Best newcomer in 2006

Dan Halter

Quite often, a show that really deserves a review doesn't get one because too much else is on, and Dan Halter's show 'Take Me to Your Leader' at João Ferreira in September was one of those. I'm not going to go so far as to say Halter is 'Best Newcomer' in my opinion but this show, about the artist's growing up in Zimbabwe had lots of promise. I particularly liked his *Typeface for a revolution* - the alphabet constructed from glued matches and matchbox covers displayed on a wood veneer board, an aesthetic one might describe as Rhodesian banroom. I also very much liked his maps of Zimbabwe deconstructed by being interwoven with the names of farmers who had had to leave their farms.

Most important art event

Hmmm... most important art event... couldn't have been 'TransCape', since that didn't happen... I'll nominate the opening of the Red Museum, in Port Elizabeth, a museum approachable and approached along dusty streets rather than set down in the middle of a city. Can't wait to visit.

Former Cape Town Editor, current International Listings Editor Linda Stupart:

The three best shows in Cape Town in 2006

Nicholas Hlobo's 'Intente' at Michael Stevenson Contemporary

At the beginning of 2006 I knew Nicholas Hlobo to be a dynamic and fantastical performer after viewing his unexpected interventions at both the VANSA conference and Sessions iKapa. His first solo show at Michael Stevenson, however, has quickly cemented his status as one of the country's top sculptors and, with his sly and beautiful interrogations of sex, gender and culture in South Africa, one of the most interesting artists around last year.

Dan Halter's 'Take Me to Your Leader'

Dan Halter's breakout first solo show was funny, clever and often exceptionally sad. The work dealt with the current political situation in Zimbabwe, often drawing parallels between Zimbabweans' fight for political freedom and the freedom sought by young 90s ravers. Who could forget the disturbing chant of *Everybody's Free (To Feel Good)* as a backdrop to angry protesters in Halter's *Untitled (Zimbabwean Queen of Rave)*?

The Cape Town Biennale at blank projects

In the wake of the non not-a-biennale, Andrew Lamprecht's 'Cape Town Biennale' at blank projects did a great job of diffusing some of the fury felt by much of the Cape Town artworld, particularly those who had been planning work for the not-a-fringe, 'X-Cape'. Instead of brandishing pitchforks at Gavin Jantjes' office, people filled blank project space with their works and got drunk. The exhibition was an irreverent and necessary response to the chaos of 'Trans Cape', with a despairing sense of humour that often seemed to characterise the general mood in Cape Town last year. Also, the person dressed as a duck was there and she/he is always fun.

South African artists making interesting work

Candice Breitz

Across international art publications' lists of 2006's most important artists, Candice Breitz is consistently found in the top 100, cementing her status as an international art star. In 2006 Breitz continued with her video portraits of musical icons including *Working Class Hero (A Portrait of John Lennon)* which displayed a community of Lennon fans performing *Plastic Ono Band* in studio. These pieces, both witty and tragic, make for a fascinating exploration of the culture of fanatic in contemporary culture.

Roger Ballen

Firstly, I should point out that my general feeling towards Roger Ballen is that he is an archetypal exploitative photographer, and that he should leave the folk of the Platteland well alone. That said, however, 'Shadow Chamber', which was shown across the world in 2006, was an altogether more subtle, complex and interesting collection of images than any we have seen from this veteran thus far. Of course, I'm still not entirely sure that I like them...