

Riveting view of South Africa through the camera lens

Mercedes-Benz South Africa opens unique photo exhibition in East London

A most significant historic photographic overview of South African culture and lifestyle from the 1950's to the present has been compiled and will be open to the public at the Ann Bryant Art Museum from Thursday 14 July to 28 August 2011.

The *South African Photography 1950 – 2010* exhibition, comprising mostly black-and-white photographs, gives an insight into South African society, politics, culture and the economy, as well as the struggle for survival in the big cities. It shows the way South Africa has evolved into the modern nation it is today.



Photo by Paul Winberg (1956)

The exhibition is sponsored by Daimler AG, Stuttgart, as a “contemporary example of man’s ability to overcome adversity and renew himself,” explains Dr Martin Zimmermann, CEO of the local Daimler AG representative company, Mercedes-Benz South Africa (MBSA). “It is an inspirational collective which simultaneously illustrates Man’s duality, two sides of the same coin; and Man’s capacity for redemption.”

Further support for the exhibition was provided by the curator and art historian Dr Ralf Seippel, as well as the BAHA Archive and South African Photographers, and the Bailey Seippel Gallery, Johannesburg.

The exhibition is divided into three main periods, namely from 1950 to 1976 (apartheid), from 1976 to 1994 (struggle) and from 1994 to 2010 (freedom). Photographers such as Bonile Bam – who hails from the Eastern Cape, Jodi Bieber, Pierre Crocquet, David Goldblatt, Bob Gosani, George Hallett, Alf Kumalo, Ranjith Kally, Peter Magubane, Gideon Mendel, Santu Mofokeng, GR Naidoo, Cedric Nunn, Mikhael Subotzky, Andrew Tshabangu, Paul Weinberg, Gille de Vlieg and Sam Nzima, as well as a number of *Drum* magazine photographers whose names are not known, provide us with their insights into life in South Africa over the past 60 years.

Photographs from the 50s and 60s published in *Drum* tell the story of life in the period of apartheid and reveal the naked truth of segregation. They also document sports events, the rise of football stars and the night life vibrating with jazz music and dancing feet. Images from the 70s, such as Sam Nzima’s iconic photograph of the wounded Hector Pieterse who was shot down by the police in Soweto on 16 June 1976, document the growing struggle and resistance movements that fought apartheid. Photographs taken during the 80s and 90s highlight violent murders, demonstrations, the brutality of imprisonment and the fight for freedom. Finally, photographers working in the 21st century show a South Africa of recovery and immense development, democracy and freedom, but they also show the work that still has to be done and the inequalities that remain. In the new South Africa everyone can vote, there is freedom of speech and gender equality allows women to demonstrate their strengths.

The exhibition is accompanied by a German/English catalogue of 160 pages published by Hatje Cantz and edited by Delia Klask and Ralf Seippel. Apart from the photographs in the exhibition the catalogue also features articles by Andries Oliphant, Luli Callinicos and Wiebke Ratzeburg.

The Ann Bryant Art Museum is open from Mondays to Fridays, 09:00 to 17:00 and Saturdays from 09:00 to 12:00. Contact Leon du Preez or Terence Flynn on 043 722 4044 or visit www.annbryant.co.za for more information.