

Hotspot (2013) by Greg Streak. Nomination for the Helgaard Steyn Award 2017.

I would like to nominate Greg Streak for the Helgaard Steyn award. His extensive Curriculum Vita attests to his expansive explorations in and beyond his own creative practice. Aside from exhibiting nationally and internationally alongside the names of William Kentridge, Moshekwa Langa, Ai Wei Wei, Anish Kapoor etc. he has also been responsible for creating some of the more critically acclaimed international projects in this country under the auspices of the artist run initiative PULSE, and his pedagogical commitments are a further indication of his pursuits in nurturing future creativity. He has been committed to the South African context for well over 25 years, and despite numerous travels abroad, has remained focused on his local context. His CV is littered with achievements that belie his relatively under-the-radar status within the South African art world and I feel he is overdue more significant recognition.

I have had the pleasure of viewing Greg Streak's work over the past two decades and although he works in a wide variety of mediums I feel his sculpture is his strongest suite. The piece **Hot Spot** (2013) for me sums up an artist's reaction to the forces at play both globally but more importantly in the South Africa of 2017. The work is on permanent display at the Grand Provence Estate, Main Road in Franschhoek. My own interpretation of the work is as follows:

Streak's sculpture is at once ancient and contemporary, traditional and progressive, receiver and transmitter.

The antenna-like dish is an ear to the cosmos for a recipient, custodian and perhaps a purveyor of information; news comes in... is sold on.

The materials are current, steel and PVC but hark back to wicker in their working and patterning and so connects South Africans, particularly traversing the disconnect which bedevils us.

And maybe this is the essence of the piece: an apparatus waiting for affirming words, or metaphorically: *peoples* ready to talk to one another but stuck in time.

The tension of the piece is resolved by the central *breast* – universal, matriarchal and unifying.

Although one might think of the work in a simple solar frame this is Streak playing with the colour and centrality of the work but pointing to a different kind of *solar system* – a ranking and contextualising of the signals we receive ... and put out.



Professor Michael Chapman (University of KwaZulu-Natal, Fellow, Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study) wrote of **Hotspot** (2013):

Hotspot (2013) in scale and suggestion is a sculpture of conceptual and aesthetic impact. Part Zulu telephone-wire bowl (*imbenge*), part satellite dish, the work captures the hybrid and complex character of contemporary South Africa; indeed, the character of many configurations of the South of the globe.

Red telephone wire – an older conduit of transmission – is tightly woven into an upwardly elevated dish and cone, the shape of a satellite emission point. *Hotspot*, accordingly, embodies in content and form a single point of both communication and contention, in which Third World speaks to First World, or vice a versa. Who speaks, who listens? Where does power reside?

Stand a metre away from the cone. Speak... listen!

"**Hotspot** is an innovative exemplification of a South African 'reality', in which the traditional, the modern and the postmodern exist, visibly and audibly, in the life of the present-day... a reality in which digital communication and contention are as ubiquitous in the spaza shops of KwaMashu as in the boardrooms of e-commerce.

"In photo-pic reproduction, **Hotspot** would be the ideal cover illustration for the next reprint of my study, *Southern African Literatures* (2003)."

I would like to reaffirm my nomination of the work **Hotspot** (2013) by Greg Streak for the Helgaard Steyn Award for Sculpture 2017.

- Jenny Stretton (Senior Curator, Durban Art Gallery)

