

Wat cool -0004~ o1|

INSTITUUT VIR ELETYDSE GESKIEDENIS

Die Universiteit van die Oranje-Vrystaat

Datum

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Ian Haggie
ng for fine arts

higâ\2027vement was
pestOwed on Paul
;mtopforth and Wil-
jfjam Kentridge in

*1986, â\200\230this year, after
Jones yearâ\200\231s absence,
| the Market Galleriesâ\200\231

advisory board decid-
o, extend Haggieâ\200\231s
esse -to the
4: broader community.
414) The result: a competi-
â\200\230| tionâ\200\231for those who had

onÃ©-person show before,
â\200\230entitled â\200\234New Visionsâ\200\235.
(Currently on show at
the Market Galleries in
Newtown.)

lery: convenor Hazel
Friedman, self-critic-
ally; â\200\234â\200\230we should not
have called it â\200\230New Vi-
â\200\230sionsâ\200\231; but rather â\200\230Vi-
sions â\200\23188â\200\231.â\200\235"

â\200\234And to some extent
\shÃ©is right. For on one
â\200\234level the exhibition is
â\200\234hafdly a harbinger of
change, a prognostica-
tor of things to come.
For those who were an-

ticipating a resounding

; has

ABE j competition front
at how dominates the
Ã©:of visual art pro-

ation in this country,

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case.

â\200\230orts on the part of or-

â\200\230}iganisers to introduce

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neyer exhibited in a.

_, â\200\234Perhaps,â\200\235 says gal-"

â\200\230had proved not toâ\200\231

or despite concerted

new blood on the leve]],
of arbitration, and de-
spite their-relatively
non-circumscribed pa-
rameters for entry, the
work to some extent is
disappointing in its con-
servatism.

There appears to
have been a marked re-
luctance on the part of
the artists to take risks
and to break with for-
mal conventions. In
most instances, the
works are â\200\234safeâ\200\235 and
â\200\234non-exploratoryâ\200\235 in
their approach to their
â\200\230subject matter.

Not that this is un-
expÃ©cted. With local
competitions and exhi-
bitions dominated these
days by the Great Salon
tradition in painting,
and with even the most
dissenting political
voices adhering to this
- particular approach to
visual art production,
young artists have few
iconoclastic models to
turn to by way of exam-
ple. (The majority of
works on exhibition are
by students, or recent
graduates.)

That noted, the exhi

bition is a chilling indicator of contemporary thinking and more than adequately reflects the current state of psychological torment pervading the nation.

Gone are the placatory days of the subtle

subversive metaphor dominated as it was by the referential land-

scape (a pervading

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symbol for the social whole). Instead the exhibition is permeated by, soaked and stained

. with, images of destruction

and pain.

Dismembered limbs, mutilated bodies, fire, carnage, exile and funeral rites scream out their crie de coeur, their disillusioned messages of anger and despair. No more the trace of optimistic pre-State-of-Emergency intent, merely a dark resigned acceptance of

the times. Here the still-lives of a Leora Farber (Jewels of Disintegration and The Beauty of Brutus) are drenched in bloodied dissolution.

Dietrich Grimms monumental Zones of Action on 15th April 1988, Pretoria, bears a thalidomide-like victim, a bomb-blasted limb and overseeing it all, is that carrion caller, a beady-eyed vulture.

Similar symbols recur in Jacobus Roux's The Griffin and the Blast, where the legendary creature is seen fleeing the scene of destruction. Already fled is Jane

Duncan's exile in Ar-

- rival/Departure. A de-

liberately remote and
alienated piece this, it
bears luggage tags, let-
ters, travel documents
attached to a wooden
(container-like) box-
frame. The inner work,
a painted canvas speaks
more emotively about
the loneliness of exile.

One of three award-
winners, Chabane Man-
ganyeâ\200\231s â\200\234Burial of a
Heroâ\200\235, a massive wood-
cut, is like its title more
heroic in intent. A more
optimistic piece this,
somehow, despite the
tragedy of its subject,
it anticipates a time of
victory in the not-too-
distant future.

Sophia Ainslieâ\200\231s char-
coal co-winning work
â\200\234Working Things Outâ\200\235,
acts as a worthy com-
panion piece to Man-
ganyeâ\200\231s woodcut.

Dominating the exhi- {

bitition space absolutely
is the final winning
work â\200\224 Russell Scottâ\200\231s
wood and metal sculp-
ture, â\200\234It dreamed it was
a manâ\200\235. A superbly rea-
lised work this, animat-
ed in its organic, but
technocratic, idiosyn-
cracies, it was ap-

parently rejected by the:

â\200\230Cape Town Triennial
judges and now stands a
worthy winner in a
competition that will
hopefully herald a re-
vival of truly alterna-
tive fine arts activity in
the years to come.

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