Editorial

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The previous issue of *Image & Text* was dedicated to two thematic clusters, namely visual and textual inscriptions of Pretoria and 'blindspots and ways of not seeing'. Number 26 is again an open issue that features current research by researchers from four South African tertiary institutions. In keeping with the expanded scope of the journal, the six articles deal with a variety of topics in various fields related to visual culture. Three articles deal with aspects of South African architecture, soap opera and fashion, whereas two others deal with broader generic issues related to design. The last article presents a discursive examination of a body of poetry by Ursula K le Guin and their interface with photographs by Roger Dorband. As in many other fields, the issue of identity and how it informs visual culture continues to inflect a number of the articles, as does the notion of spatiality, as well as the transformed/ing context of post-apartheid South Africa. In addition to the research articles, there are two book reviews and one conference report. Although the articles may appear divergent, they have many commonalities in terms of the examination of visual culture and visuality in contemporary culture.

The first article is by Deirdre Byrne and is entitled '"Other ways to be": Home, space and (un)belonging in the poetry of Ursula K le Guin'. In this article, the author investigates the occurrence of the themes of home, belonging, familiarity, unfamiliarity, origins, nostalgia, memory, mutability, ephemerality, destinations, space and place and how they inform Le Guin's poems and prose writings. Byrne focusses on a number of poems that are accompanied by photographs by Roger Dorband and examines the dialogue between image and text in these multimodal texts. In particular, Byrne is interested in the gendered nature of 'home' and how Le Guin and Dorband respond to and explore it in their 'multimodal understanding of space'.

The next article, by Anneke Allers and Amanda Breytenbach, is entitled 'Arcades revisited as urban interiors in a transformed city context'. The city referred to is Pretoria, and the authors focus on arcades in the CBD as 'urban interiors and the potential of these spaces to become points of social interaction within a transformed

city context'. The authors revisit the origins of European arcades as new social spaces in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and argue for their revival in today's fragmented urban metropoles, such as Pretoria. The authors investigate the importance of 'lingering' and promenading, and note that today's cities do not facilitate aimless wandering in urban space. Allers and Breytenbach base their article on field research and interviews with pedestrians in Pretoria. They present helpful ideas that have the 'potential to reactivate the arcades as urban interiors', based on the design of the 'building edges that link the interiors to the adjacent arcade space'.

In 'An interpretation of the role of meaning in interior design', as in a previous article in *Image & Text*, Raymund Königk touches on the often fraught relationship between the disciplines of architecture and interior design. He suggests that interior artefacts should be read semiotically as meaningful articulations of identity in terms of cultural discourse, and he uses Eco's semiotic framework to implement this. Accordingly, he posits that 'successful interior artefacts are dependent on the generation of meaningful images and their appropriate spatial interpretation.' As in the previous two articles in this issue of *Image & Text*, spatiality takes its place as an important component of identity formation, as does embodied experience. Königk argues for a more nuanced approach to interior design that recognises its potential 'to exercise its hegemonic agency with critical application by adding ambiguous or ideologically informed levels of meaning.'

'g.o.d. and the *deus ex machina* of design' by Duncan Reyburn and Marno Kirstein takes its title from Nelson and Stolterman's concept of the '"guarantor of design" or g.o.d. and the contexts and considerations that affect how this g.o.d. is selected, constructed, and deployed.' The article discusses the often problematic relationship between client and designer (in South Africa), particularly in corporate design environments and argues that 'fantasy legitimation (or *deus ex machina*)' should be replaced by solid design research. Invoking theorists such as Bourdieu and Žižek, the authors explore the complex nuances of being a designer and balancing the demands of technical skill with ideological imperatives. The authors conclude that 'tested, credible and creditable research practices enable the designer to construct a g.o.d. that is legitimate', and propose that empathy should be the cornerstone of client-designer relations.

Francois Jonker shifts the focus to popular culture in the next article. In 'We were looking for our men in the faces of stars: Soap opera and Afrikaner masculinities in *Egoli: place of gold*', he investigates this popular South African soapie that ran from 1992 to 2010. His focus is gender and identity construction, but instead of focussing on femininity as many theorists have done, he looks at the representation

of masculinities in episodes of *Egoli* from the key year 1994 when South Africa attained democratic status. In order to explore the representation of masculinity, Jonker concentrates on 'two white, Afrikaans male characters: Dr Walt Vorster (portrayed by well-respected opera icon Gé Korsten) and Doug Durand (portrayed by the controversial "bad-boy" rock star Steve Hofmeyr).' Jonker's argument centres on the destabilisation of Afrikaner male, hegemonic patriarchy in the post-apartheid years, and the questioning of capitalism and class in a transforming society.

In the last article, 'Hypersampling black masculinities, Jozi style', Leora Farber also explores masculinity, but focusses on the representation and construction of black masculinities by means of fashion in Johannesburg. Farber selects 'young fashion designers and design collectives currently practicing in the urban environs of Johannesburg' for her investigation, with particular reference to Khumbula and the Sartists. Farber argues that these young and dynamic designers are negotiating various forms of black masculine identities that are informed by historical forerunners such as the European dandy. She shows how these designers appropriate and re-work fashion in order to perform new and emerging black masculinities. As in Jonker's article, the author shows how identities can be disrupted and questioned in order to pave the way for new configurations of race, class and gender. By referring to a number of photographs, Farber shows how stereotypical images of black masculinities are being problematised by designers in order to explore new forms of agency.

As previously noted, this issue ends with two book reviews and one conference report. Jacques Lange reviews *Constructure: 100 years of the JAG building and its evolution of space and meaning*, edited by Tracy Murinik. This innovative collection of essays presents multiple views of the Johannesburg Art Gallery. Kylie Thomas' critically acclaimed book, *Impossible mourning: HIV/AIDS and visuality after apartheid* delves into the visual representation of this illness in South Africa, and is reviewed by Rory du Plessis. In conclusion, Anneli Bowie offers a detailed summary and critical review of the 'Nordes 2015: Design Ecologies' conference.

In line with with the editorial policy of *Image & Text,* this issue features contributions by established researchers as well as younger voices. It is important to nurture a body of emerging researchers who will continue to investigate visual culture critically.

Image & Text is a group project, and it would not be possible to produce it without the advice of the Editorial board. I would like to thank Rory du Plessis in particular for his help as editorial assistant and Kyle Rath for his professional design of the journal.