Greenlees (1890-1907), in 'Promoting and popularising the asylum: photography and asylum image making at the Grahamstown lunatic asylum, 1890-1907'. Du Plessis cleverly explores how Greenlees promoted and popularised the asylum in order to gain custom from private patients. He does this by showing that one way in which Greenlees created patronage was through the cultivation of a public image of the asylum as ideally suited to the care of middle class patients as well as promising restoration and recuperation from insanity. This means the image making of the asylum provided a vital tool to counter public fears and stigma. Greenlees's image-making could probably on some level be interpreted as creating an iconology of the insane, which adds to Du Plessis's engagement.

As all editors probably know, getting an issue ready is no easy task. In this case there are two angels who assisted in bringing this issue together, they know who they are. My sincerest gratitude.