

# BOOK REVIEWS

## SOWETO

by Jodi Bieber, introduction by Niq Mhlongo  
Jacana Media (in association with the Goethe-Institut)



This photographic essay by South African photographer Jodi Bieber journeys into the shanty town of Soweto, covering 7000 kilometres to acquire the 100-plus shots for this extensive, medium-sized glossy volume. Jodi tells a new variation on the kind of tale of Soweto that's been heard before. There's a pointed positivity in the work, and an obvious attempt at conveying normalcy; she captures Sowetans of all ages and vocations, in all kinds of 'everyday' scenarios. Also, accompanying the photographs are essays in which Jodi recounts her fascinating experiences of Soweto and Sowetan author Niq Mhlongo relates her own colourful upbringing in "the heartbeat of South Africa". In an attempt to break stereotypes of this infamous South African township, Jodi's body of work is uplifting and celebratory – telling a tale that's ultimately a human one. (SF)

## TANGIBLE: HIGH TOUCH VISUALS

edited by R. Klanten, S. Ehmann, M. Hübner  
Gestalten

This large-scale picture book entertains the notion that humans have an innate urge to express ourselves in tangible forms, and the need to be inspired by things with a tangible, physical presence. "It's all about vitality and validity, about reminding us of our human nature and that what we produce will remain human after all," the preface tells. Amidst *Tangible's* exploration of material, there's a keen sense of humour at play in the work displayed in its pages – whether in everyday objects being replicated in surprising materials or existing in confusing contexts, in the form of bizarre sculpture and fashion, disarming street and land art, and much more. From kitsch to quirky to downright mindblowing, this weighty tome of design manifested in the three-dimensional will spend more time off your coffee table than on it. (SF)



## URBAN INTERVENTIONS: PERSONAL PROJECTS IN PUBLIC SPACES

edited by R. Klanten & M. Hübner  
Gestalten

Another hefty hardback by Gestalten, *Urban Interventions* documents over 200 art projects by a new generation of urban creatives whose canvas of choice is their city. At the core of this practice is a quiet subversion of given norms, a creative rebellion and reappropriation of a controlled space – one while once being foremost a centre of business has increasingly gained import as a living space, and so is being redrafted by its inhabitants to 'make it their own'. The creative endeavours depicted here also reflect a shift in contemporary art, partly towards 3D space in general, but particularly towards a comedic, theatrical understanding of public space. The examples shown range from street installations to flashmob-type performance art to truly ingenious ad campaigns – all of which reinvent the cityscape in the most delightfully imaginative ways possible. (SF)



## THE BOOMBOX PROJECT: THE MACHINES, THE MUSIC, AND THE URBAN UNDERGROUND

by Lyle Owerko, foreword by Spike Lee  
Abrams Image, New York

New York filmmaker-photographer Lyle Owerko is no stranger to our pages – or those of global pop culture. You may recall his Samburu tribe series featured in issue 12 of this magazine, his album cover for American Hi-Fi, or his career-turning photograph on *Time* magazine's cover for their September 11 issue in 2001. In this 2010 collection, Lyle marries his passions for photography and music, documenting the life of the boombox through his own and others' photographs and stories. Featuring portraits of vintage models of the walking boombox, documentary photographs of people who gave it life, and anecdotes from artists, journalists and others about their love affairs with this icon of the 1970s and '80s, this is a history book like no other. Another great touch: the spot illustrations by Cape Town collective One Horse Town. (SF)

## FUTURETAINMENT

by Mike Walsh  
Phaidon Press

This book makes for essential, inspiring reading for anyone involved in the fields of entertainment and advertising or with even a remote interest in consumer behaviour and the way modern technology shapes our future as a species, and vice versa. Utilising simple but effective visuals, author Mike Walsh (sought-after media commentator and trend analyst) demystifies past, current and future trends in human thinking as applicable to entertainment (with special emphasis on music, television, film and electronic media). In Walsh's world, human behaviour is rapidly changing, driven primarily by the advances in interactive digital mediums. He examines the power of the global 'Audience Network' as the arbiters of cool, and the nail in the coffin of established television networks, media houses and major record labels. Embrace this book as gospel, and welcome to the future. (JM)



## PAPPA IN AFRIKA

by Anton Kannemeyer  
Jacana Media (in association with Michael Stevenson and Jack Shainman Gallery)

The work of Anton Kannemeyer, aka Joe Dog of *Bitterkomix* fame, audaciously explores the Dark Continent, labouring to be as politically incorrect as he can! The irony, of course, is that in so doing, he emanates some of South Africa's toughest socio-political commentary – with something to say about everyone from fear-laden racist white folk to the corrupt new political elite. The joy of Kannemeyer is that he ventures where most do not dare, and every single artwork in this collection is a veritable conversation-stopper. *Pappa in Afrika* focuses on his more recent work, many drawing on the style of Hergé's *Tintin* (from Kannemeyer's 2010 exhibition ...*A Dreadful Thing is About to Occur*) or pseudo-news-clipping style, as well as some older gems in his harder, adventure-comic style. A must-have for contemporary art lovers. (SF)

