

IK BEN EEN
AFRIKANDER
THE UNEQUAL CONVERSATION

"Being an 'Afrikaner' is not a simple task, and the complexity is evident in translating the word, as it has different meanings in different languages."

- Mandy Rossouw, Political Editor, City Press;
Ik Ben Een Afrikaner, Catalogue Essay, 2012

IK BEN EEN AFRIKANDER

THE UNEQUAL CONVERSATION

Ik Ben Een Afrikander is an ongoing project curated by Teresa Lizamore under the auspices of Lizamore & Associates.

Lizamore explains: *"When we initially decided to do an exhibition based on the exploration of the Afrikaner's place as an African, little did we realise how overwhelming the response would be. The curatorial narrative took as its cue the first person recorded (according to legend) to have identified himself as an Afrikaner, Hendrik Biebouw. In March 1707 he proclaimed 'Ik ben een Afrikander,' when he was threatened with expulsion from the Cape as he did not want to leave South Africa and his use of the phrase at the time was meant to claim his 'Africanness'".*

The first *Ik Ben Een Afrikander* exhibition at Artpsace (now Lizamore & Associates) in 2011 attracted significant critical response and media attention. This exhibition was then followed by a second exhibition at the 2012 Stellenbosch University Word Fest and a third exhibition at the 2012 Absa Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees (KKNK), where *Ik Ben Een Afrikander* received a Kanna nomination for

best visual art exhibition. *Ik Ben Een Afrikander: The Unequal Conversation* will be exhibited during 2015 and early 2016.

Lizamore comments about *The Unequal Conversation*: *"When identifying artists for this show, we looked to significant names whose artistic practice would lend itself to this narrative. Upon looking at our list, we realised that, like other industries, a pattern started emerging that gave us a new insight. Looking at artists who have established important careers in South Africa, our list became very heavily weighted toward white male artists."*

This exhibition showcases four white male artists, Strijdom van der Merwe, Hentie van der Merwe, Luan Nel and Jan van der Merwe, in conversation with one white female, Rosemarie Marriot and one black female artist, Senzeni Marasela, all of whom were born and came to maturity well prior to 1994. Their formative years, whether moving from childhood to adulthood, or as adults climbing the ladder of artistic success, all coincide with South Africa's transition to democracy.



ABOUT THE CURATOR

TERESA LIZAMORE

Lizamore & Associates: Director and Curator

Over the past 31 years, Teresa Lizamore has developed a sound career in the industry, as gallerist, art consultant and curator. Lizamore's interest in the industry developed during her early years as a student at the then Rand Afrikaans University (now University of Johannesburg), where she studied history of art. She went on to obtain formal qualifications in public relations from The Public Relations Institute of South Africa and interior design from the Boston College in Rosebank. Her work as a public relations practitioner, art consultant and gallery director has merged her interests and experience with an entrepreneurial spirit.

Lizamore served as the curator for the Sasol Art Collection between 1982 and 2009, building the collection to over 2000 pieces of contemporary South African art. This collection is recognised as one of the premier collections of contemporary South African art. Serving as advisor and curator to Rand Merchant Bank since 1994, she manages the Bank's collection of approximately 1500 works. During her career she has worked on several other corporate collections and projects including Telkom, DBSA, ATKV, The Brett Kebble Art Award, and McKinsey Incorporated. Lizamore was a recipient of an Association of Arts Award in 2010, for service to the industry.

She started Lizamore & Associates in Fairland, Johannesburg in 2001 and moved to the Rosebank Artstrip in 2008. Artists such as Wayne Barker, Karin Preller, Judith Mason, Colbert Mashile, Collen Maswanganyi, Mbongeni Buthelezi, Walter Oltmann, Richard Smith and Angus Taylor have all shown with Lizamore, in a series of solo and group exhibitions. She continues to show established artists while actively giving opportunities to a new generation of voices on the contemporary scene. Lizamore manages a series of programmes and projects under the auspices of the gallery, including the *Lizamore & Associates Mentorship Programme*, the *Ik Ben Een Afrikaner* project and the *SA Taxi Foundation Art Award*. Furthermore, Lizamore has worked extensively on the festival circuit and other visual art projects (such as the Sandton Benchmark Project) and has been showing at various Art Fairs over the last couple of years.



SENZENI MARASELA

I have chosen an image found in my Standard 3 (Grade 5) history book about the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck. This image forms part of a larger body of work that will look at blurring iconic imagery of 'arriving in South Africa'. While this image also acknowledges the indigenous people found here, it is the later images of Pieterneef that totally omit any signs of life, especially of black people. In this earlier image, arriving in the Cape is not a fantasy but an experience imagined to be real.

Pan Africanism is reclaiming the term 'Afrikaner', preferring to call black people Africans. I believe that Afrikaner is neither in English or Afrikaans, rather located in the middle of two languages. Revisiting iconic painting is a permanent part of what I do. Repetition acts as a form of emphasis.



Senzeni Marasela. *Arrival 1652 I - VII* (Detail). 2015. Watercolour on Fabriano, 24 x 32 cm each

ROSEMARY MARRIOTT

My sculptures explore the transformation of materials and themes that have a strong connection to my own familial background, having grown up on a farm in the Kuruman district of the Northern Cape.

My sculptures deal with both the protection and loss of innocence. I play with the concept of cognitive dissonance and the unease, discomfort and disequilibrium it causes.

In social psychology, the theory of cognitive dissonance purports that people have a motivational determination to diminish dissonance by changing prevailing perceptions, adding new perceptions to create a harmonious and constant belief system, or alternatively by lessening the importance of any one of the discordant elements.

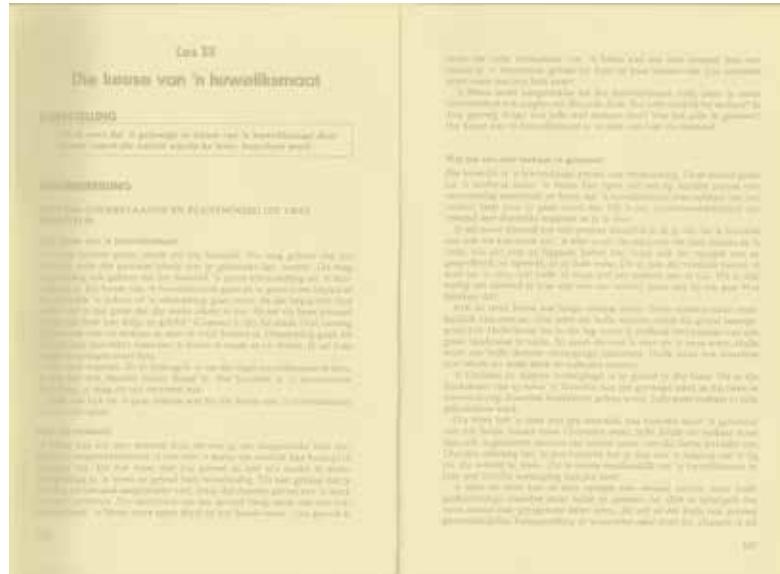
'Cognitive dissonance' is the upsetting mental state that humans feel when they find themselves doing (or seeing) things that don't correspond with what they know, or having opinions that do not fit with opinions previously held. The notion that humans want their expectations to meet reality, thus creating a sense of equilibrium or harmony, is a significant supposition of the theory. Similarly, another supposition is that humans will avoid circumstances or information sources that give rise to feelings of discomfort, or dissonance.

I try to encapsulate 'cognitive dissonant' notions of innocence and the loss of innocence, naivety, evil, pain, delusion, soiling, learning, offering, interpreting, protecting, healing, concealing, sheltering, warming and vulnerability in my work. I hope that my work



Rosemarie Marriott. *Tablo (tableau - 'silent and motionless group of persons etc. ...')*. 2015. Ceramic installation, Dimensions variable

Katkisasie lesse/Catechism lessons (Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk)



Sylwe/Sylphs



Onthaal/Reception



Seremonie/Ceremony

From the outset my contribution to Ik Ben Een Afrikaner focused on the type of Afrikaner I was born as or perhaps born into - Afrikaans. To me the word Afrikaner is distinctly wider than the word Afrikaner. The term Afrikaner could include anybody who views themselves as African. It can be wider than mere ethnicity/race or colour. In that sense it is an inclusive term, or it is supposed to be. I liken it to what John F. Kennedy famously said: 'Ich ben ein Berliner' meaning he sees himself as a type of 'refreshment', a 'hot dog' of sorts. This was a mistake. He meant he views himself as of or from Berlin, he identifies with Berlin and its people. To say 'I AM' means to identify with, be part of an idea, a country, a people, and a movement. It shows solidarity.

I will not be highlighting my 'Africanness'; I present the viewer with a selection of pages from my confirmation booklet. The history of the Afrikaner and their ties to the continent are forever linked with the teachings of the Dutch Reformed Church. The narrative of the Israelites in search of the 'Promised Land' is one that was inculcated from a very early age and in such a way that the congregation (and wider) identified with these people and their apparent plight. In this analogous reading of the Old Testament lies the seed and the fuel for a nationalism that has wrecked havoc upon this part of the continent and the lives of so many for so very long. It separates and the focus is inward. It can be argued that it was necessary; it was a tool for survival. This may have been the case, but at what cost? The legacy of this will live with us

forever. My relationship with the church of which I am a member is at best a fraught one. I do not intend to stand in judgment of their teachings. It is however impossible for me to ignore one of the building blocks in constructing the type of Afrikaner I was supposed to be: an Afrikaner man. All these years I have kept my confirmation textbook from which many lessons were taught. I paged through it recently and found it so useful in understanding where, to a considerable extent, not only mine but also my family's identity was moulded. The other thing that became very apparent was the differences in my life and those of the life prescribed.

I merely present documents and images that show my making and my failings or shortcomings as this construct - white, male, heterosexual, Afrikaner. My work might also show the incongruities and anomalies that religious instruction - from a colonialist, nationalist, patriarchal, heterosexist point of view - leaves behind. I am also simply telling or presenting a love story, a few in fact.

HENTIE VAN DER MERWE



Liewe Heksie (Afrikaans for 'Dear Little Witch') is an Afrikaans work of fiction created by children's book author Verna Vels in 1961. It centres around Liewe Heksie a rather incompetent and forgetful witch, who lives with her friends the elves in Blommeland and whose foolishness and lack of magic skills leads to many funny situations. The Liewe Heksie-series started off as radio stories, but was followed by books and stories on vinyl record. In 1981 it was made into a popular Afrikaans language children's television programme, directed by children's programme writer and director Louise Smit.

My early childhood evenings were spent in front of the TV watching children's programmes, chief amongst which was the Liewe Heksie-series. The series' clumsy puppetry didn't prevent my childhood imagination from being ignited and the absurd world of Blommeland became for me one of the first entry-points into the world, and left a lasting impression on my understanding of myself in relation to that world, which at the time was apartheid South Africa/Namibia.

I was fortunate recently to meet the person who currently looks after the puppets from the early SABC children's programmes for television, such as those from the Liewe Heksie-series, and he generously allowed me to photograph the puppets.

JAN VAN DER MERWE



Stof op my Schoene / Dust on my shoes consists of a man's jacket, pants and tie, draped over a clothing stand, all made from rusty metal. On the floor in front of the stand, a repeating image of shoes being polished is displayed on a television monitor. The television monitor and clothing stand are both placed on a rusted metal floor plate.

Dust on your shoes speaks of and is a confirmation of your engagement with your home and work space as well as the place of your birth and death. The daily cleaning is a way to prepare yourself anew, to prepare and to complete a conversation with yourself.

Jan van der Merwe. *Stof op my skoene / Dust on my shoes*. 2015. Rusted steel, found objects, TV screen and film, 115 x 100 x 100 cm

STRIJDOM VAN DER MERWE

As an Afrikaner I had to live through historical experiences and changes that have formed this land, from the influx of the European settlers, to colonialism, to the establishment of a republic under apartheid laws, to the process of freedom for all in a democratic country.

You are shaped and formed by all of these and as a human being you have to adjust and adapt to all these changes and reconnect your life in ways that hold the past, respect the present and honour the future. As Afrikaners we have the ability to adapt and change, we have become like chameleons that hold their identity in an ever-changing society. Constantly stitching our lives together. These three photos of myself sitting on a chair in the Karoo, stitching 3 flags together, represent the largest part of our history: British Colony, Republic (apartheid) and South Africa as a Democratic Country.



Strijdom van der Merwe. *Constantly stitching our lives together*. 2015. Photographic documentation of performance piece in the Karoo landscape printed on Somerset Velvet - 225 gsm, acid free, cotton paper, mould made, 110 x110 cm, Edition of 3

**Photographer: Jan Menzel

SENZENI MARASELA

Senzeni was born in 1977 in Boksburg, South Africa. She studied at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg where she obtained a BA Fine Arts degree in 1998. She has taken part in numerous South African shows and was an artist in residence at the Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town in 2000. In 2002 she was a recipient of the Thami Mnyeale Scholarship.

Senzeni participated in numerous group exhibitions including *Truth Veils* at the Gertrude Posel Gallery at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1999; *Upstream Public Art Exhibition* at Umea, Sweden, 2000; *Portrait Afrika* at Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin, Germany, 2000; *Translation/Seduction/Displacement* at White Box in New York, USA, 2000; *Margins in the Mainstream* at the Namibian National Gallery in Windhoek, 2000; *Art Region End of Africa* (A.R.E.A.) at Listasafn Reykjavikur Kjarvalsstadir in Reykjavik, Iceland, 2000; *AIDS in Africa* at Wesleyan Women's College in Boston, USA, 2002, and *Body and the Archive, Artists' Spaces* in New York, 2003. Her work features in prominent local and international collections including the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

ROSEMARY MARRIOTT

Rosemarie Marriott was born in the Kuruman district, Northern Cape, South Africa where she grew up on a farm. She obtained a BA degree from UNISA in 1974 and an Advanced Diploma in Fine Arts from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg in 1996.

Marriott has had numerous solo exhibitions since 1986 and has also participated in group exhibitions. Her work can be found in private, public and corporate collections in South Africa and abroad.

A paramount force in her art-making practice is the combined act of collecting material such as animal skin or parts (from taxidermists and local farms) and the visceral transformation of this material into often tender or startling new forms. Marriott's intuitive responses to the specific tactility, texture and colour of chosen material (skins, bones, etc.) dictates how far the material can be manipulated and transformed. Inchoate ideas develop through working in a labour-intensive way, recognising the potency of the dead animal and realising a new sculptural incarnation from that close proximity and touch. The redemptive quality of giving renewed life to dead or discarded objects is a primary motivation in her work.

LUAN NEL

Luan Nel received his BA Fine Arts in 1993 and his Higher Diploma in Education in 1994 from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. In 1994 he won the Judges Prize in The Sasol New Signatures Competition. In 1998 and 1999 he participated in the artist's residency at The Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam. In 1999 he also did a research residency at The Dutch Institute in Rome. Nel has had various solo exhibitions including at the Carlton Centre parking lot in Johannesburg in 1996.

Group exhibitions include *Taking Stock*, at the Johannesburg Stock Exchange in 1997 and *Lustwarande* at the Pleasure-Garden in Tillburg, The Netherlands in 2000. Nel's work is included in many private and corporate collections, including The Johannesburg Art Gallery, SABC, The Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Sasol, Hollard and KPMG.

HENTIE VAN DER MERWE

Hentie van der Merwe lives in Cape Town where he also has his studio. He is a senior lecturer in the Department of Visual Arts, Stellenbosch University. He was born in Windhoek, Namibia in 1972 and studied at the University of the Witwatersrand where he obtained both his Bachelors and Masters Degrees in Fine Arts. Between 2000 and 2002 he attended the Higher Institute for Fine Arts (HISK) in Antwerp and in 2001 the prestigious Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine, USA. He has had a number of solo exhibitions in both South Africa and Europe (Tim van Laere Gallery, Antwerp, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg and Cape Town and Galerie Gabriele Rivet, Cologne). He has also taken part in numerous group exhibitions both in South Africa and internationally, some of which were curated by acclaimed international curators such as Jan Hoet. Group exhibitions include *My Private Heroes* in MARTa Herford, Germany in 2005 and *Okwui Enwezor, Snap Judgements: New Positions in Contemporary African Photography* at the International Center of Photography, New York in 2006. In 2002 he won the prize for best visual artist at the BIG Torino 2002 International Biennale of Young Art curated by Michelangelo Pistoletto and in 2008 the Sasol Wax Art Award in South Africa.

JAN VAN DER MERWE

Jan van der Merwe has been a practicing artist for the past 38 years (1977 – 2015). He has an extensive career as an art lecturer, has produced a significant body of artwork and has published numerous academic articles. His work is also featured as source material for secondary and tertiary visual arts students. From 1980 - 1988, Van der Merwe worked as an artist in various posts outside the academic field, e.g. at the State Theatre and at the Bureau of Heraldry. In 1989 he accepted a post as Lecturer in the Department of Entertainment Technology, Tshwane University of Technology (TUT). During this time he completed an MTech in Fine Art and was promoted to Senior Lecturer.

Since 1977 Jan has been a practicing artist, constantly producing artwork and taking part in exhibitions. During this time he has had 17 solo exhibitions, has taken part in approximately 138 national group exhibitions and in 19 international group exhibitions. He has also been the recipient of various awards or has been nominated for awards, pertaining to his career both as lecturer and artist.

STIJDOM VAN DER MERWE

In 1983 he obtained a BA degree in Fine Arts from the University of Stellenbosch and finished a BA Honours degree in Fine Arts in 1984 at the same university. From 1984 onwards he worked as a graphic designer and in 1990 received a bursary from the Dutch Government to study printmaking at the Hooge School voor de Kunste in Utrecht, Holland. In 1992 he became head graphic designer at the graphic design studio of the University of Stellenbosch. From 1993 - 1995 he also lectured computer graphics in the Art Department of the University of Stellenbosch. During 1995 he studied sculpture for six months at the Academy of Art, Architecture & Design in Praha, the Czech Republic and went on to become artist in residence at the Kent Institute of Art and Design, Canterbury, England in 1995/1996. Since 1996 he has been working full time as an artist.

Strijdom was invited to participate in numerous exhibitions and commissions in South Korea, Turkey, Belgium, France, Sweden, Lithuania, Japan, Australia, Germany, Kenya, England, Italy, Finland, Norway and Belgium. He has held many personal exhibitions in various art galleries and his work has been bought by numerous private and public collectors locally and abroad.

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