



Francois du Plessis



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Francois du Plessis was born in Harare, Zimbabwe in 1961. Three years later his parents moved back to South Africa, where he grew up and started to follow his artistic interests, which included music, painting and working with found objects. In 1985 he left South Africa, a country in turmoil, and spent the next three years travelling through Europe and the Middle East, before settling down in Aachen, Germany, which is still his home. This self-taught artist gradually built a career as a fine artist and along the way discovered his signature and very distinctive source material: the printed book.

In his youth, in South Africa, Du Plessis was already interested in art. He lived in Pretoria, a block away from the Pretoria Art Museum, which he often visited. Here, in the early eighties, he saw an exhibition of Picasso's work that inspired him and that he always remembered.

Since Picasso introduced collage as fragments of "real life" into art at the beginning of the twentieth century, the range of materials utilized by artists has opened up. The choice of materials and techniques has become

arbitrary, often depending on the meaning the artist intends to convey. Found material is transformed imaginatively by the artist and new meanings are generated. The found object carries the memory of its original function, which fuses with the creative play introduced by the artist. The books as found objects in these works by Du Plessis are sometimes transformed almost beyond recognition, but the pleasure one derives by looking at them, has much to do with the fact that one still recognizes them as books and that they conjure up all the associations and pleasures one feels when entering a book shop. One can regard his works as book poetry. He honours books. At the same time one is reminded that these books are being recycled as waste material, have been rescued by their transformation into artworks; that there is an endless source of these redundant objects in our digital era.

By limiting and pinpointing his source material, Du Plessis has found the key to limitless possibilities. He inventively crafts his found objects into surprising shapes. Playfulness is a key quality in these works. They

suggest year rings of a tree or archaeological layers. The colourful repetitive shapes seem musical, like pulsating rhythms and one is reminded that Du Plessis is also a musician, specifically a drummer in a band. His book poetry is visual music, layered with ambiguous meanings: a visual library labelled with suggestive titles.

Jan van der Merwe. August 2014







(pages 2) WINSTON CHURCHILL, 2014 • cut books, textiles, screws • approx. Ø40cm x 6 cm

(pages 3) HYBRID, 2014 • cut books, textiles, screws approx. Ø30cm x 6 cm

(page 7, 8 & 9) GOLD FEVER EDITION, 2014 • Cut books, textiles, screws • approx. Ø20cm x 6 cm

(page 10) ETHAN CROSS, 2014 • Cut books, textiles, screws approx. Ø40 x 6 cm

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