

Brandan

This exhibition of cartoons by Brandan Reynolds is presented as a contemporary capsule within the retrospective, *Alternative Press, works by Derek Bauer*.

Brandan's contribution illustrates the development of the medium of cartoons within the digital age. The genesis of Brandan's practice is ink on paper but once conceptualized and drawn, his cartoons are scanned and completed through a digital painting process.

Most of the cartoons included in his exhibition were drawn for and published in the *Business Day* newspaper in South Africa. Brandan's cartoons are reflective of the focus of this newspaper which covers all major national and international news events, and has a specific focus on the South African politics and economy. Within this context and specification it is therefore no surprise that President Jacob Zuma has emerged as one of Brandan's most frequently drawn and established caricatures. Brandan's characterisation of the president as a rotund caricature is particularly effective and highly comparable to a fully realized Falstaffian figure. However, unlike Shakespeare's fictionalized character, his comical representation of the president are most likely inspired by naked truths and facts.

Brandan was born in 1970, in Cape Town, South Africa. He grew up in the suburbs of Lansdowne and later Athlone on the Cape Flats. In the late 1980's, and while still at high school, Brandan saw a Derek Bauer cartoon published in a local newspaper. It inspired him to become a cartoonist. In 1991 he graduated from the Ruth Prowse School of Art in Cape Town with a diploma in Graphic Design. After working in the advertising industry for a few years, he felt it was time to put into action his dream of making cartoons his career, and completed his first cartoon in September 1994. It was a comment on Haiti, in which General Raoul Cedras had been "persuaded" by the US to step down in favour of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide - the man he ousted in a 1991 military coup.

With the cartoon under his arm, Brandan called the then managing editor, Tim Patten, from a call box outside the offices of *The Argus*. Patten invited Brandan to his office; viewed the cartoon and said he would get back to him. At the time, *The Argus* had no staff cartoonist and often ran cartoons from other newspapers around the country. Patten called Brandan the next day and suggested that he get himself a copy of the paper - his cartoon had been published. He also asked Brandan what he had in mind for the next day. He had no response - the Haiti cartoon had taken him six months to complete.

Over the next few months, he produced a few more cartoons for publication in *The Argus* and by 1995 he had several regular spots with a number of newspapers in Cape Town. In 1997, Bruce Cameron, editor of *Personal Finance* offered Brandan a full-time job as illustrator, cartoonist and information graphics artist. It was during this time that Brandan developed his computer graphics and pixel-based computer illustration skills. He also settled on a technique, which starts on paper and is completed digitally: it has remained his practice to this day.

Brandan lived and worked in Atlanta, Georgia in the United States for two years. Upon his return in 2002, he was offered the position of Senior Graphic Artist at *Business Day* in Johannesburg. The editor, Peter Bruce, also expected him to submit a small daily editorial cartoon for publication. Brandan currently draws seven editorial cartoons per week, published in three different South African newspapers (*Business Day, Sunday Times Business Times* and *Rapport*) and in two official languages. He regularly contributes material for cartoon collections, books, academic books and news magazines, both nationally and internationally. In May 2013, he was awarded the Standard Bank Sikuville Journalism Award for his cartoon on the intolerance displayed by the ruling party in reaction to Brett Murray's controversial *The Spear* painting. He is a member of the international group Cartooning For Peace.