

THE RAINBOW NATION VOL1 NO1  
NOVEMBER 1995

Lt YY IN BAUM AVIVA)  
N\$9.60 NAMIBIA/NAMIBIE  
(TAX DUTY AND SALES TAX INCL)  
(HEFFING & BELASTING ING)  
\* MB R8.92 OTHER COUNTRIES/ANDER LANDE

.. (TAX INCLU/BELASTING ING)  
P issn 1025-2134

Portraits

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Â¢ Â¢hanaging Director/ .

Besturende Direkteur Dr. Philip Kriiger

Chief Editor/  
Hoofredakteur Johan van Rooyen  
patron/ The Hon. Mrs. Brigitte Mabandla

Deputy Minister of Arts, Culture,

Science and Technology

Beskermvrou Die Ed. mev. Brigitte Mabandla  
Adjunk-Minister van Kuns, Kultuur,

Wetenskap en Tegnologie

Art Direction/ :  
Ontwerpbeplanning Margie Edwards  
Tet (011) 837 6796, FAX (011) 837 2657

Assistant Editor/

- Assistent-Redakteur . Maria le Roux

â\200\234Typesetting!  
Eoemcn . Locaing don,  
â\200\234Editorial Secretary/ SS Engela py ee  
~-Redaksiesekretaresse Engela ven Dyk  
~ Masthead & Cover/ Rte Sy :  
Mashoof en Voorblad Tersia van Rensen  
Vee Sash 4 2) HOMESTEAD, Stupios Tet (012) 327 0353  
Reproduction/ ats :  
Reproduksie Bae Repro Solutions cc  
PURO ASL aes Ter (011) 483-2520  
Printer/, = The Natal Witness Printing

f Druiker : ie and Publishing Company (Pty) Ltd  
CONTACT NEVILLE WIGGINS, TEL (011) 782 0559.

Marketing/ ct  
Bemarking Â«â\200\224

Pieter Bresler

HEC Cet 082 456 6056

â\200\234Advertising/ Pauline Simpson: Tet (01 1) 883 9931  
Reklame Matty Swanepoel: Cei. 082 565 4889

Distribution RNA

Verspreiding

.\_ CONTACT GLEN VAN ROOYEN, Tet (011) 776 9111 Ext. 211

â\200\234 Subscriptions/ ve

Subskripsies Engela van Dyk

â\200\234Anquiries) Engela van Dyk

Navrae :

: \* Fax 322 6408; Tet (012) 322 6404;

FEST/SOWT, PO Box/PosBUS 1758, PRETORIA, 0001

Cover: Jan Schoeman through the eyes of Obie Â©  
Oberholzer. See page 30.

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Education, Science and Technology. :

VUKA SA is â\200\230n publikasie van Die Stigting vir ~  
Onderwys, Wetenskap en Tegnologie

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To foster understanding and appreciation of cul-  
ture, science and technology among all the peo-  
ples of Southern Africa. ee is

Die SOWT-visie :

Om begrip en waardering vir kultuur, wetenskap  
en tegnologie by die hele bevolking van Suider- -  
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VUKA SA NOVEMBER 1995

Â© refer to ourselves as the Rainbow Nation.

This appellation occurred spontaneously in

popular consciousness. In some instances, because of our unhappy past, the designation may express wry misgivings. Agreed. Equally, however, it qualifies as a reflection of our fervent national hope.

Throughout history, in religions and indigenous mythologies as divergent as the Judaic and Polynesian, the Nordic and Indian, the rainbow is a recurrent symbol. It serves always as a purposeful bridge between a lower and higher order of things. In ancient Sanskrit texts we learn that the rainbow is the path whereby the gods descend to Earth. In Judaic/ Christian context the rainbow is a sign and token of God's Covenant. The rainbow is a promise of regeneration and as a symbol it has the power of unification.

We live in challenging times. Culture is the expression of the essence of the aspirations of all our peoples. Culture represents the soul of our Rainbow Nation.

We called our new magazine VUKA SA. Vuka is a Nguni word meaning "Wake up!" "Come alive!" Vuka! is the empowering call of morning. We invite you to share with us as citizens of a New Land of Opportunity in the creative energy, enterprise and achievement of all our people in all fields of the arts.

Geen kultuur bestaan onaangetas deur ander nie. Yster slyp yster, so slyp die een mens die persoon van die ander, staan daar in Spreuke XXVII. Ons medemenslikheid is slegs kenbaar deur die van ewenaaste.

Op ons drempel is gesigte sonder name. In ons oor klink tale wat die tong knoop en verras. Ons is omring deur prestasies waarop Ons nie ag geslaan het nie. In hierdie tyd-vak van vernuwende historiese ommekeer praat ons van ons Reënboognasie. Die wekroep is VUKA! Word wakker! Vv

Johan van Rooyen  
Editor in Chief/ Hoofredakteur

Photograph: Nan Melville

Dene Louw ' Ou eq poh t

Oberholzer says that one of the ethical dilemmas he has had to grapple with is the fact that, in order to get the photographs he wants, he has to use people.

It's not the best part of what I do using people, using situations for my own good ... But I've decided that I can do it with a smile, as long as I never try to injure people or their pride.

With occasional exceptions, his sensitivity to the pride of the humblest of his subjects is a facet of Oberholzer's work that is immensely

touching. It shines through in photographs such as that of Jan Outa Schoeman, whose heavily-decorated hand-carts bear witness to the fact that he is different. Consequently, he has been ostracized from a town which ironically has a sign on the main road that reads, "Thank you; Come again".

The text that accompanies Oberholzer's photograph of Jan Outa Schoeman (see cover) explains that 31 years ago, Jan was the sole survivor when his bakkie was hit by a train at Dwyka Station. He spent months in hospital. Two years ago, he returned to pay his bill of R30. Over the years he had collected the money in a bucket, but the hospital had moved and the files had disappeared. Last year, he walked 160 km in 9 days to attend his daughter's wedding. He last saw her as a child. They didn't allow him into church without a suit.

The decorated hand-carts are a manifestation of Jan Outa Schoeman's urge to create. Often, Oberholzer reports, Jan travels the country on a pilgrimage, to beautify the veld; to press life closely for it is only lent to me, to give, to smile, and to make something out of nothing.

Implicit in this manifesto is the fact that Jan Outa Schoeman is, in his own way, an artist. He is not the first artist nor will he be the last to be ostracized because he is different.

In spite of the many kudos that have come his way from the art world, Oberholzer is unpretentious. He says, "I don't want to be seen as some high-falutin', quick-talking, great phrase-making academic ... I'm only the driver of my vehicle, which happens to be making images."

When talking about his artistic philosophy, he is fond of quoting Andre Kertz, who said, "I photograph what I love: let's not worry about the art."

That rings true for me," Oberholzer observes.

Yes, indeed. I'm reminded of First World War poet Wilfred Owen, who said of his own poems, "The poetry is in the pity."

In Obie Oberholzer's work, too, the art is the poetry. It is in the compassion with which he views and depicts the human condition, with its many sorrows

and hardships. But itâ\200\231s also im his joyous pictorial recog-  
nition of the precious, shining moments that from time  
to time illuminate even the loneliest or bleakest of lives.  
Itâ\200\231s in his photographic tributes to the landscapes of  
Africa, whether fecundly beautiful or harshly hostile.  
Above all, itâ\200\231s in his personal celebration of the  
indomitable spirit of the people of Africa. vV

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â\200\230In Ladismith, | photographed Hettie Gelderblomâ\200\231s Bargain Store.  
Then | drove into the Klein Karoo. On the long road to  
Vanwyksdorp | fell into a dream ... Further, where the road melted  
into light, stood a voluptuous blonde hitchhiker, from ... mmm ...

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