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OUR LOST
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**Managing Director/
Besturende Direkteur** Dr. Philip Krüger

**Chief Editor/
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Patron/ The Hon. Mrs. Brigitte Mabandla
Deputy Minister of Arts, Culture,
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Besermvrou Die Ed. mev. Brigitte Mabandla
Adjunk-Minister van Kuns, Kultuur,
Wetenskap en Tegnologie

**Art Direction/
Ontwerpbeplanning** Margie Edwards
TEL (011) 837 6796, FAX (011) 837 2657

**Assistant Editor/
Assistent-Redakteur** Maria le Roux

**Typesetting/
Setwerk** Lorraine Strydom

**Editorial Secretary/
Redaksiesekretaresse** Engela van Dyk

**Masthead & Cover/
Mashoof en Voorblad** Tersia van Rensen
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CONTACT NEVILLE WIGGINS, TEL (011) 782 0559

**Marketing/
Bemarking** Pieter Bresler
CELL 082 456 6056

**Advertising/
Reklame** Pauline Simpson: TEL (011) 883 9931
Matty Swanepoel: CELL 082 565 4889

**Distribution/
Verspreiding** RNA
CONTACT GLEN VAN ROOYEN, TEL (011) 776 9111 EXT. 211

**Subscriptions/
Subskripsies** Engela van Dyk

**Inquiries/
Navrae** Engela van Dyk
FAX 322 6408; TEL (012) 322 6404;
FEST/SOWT, PO BOX/POSBUS 1758, PRETORIA, 0001

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

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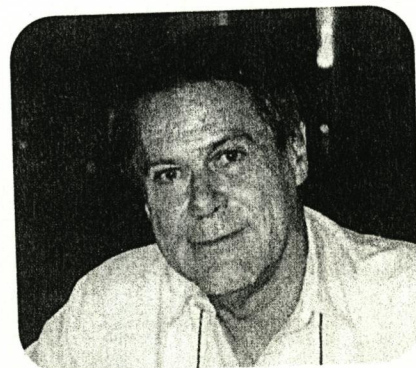
To foster understanding and appreciation of cul-
ture, science and technology among all the peo-
ples of Southern Africa.

Die SOWT-visie

Om begrip en waardering vir kultuur, wetenskap
en tegnologie by die hele bevolking van Suider-
Afrika te bevorder.

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van die redakteur nie. Enige deel van die redaksionele in-
houd kan sonder verdere vergoeding deur Bandhulp vir
Blindes gebruik word.



Photograph: Nan Melville

We 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:17. Ons medemenslikheid is slegs kenbaar deur die oë van 'n 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!

Johan van Rooyen

Editor in Chief/Hoofredakteur

Denise Lowy : On equal terms

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' – the innate dignity – 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 K's 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'.

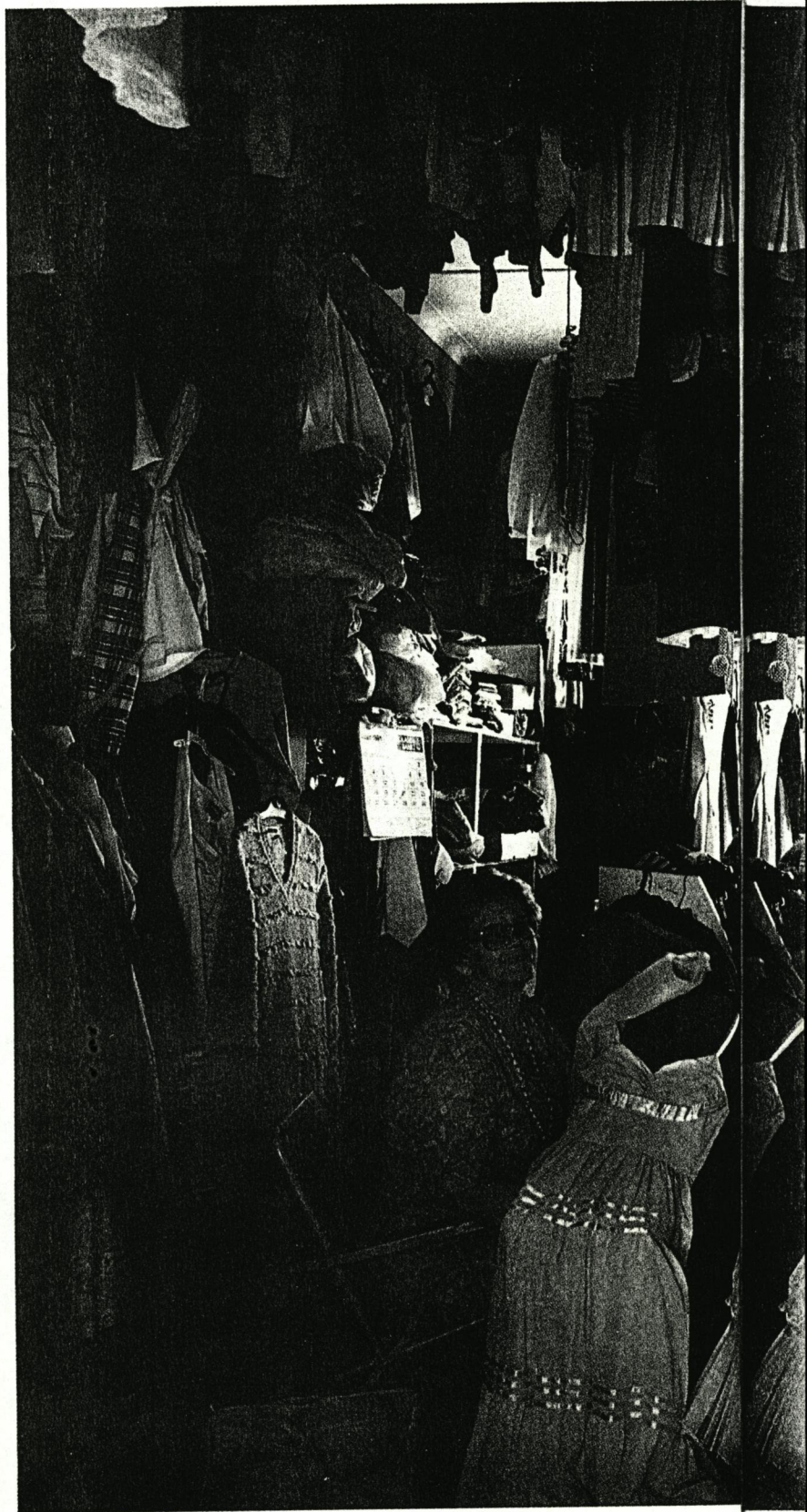
In spite of the many kudos that have come his way from the art world, Oberholzer is unpretentious. He says, 'I don't want to be seen as some high-falutin', quick-talking, great phrase-making academic ... I'm only the driver of my vehicle, which happens to be making images.'

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 – the poetry – is in the pity. It's in the compassion with which he views and depicts the human condition, with its many sorrows and hardships. But it's also in his joyous pictorial recognition of the precious, shining moments that from time to time illuminate even the loneliest or bleakest of lives. It's in his photographic tributes to the landscapes of Africa, whether fecundly beautiful or harshly hostile. Above all, it's in his personal celebration of the indomitable spirit of the people of Africa. ▽



'In Ladismith, I photographed Hettie Gelderblom's Bargain Store. Then I drove into the Klein Karoo. On the long road to Vanwyksdorp I fell into a dream ... Further, where the road melted into light, stood a voluptuous blonde hitchhiker, from ... mmm ...