

PRESS RELEASE

THE AVA

in collaboration with

THE JK GROSS TRUST and SPIER

announces

JOHANN VAN DER SCHIJFF

as the WINNER

OF ITS

**FOURTH PUBLIC SCULPTURE COMPETITION
FOR THE CITY OF CAPE TOWN**

The AVA, in conjunction with the JK Gross Trust and Spier, is pleased to announce that **Johann van der Schijff** is the **winner of fourth public sculpture competition with his piece entitled Arm Wrestle Podium.**

The AWP or Arm Wrestle Podium is a public sculpture acting as a communal platform where disputes can be settled, once and for all, in view of the public, by means of the physical act of arm wrestling. Located on the patio of the Association for Visual Arts, it is foreseen that it could play an important role in resolving those nasty art world disputes that seem to be part and parcel of the “scene”.

Its application, as a public sculpture in South Africa, is obviously much wider than the art scene and could be used as a way to find closure on political disputes where negotiation has reached a stalemate. But, it could also be as simple as acting as a platform to settle personal disputes of passers-by.

The advantages of settling a dispute on the AWP are that: it leads to a definite outcome; it is in the public eye for everyone to see; and although there is physical interaction and an undertone of violence, apart from possible stretched biceps, the result will not cause long-term injury to anybody if used according to the rules.

Attached to the sides of the podium will be four plaques, in English, Xhosa, Afrikaans and Braille, with the rules as adapted from the USAA (United States Armwrestling Association). There are fourteen rules at present.

Van der Schijff will receive R30 000 in prize money and R70 000 for the creation and installation of his winning sculpture.

The site for the winning piece is the patio of the AVA in Church Street mall in the city centre, a very lively area, popular with locals and tourists alike. The final piece will be installed in 2007 and will probably be executed in a combination of bronze, stainless steel, painted galvanized steel and rubber. Van der Schijff will also make a bronze of the winning maquette, edition of 5, plus artist's proof, which will be on sale later in the year.

Johann van der Schijff (born 1969 in Pretoria) is currently a lecturer in New Media at the Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town. He is also the course convenor of the MFA in New Media at the Institute for Film and New Media.

Previously he was involved with setting up the Multimedia programme at Technikon Witwatersrand. Before entering the academic world he worked as creative director at Shift Interactive Communications and as computer animator at Delapse and Haptics in Johannesburg.

He holds an MFA (New Media) Academie Minerva, Hane University for Professional Education, Groningen in the Netherlands, an MFA (Sculpture) from UCT and a BA Fine Art from the University of Pretoria. His sculptural and new media works have been exhibited nationally and internationally. He has won several art awards, has published articles and catalogues and has made presentations both locally and abroad

This competition was judged by an independent panel of six judges: Farzanah Badsha, Willie Bester, Willem Boshoff, Stefan Hundt, Zwelethu Mthethwa and Sonja Spamer.

The first competition in this series was won by John Skotnes with his Mythological Landscape, which stands on Thibault Square, Cape Town. The second winner was Brett Murray and his Africa stands in St George's Mall at the bottom of Waterkant Street, in Cape Town. The third competition which was won jointly by Fritha Langerman and Katherine Bull who produced Come to Pass, which is set into the intersection of St George's Mall and Shortmarket Street

These competitions were initiated by the J.K. Gross Trust with a view to making art more accessible to the Cape Town public by exposing them to contemporary art-making by some of South Africa's most prominent sculptors. The regeneration of the inner city of Cape Town, for the benefit of both locals and visitors, is a vital component of this competition. All three winning sculptures to date have proved great draw-cards for the city centre and have elicited interesting debate around issues of public art and its role. Cultural tourism has thereby been advanced and the surroundings of the city greatly enhanced.

The maquette entries are all on view at AVA until Friday, 1 September 2006.

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