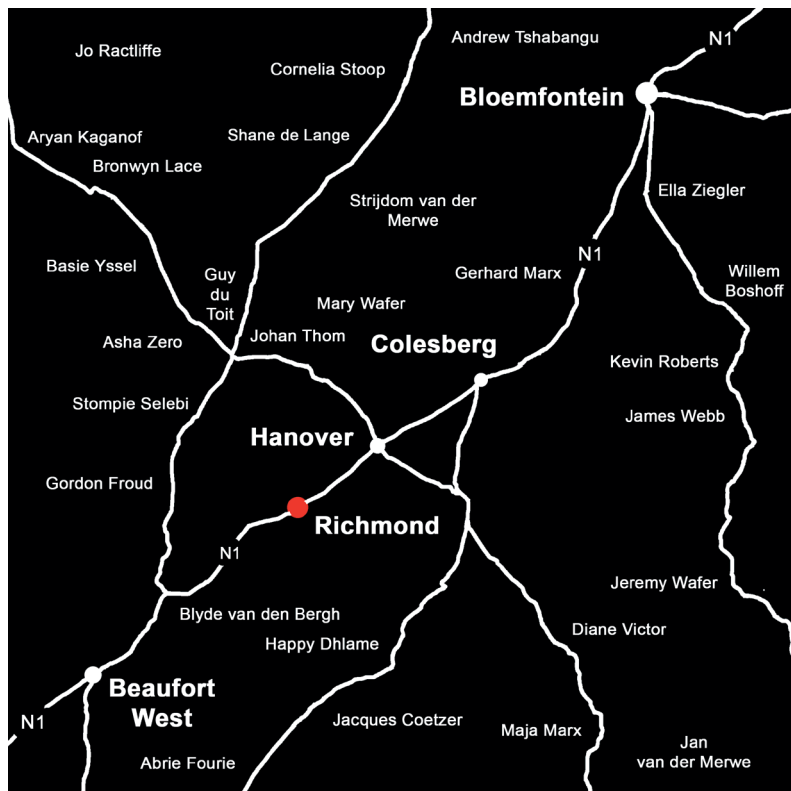


AWAY









Inside Away
by Miranthe Staden-Garbett

AWAY is a group exhibition that marks the opening of a new Map gallery and artist's retreat in Richmond. Tucked away in the Karoo, this quaint town provided a singular context for a contemporary art exhibition. Featuring artworks by 27 South African artists, most of whom live and work in Gauteng and Cape Town, and curated jointly by Shane de Lange¹, Mary Wafer² and Abrie Fourie², AWAY was a collaboration entered into enthusiastically and generously by all concerned.

The logistics entailed in carting dozens of artworks, including large-scale installations, hundreds of kilometers, were intimidating, but the parties involved were not deterred. On the contrary this strategic detour was taken with impressive commitment and verve. Of the twenty nine artists whose work was on display, many made the pilgrimage to Richmond in person, with families and friends in tow. A lively trail of them came and went – delivering, installing, visiting – creating a relaxed and intimate environment.

When I arrived, early in December 2007, work on the venue was still in progress and this corner of sleepy Richmond was a hive of activity. The gallery, a renovated supermarket, is a striking presence in the town and, at the time, a source of much curiosity and speculation. This sprawling art space compares favourably with urban venues, facilitating ample viewing distance and an uncluttered, minimalist environment conducive to perambulation and contemplations.

The opening was a resounding success, twice, on the same Sunday. The whole town pitched up to join in the festivities which began in the morning after church service and continued well into the evening. Not the usual suspects, this crowd consisted of families and lots of kids asking lots of questions. This exhibition was not an excuse for idle, mildly intoxicated-on-free-wine chatter and the customary exchange of phone numbers. Here the art was the main attraction. Admittedly its novelty held great appeal. From the perspective of Richmond's community, it is the cosmopolitan art world that is far away.

What the locals as well as the odd tourist were treated to was an interesting selection of recent works by practicing contemporary artists, ranging from traditional media to

more conceptually based texts, videos and installations. This included paintings by Mary Wafer, Shane de Lange and Asha Zero, prints by Basie Yssel, Diane Victor and Blyde van der Berg, drawings by Kevin Roberts and Maya Marx, sculptures by Jacques Coetzer, Guy du Toit, Gordon Froud and Cornelia Stoop, collages by Stompie Selibe, Happy Dhlame and Gerhard Marx, photographs by Bronwyn Lace, Andrew Tshabangu and Jeremy Wafer, text-based works by Ella Ziegler, Aryan Kaganoff and Abrie Fourie, videos by Johan Thom and Jo Ractliffe and installations by Willem Boshoff, Jan van der Merwe and James Webb.

Despite the lack of a unifying theme, correspondences emerged between diverse artists, suggesting common ground and shared concerns, such as the pace and price of city life, crime and consumer culture.

The desolate and tranquil Karoo is an antidote to those ubiquitous urban forces, providing a welcome break from routine and an opportunity to still the mind and absorb other perspectives. Since this was a site-specific exhibition the Karoo landscape was a source of inspiration and material in stark contrast to those works reflecting on city life. Mary Wafer and Jo Ractliffe both had work centred around the N1 freeway, while Willem Boshoff and

Strijdom van der Merwe assimilated elements from the immediate environs. Willem Boshoff's *Skoob* is an installation of over one hundred bibles in different languages, opened to famous verses dealing with the nature of love in Corinthians and Exodus and weighed down with hundreds of white rocks painted on site with the help of the local community. It is reassembled and resuscitated at each new venue using available resources. Strijdom van der Merwe, trying to reconcile the differences between maps and real territory, dramatically burnt a path of fire through the Karoo landscape, much to the bemusement of local onlookers.

AWAY was conceived with this remote space in mind, creating the opportunity for a more spontaneous dynamic to emerge. A deliberate wandering off the beaten track, AWAY was undertaken in the spirit of experiment and adventure, eschewing commercial means and ends.

1. Art editor for *A Look Away* arts magazine

2. Map coordinators



















see⁸ /si:/ v (pt saw/sɔ:/, pp seen /si:n/)

> USING THE EYES 1 [Tn, Tf, Tw, Tng, Tni] (not in the continuous tenses) become aware of (sb/st) by using the eyes; perceive: *Abrie looked for Ella but couldn't see her in the crowd.* • *Ella looked out of the window but saw nothing.* • *Abrie could see (that) Ella had been crying.* • *If Raoul watches carefully he will see how Abrie did it.* • *Did you see what happened?* • *Abrie hates to see Ella so unhappy, i.e. in such an unhappy state.* • *Ella was running away from the scene of the crime.* • *Ella saw Abrie put the key in the lock, turn it and open the door.* • *Ella was seen to enter the building about the time the crime was committed.*

Text according to: Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English,
Oxford University Press, 1989

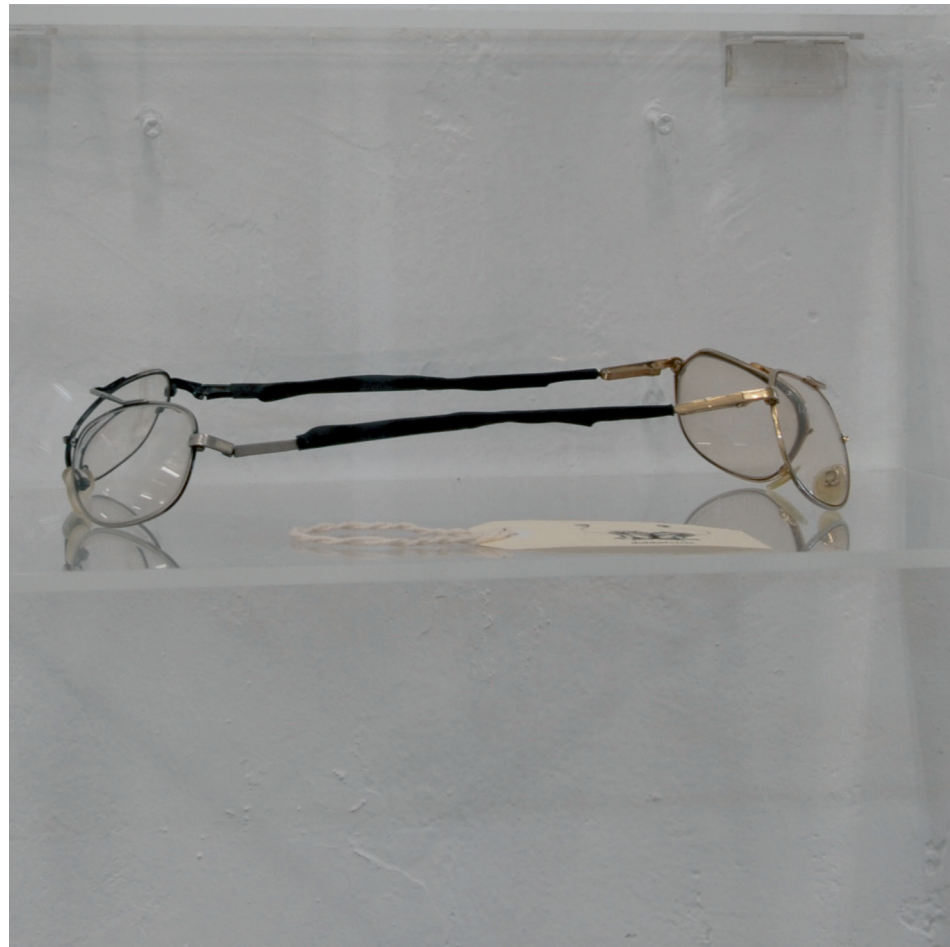






Image: (pages 2 & 3) The desolate and tranquil Karoo landscape - Richmond, South Africa

Image: (pages 4 & 5) The newly renovated house/retreat and adjacent gallery in Richmond.

Image: (pages 6 & 7) The gallery, a refurbished supermarket.

Image: (page 11) MIRROR #7, 2006
Artist: Basie Yssel
Medium: Inkjet Print on Hahnemühle
Dimensions: 42cm x 29cm

Image: (pages 14 & 15) Willem Boshoff's *Skooob* is reassembled in Richmond with the help of the local community.

Image: (pages 16 & 17) Installation view

Image: (page 18) HYPER SHOPPER, 2006
Artist: Jacques Coetzer
Medium: Sculpted trolley
Dimensions: 232cm x 110cm x 58cm

Image: (page 19) RED TEXT, 2001
Artist: Aryan Kaganof
Medium: Digital print on canvas
Dimensions: 95cm x 118 cm

Image: (pages 20 & 21) Installation views

Image: (page 22) Shane de Lange's work in progress

Image: (page 23) Installation views

Image: (page 24) INSIDE BREE STREET TAXI RANK, 2004
Artist: Andrew Tshabangu
Medium: Fibre-based print
Dimensions: 50cm x 75cm

Image: (page 25) ANTICUBE (BLACK - CONSTRUCT 3), 2007

Artist: Shane de Lange
Medium: Acrylic on board, acrylic on canvas, acrylic on wall
Dimensions: 50cm x 75cm

Image: (page 26) AWAY installation view

Image: (page 27) QUOTATION - CLICHE, 2007
Artist: Guy du Toit
Medium: Bronze
Dimensions: 14cm x 16cm x 17cm (x2)

Image: (pages 28 & 29) ECLIPSE, 2002
Artist: Jan van der Merwe
Medium: Found material, rusted metal, tv monitors, dvd player, security lights
Dimensions: 460cm x 1060cm x 234cm

Image: (page 30) SEE, 2007
Artist: Ella Ziegler
Medium: Digital print
Dimensions: 23cm x 31cm

Image: (page 31) OOGTOETS - (detail) DUBBELVISIE, 2007
Artist: Jan van der Merwe
Medium: Found material, perspex
Dimensions: 38cm x 22cm x 17cm (x7)

Image: (pages 32 & 33) Strijdom van der Merwe's burns a path of fire through the Karoo landscape.

Image: (pages 34 & 35) Reception 9 Desember 2007

Image: (pages 39) WE HAVE EYES TO SEE, BUT DO NOT SEE, 2007
Artist: Abrie Fourie
Medium: White enamel paint on wall
Dimensions: 1000cm x 400cm

Artists: Willem Boshoff, Jacques Coetzer, Happy Dhleme, Shane de Lange, Guy du Toit, Abrie Fourie, Gordon Froud, Aryan Kaganoff, Bronwyn Lace, Gerhard Marx, Maya Marx, Jo Ratcliffe, Kevin Roberts, Stompie Selibe, Cornelia Stoop, Johan Thom, Andrew Tshabangu, Blyde van der Bergh, Jan van der Merwe, Strijdom van der Merwe, Diane Victor, Jeremy Wafer, Mary Wafer, James Webb, Basie Yssel, Asha Zero and Ella Ziegler

Concept: Harrie Siertsema

Co-ordination: Abrie Fourie

Curators: Shane de Lange and Mary Wafer

Text: Miranthe Staden-Garbett

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- ⊗ - Graskop
- ⊗ - Dullstroom
- ⊗ - Pretoria - Tshwane
- ⊗ - Irene - Tshwane
- ⊗ - Richmond
- ⊗ - Cape Town