

## HUMAN 'TRANSGRESSIONS'

## We are all 'Suspended Between Life, Death'

The annual Cape Town Art Fair (CTAF) starts today, promising four days of colour, creativity and loads of out-of-the-box thinking writes STEYN DU TOIT.

ONE of the artists whose work is being showcased as part of the ARTCO Galerie's stand is photographer Gordon Clark. Extracts from his solo show, *Who Am I? ... Transgressions*, which featured images of painter and progeria sufferer Leon Botha, can be seen until Sunday.

"We've had a great response when the exhibition first opened at ARTCO in 2011," says Clark.

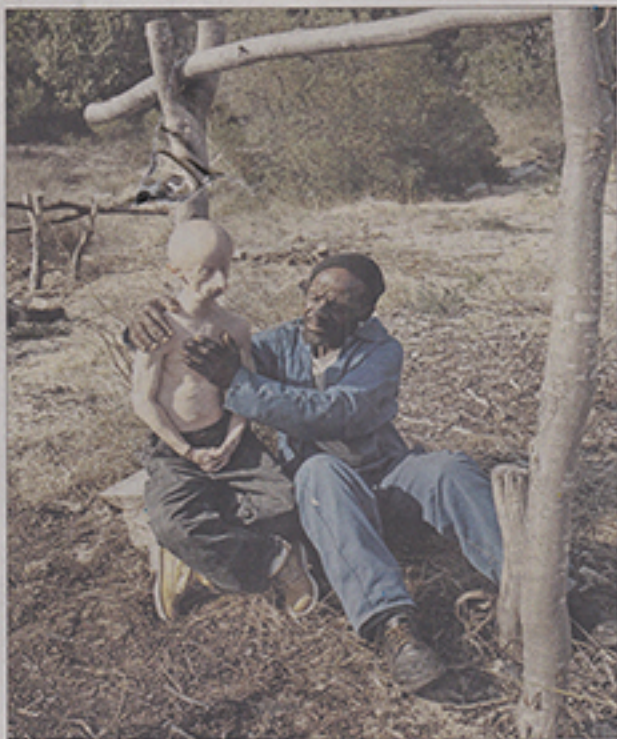
After debuting in 1988, he has staged over 30 solo shows over his career since. In addition, the Hout Bay-based creative's CV also includes a feature film, two documentaries, several music videos as well as a photographic book forwarded by none other than Oprah Winfrey herself.

"Leon and I journeyed together for two-and-a-half-years. During this time we would challenged each other often in an attempt to push our perceptions of what 'life' and 'death' meant to us."

"Those interested to learn more can see an extract of our project on YouTube under the title, 'Who Am I? ... Transgressions' exhibition video clip.' It has received over 230 000 views so far."

One of the exhibition's photographs that can be seen at CTAF is called *The Exchange*. It captures Botha, who also appeared in Die Antwoord's *Enter the Ninja* music video, busy sharing a sacred moment with a stranger they had met only moments earlier.

"We were driving over Old Cape Road when Leon asked me to pull over so that he could stretch his legs. When we got out we ran into two men busy collecting firewood. Upon seeing Leon the one immediately ran away into traffic. The other,



HEART ENERGY: A passerby asks, are you real?, in *The Exchange*.

however, stayed and asked us if Leon was 'real'.

"In order to convince himself that he was in fact human, the man asked if he could place his hand on Leon's heart. The exchange that followed is what you see in the photograph."

Not included in the original exhibition, and shown at CTAF for the first time in public, is the last image Clark ever took of Botha. It features the painter, shortly before his death

in 2011, lying naked on black satin and in the foetal position.

"We think we have a certain amount of time as human beings," Botha is quoted at the bottom of the image. "We try to put what we think our destiny paths are into that time frame... we forget that this is a timely thing, and its so quick that words are just spoken and it's gone already."

Called *Suspended Between Life and Death*, Clark says they took it, to



TRANSCIENCE: Progeria sufferer Leon Botha in *Suspended Between Life and Death*. PICTURES: Gordon Clark

quote Leon, 'Because we may as well.' "After he died his mother was understandably very sensitive towards showing this image in public, and I respected that. Leon also told me when we took it to wait a bit and to 'drop it in later'."

Asked what the next few months hold in store creatively, Clark answers that his interests lie in how he feels about infected behaviour. Specifically, how different environments can affect an individual's behaviour, and what that effect in

turn will have on him.

"The challenge is always shifting. Time is always moving, and the dynamic of the individual in that environment is constantly being challenged. The images that I create become a yardstick for both the sub-

ject and I. It questions the oxymoron of our opposite environments."

Another artist showing work at CTAF is last year's KKNK Kanna Award for Best Visual Arts Exhibition winner, Hannalie Taute. Extracts from her latest solo exhibition, *Cross My Heart* (on until March 31), can be seen at the Erdmann Contemporary stand.

"*Cross My Heart* was initially based on the childhood oath, 'Cross my heart and hope to die, stick a needle in my eye'. I also saw this exhibition as an extension of my previous solo, *Rubber Ever After*."

"Do I promise to continue with the medium of rubber? Well, in fairy tales they say happily ever after is that a promise, and can it be kept, especially if we think about our environment?"

On Saturday Taute will also be conducting a live performance at the Erdmann Contemporary's booth (B1). "I will be wearing a rubber dress and accessories. The audience will be asked to take a pin and stick it into a stuffed rubber heart sewn onto my chest - right above my real heart. "The ones who are able to find my 'soft spot' with the pin will receive a gift in the form of an erasure poem. To find out what those are people will have to come stick a needle in me first!"

Describing her work as "dealing with emotions", Taute says ideally she'd like to solicit emotional responses from her viewers, and not necessarily academic ones.

"Since I am usually reserved, this 'performance' helps me to approach people with the intention to start a conversation. With this specific interaction I would like to see how people respond to my request of sticking a pin into my heart."

"It can almost be seen as Pinter-esque, only in real life."

● CTAF: R80, Computicket 0661 915 8000, [www.computicket.com](http://www.computicket.com)