

“Outpost II”

Curated by Virginia MacKenny & Storm van Rensburg

NSA GALLERY:

20 August until 7 September

UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH GALLERY:

10 October until 6 November

The NSA is hosting a follow-up to “Outpost”, a travelling show that took contemporary work from KwaZulu Natal to Pretoria two years ago. “Outpost II”, the sequel, will also be traveling, this time to Stellenbosch. Both shows have been curated in response to the historically held idea that KZN is the last bastion of British colonialism in a far-flung and remote part of Africa and as a consequence work produced here will be conservative and reactionary.

Andries Botha | Carol-Anne Gainer | Clive Hardwick | Langa Magwa | Thando Mama | Isabella Quattrocchi | Greg Streak | Ingrid Winterbach

Also penetrating personal arenas and subverting expectations **Greg Streak's** *Public Speaker* lacks the authorial and authoritative assertions anticipated of it. A sound work, consisting of a number of hidden microphones in various places in the exhibition venue, it 'eavesdrops' on visitors to the exhibition, insinuating itself into private spaces and then broadcasting individuals' exchanges, making public that which was never intended to be. Both denying public pronouncement whilst operating as the ultimate authority *Public Speaker* is an Orwellian Big Brother who hears all and claims it as public property. This public address addresses the public's own utterances – an 'outpost' of relayed sound it captures information from the edges and, taking it centre stage, it disturbs the viewer who becomes aware of their surveillance.

This is the aural equivalent to the nineteenth century 'panopticon', a jail where the circular nature of its construction put prisoners under constant scrutiny. Consciousness of these led prisoners to self-monitor - a behaviour that Foucault notes is a feature of modern disciplinary societies where individuals are encouraged to self-censor. Streak's piece plays with such notions of surveillance, interception of information and invasion of privacy in a way that both references the South African past in agencies such as Bureau of State Security (B.O.S.S.) whilst alerting the viewer to a particular consciousness of self in the present.

