



paul
du
toit

SCULPTURES
PAINTINGS



INTRODUCTION

BY BRANDON DE KOCK

Paul du Toit is a contemporary South African artist based in Hout Bay, Cape Town. Following his participation in the '70 over 2000 Exhibition' celebrating the life of Professor Richard Demarco, Paul's invitation to the Florence Biennale caps a remarkable year that has included international exhibitions and a nomination for the Daimler Chrysler Sculpture Award 2002. His denatured forms and faces, brought to life with basic, bold colours and simple lines, explore the infinite variations of the human head and psyche.

Although his focus has shifted from painting toward sculpture, Paul's art continues to fracture visual expectations and with

his most recent work, the two disciplines are almost interrelated. The paintings are not only blueprints and recordings for future sculptures but also reflections of existing pieces and works in progress. This process, together with newly discovered techniques, has led to an evolution into metal, bronze and aluminium sculptures accentuated with Paul's trademark primary colours.

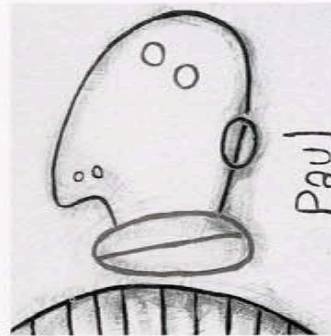


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WELCOME TO PLANETPAUL

BY GUS SILBER

Somewhere between El Dorado, the Island of Fook, and the Big Rock Candy Mountain, you will find the planet of Planetpaul, a place that would be mythical were it not so tangibly, palpably real. I know, because I have been there. I know, because that's where I live.

Well, not always; sometimes, I am forced to return to the Third Rock from the Sun, to grapple with the terrors of terra firma, to wander through a wasted landscape of autumnal browns and pale, washed-out yellows, to wonder why the people round me are so curiously lacking in definition, in line, in colour.

That's when I wish someone would take a big, bold finger, dip it in a pot of paint, gouge deep canyons across a canvas, stab two impact-craters for eyes, slap a couple of hot-dog buns where

the lips should go, plough a wavy furrow at the hairline, and plaster the gaps with liberal dabs of cyan and magenta and yellow and maroon and orange and red and lime-green and electric-blue. Ah, that's better.

I first saw the face of Planetpaul while trawling the Internet one evening, in search of the most abundant element in the universe: Information. I was downloading pop songs and poems and photographs and software programs, not because I needed them but because they were there, free for the taking, all cunningly wrapped up in the same binary packages of zeroes and ones, albeit arranged in a slightly different order. I paused for a while at a site called The Virtual Gallery, and that's when I virtually fell off my chair, because I found myself staring at a

painting by an artist named Paul du Toit. It was a painting of a face – I think it may even have been called Face – and the artist had signed his first name in big capital letters in the bottom left-hand corner, with the L in Paul facing the wrong way, like a child tripping backwards down the street, oblivious to the traffic and the warning shouts of his elders. I stared at the face for a while, mesmerised by the spidery lashes, the blue beret, the ultraviolet lips, the nose like a dagger, the silver and gold dots like Morse Code or money falling from heaven. Then I did what I always do when I find something I like on the Internet: I right-clicked and saved the painting to my hard drive. But as I watched it on my screen, I began to realise the limitations of the digital medium. The face seemed flat, distant,

untouchable. So I sent off for the analogue version, and now it's hanging on my wall.

It is not alone.

For I live in a world of orbiting atoms and flying bugs and giant gnashing teeth and floating faces and kaleidoscopic eyes and space horses wearing takkies.

I live on the planet of Planetpaul, somewhere between El Dorado and the Island of Fook and the Big Rock Candy Mountain. Come on in. Step on up. Put your face in a different space.

Welcome. You'll never want to go back home.

Gus Silber – Somewhere on PlanetPaul

HAPPILY MURDERING THE REAL : THE ART OF PAUL DU TOIT

BY CHRIS ROPER

Pleasure is the driving force behind Paul du Toit's art, the very engine of its bright being. It's impossible to look at his multicoloured portraits and not feel this. Happiness is worked into the texture of the canvas, slashed into it with a variety of homemade tools that remind one of a Faustian toy-maker's toolbox.


There's more art than artifice in the bold lines of the distorted faces and mutant eyeballs, zigzag smiles and startled grimaces. The bright colours mask the faces as a carnival grotesquerie that alludes more to the dark torment of the freakshow carny than the mundane hilarity of the circus clown.

So there's pleasure, yes, but it's a pleasure not untroubled by pain. The endless, almost obsessive repetition of Paul du Toit's ungainly portraiture is a search for perfection, perhaps, but it's also a ritualistic figuration and refiguration of the agony of that futile search.

When I talk of repetition, I don't mean that the paintings look similar. Far from it: each apparently crude face is different from the previous, sometimes subtly, at other times wildly. Each painting is unique, with its own quirky characteristics. You can find Paul du Toit's work in every far-flung corner of the globe, and this isn't just another cliché: in his geometry of gawkiness, globes do have corners, in the same way that his faces and bodies have angles that mock representation, but that convey a certain reality.


I'm tempted to say, stealing from Baudrillard, that Du Toit's paintings murder the real, and that they are more industrial simulacrum than representation. They exist inside their own economy, in more ways than one.

In an economy of meaning, what they are (both in the way Du Toit produces them, and in the way people look at them) is determined by an exchange that takes place within themselves,



I left the Picasso museum in Paris in a Bart Simpson funk. I had the feeling that I was being conned. How many examples of male genitalia and pubescent hormone problems can one endure before noon. Much of it seems to ooze with the ego-driven, politically-correct, look of a fake. Picasso's work was influenced by pre-literate masks and sculpture, but Pablo was playing visual games with second hand imagery.

Paul du Toit's work may look like Picasso's, but, unlike the Macho Man, it has the integrity of a first hand experience. Having discovered his painting and sculpture, I was surprised to find that Paul shows the energy and clarity of a true primitive. He seems to have a special contact with the loony evolution of the Universe and is able to express this connection in his work. These are not just happy portraits, they are more like yantras and mandalas that align our perception with the forces of change.



Paul has none of the hang-ups of an academically trained artist. We can see the clear vision of a child and experience the joy that we once felt before confronting the seduction of words and the judgment of history. They glow with the confidence and perfection of refrigerator drawings, yet, with the intuitive precision and the empathy that comes from living a full contemporary life. These perfectly primitive images feed on the insanity of our digital culture and align this virtual reality with universal needs. If his work reminds us of Bart Simpson, it may be because they both so clearly reflect our media mad lifestyle.

Du Toit's recent sculpture is an extension of his unique vision of the world. Free of the distractions of art history and the visual games of the past, he is able to take full advantage of found objects and materials. In his hands, auto parts become an assemblage of contrasting positive and negative forms. Each

shape and colour has a character that we intuitively know; one that corresponds to essential processes in nature, culture and in our own being. Because it is informed by direct experience, the sense of balance is complete and the harmony of elements is refined. It all seems so easy, so right.

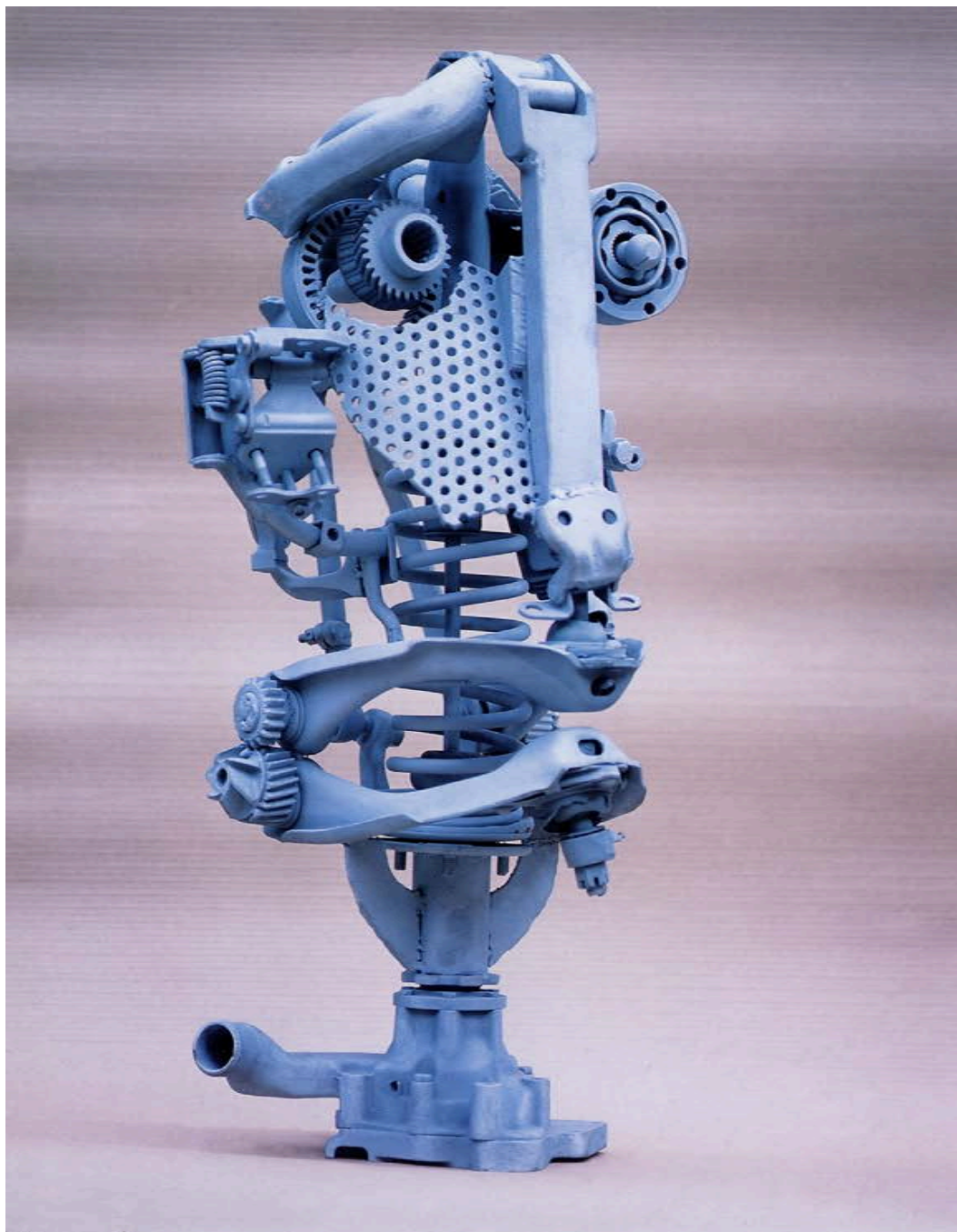
After a quiet morning spent in a garden of Miró sculpture, I feel free...I smile knowingly at the world around me. But, humour like first hand knowledge and honesty, will always be politically incorrect, and, happy art has rarely been taken seriously. I suspect that du Toit, like Miró and Simpson, will be the exception to this rule. Standing in California, the media and hype capital of the world, it looks like Paul du Toit is the real thing.

Mark Jurey

© 7/2001 Mark Jurey Professor of art, California State University Northridge

sculptures





SUPERLATIVE

Found industrial metal, joined by fusion with an electric arc & painted with automotive paints
2001

860 x 380 x 330mm

Artist Collection

Selected for Daimler Chrysler Sculpture Award 2002

FIRST GEAR

Found industrial metal, joined by fusion with an
electric arc. It painted with automotive paints
2001

680 x 440 x 310mm

Selected for Daimler Chrysler Sculpture Award 2002

Private Collection





TIN SOLDIER

Found industrial metal, joined by fusion with an electric arc. It is painted with automotive paints.

2001

680 x 430 x 300mm

Private Collection

Selected for Florence Biennale for

Contemporary Art 2001

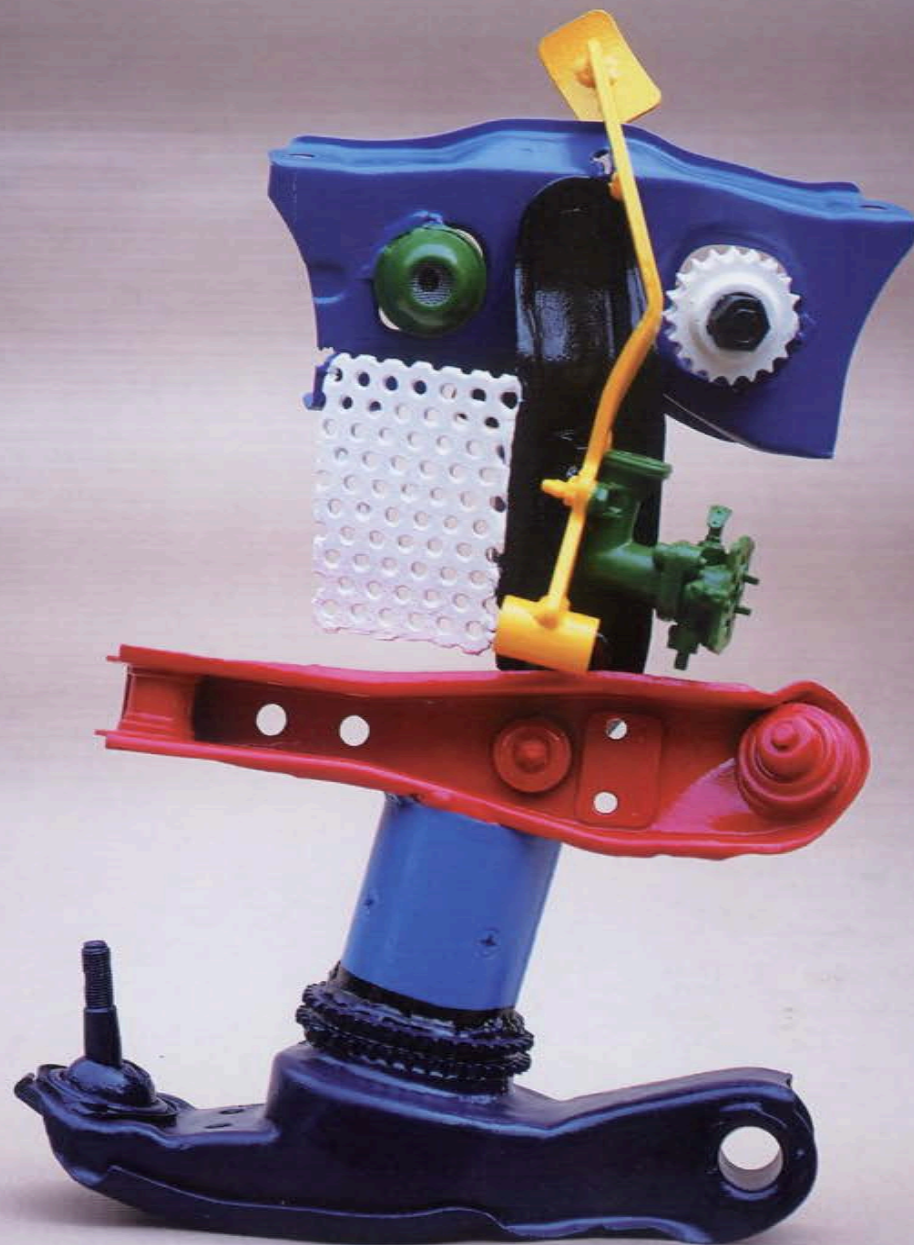
FORTUNE SMILE

Found industrial metal, joined by fusion with an
electric arc & painted with automotive paints

2001

590 x 360 x 170mm

Private Collection

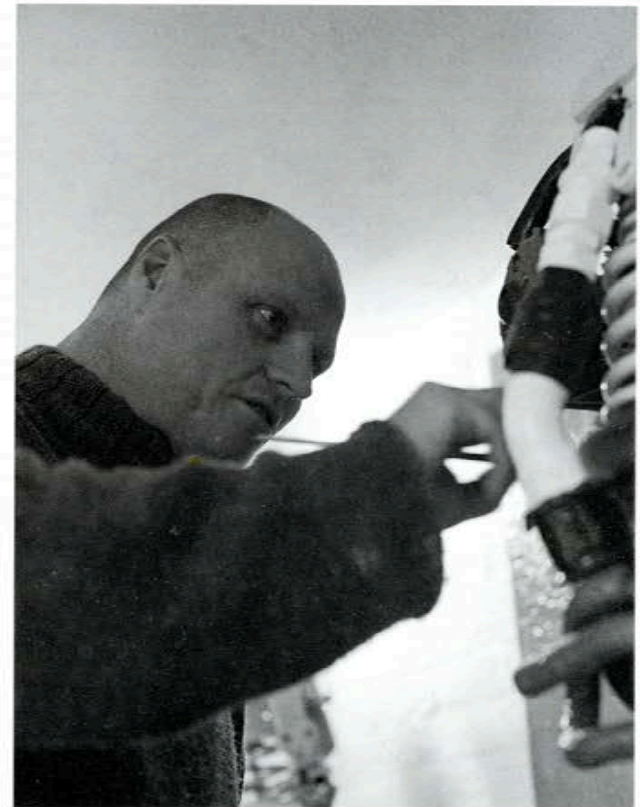




FIXATE

Found industrial metal, joined by fusion with an electric arc & painted with automotive paints
2001
550 x 270 x 270mm
Private Collection

relief sculptures





ATTRACTING IRON

Found industrial metal, joined by fusion with an electric arc. It's painted with automotive paints.

2001

600 x 440 x 140mm

Private Collection

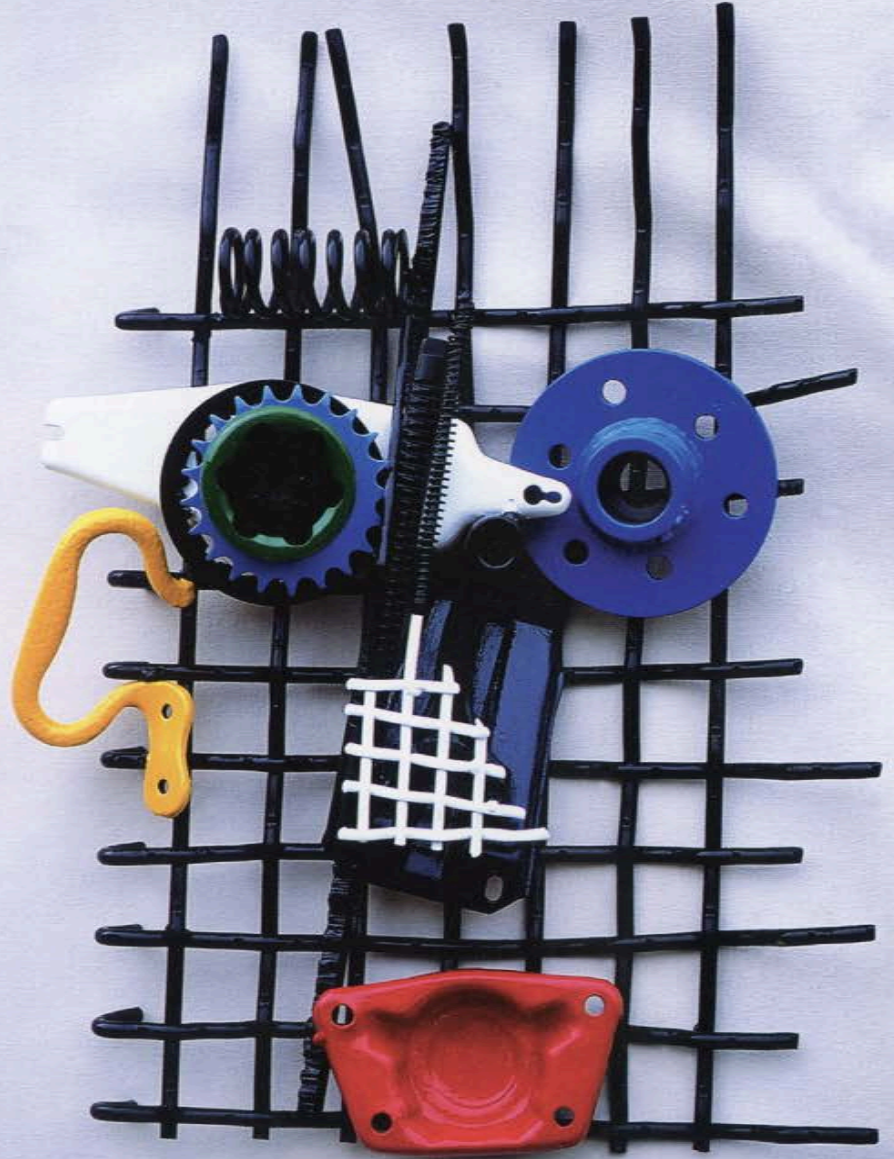
MAGNETIC STORM

Found industrial metal, joined by fusion with an
electric arc & painted with automotive paints

2001

620 x 470 x 190mm

Private Collection





ATTRACTING IRON

Found industrial metal, joined by fusion with an electric arc & painted with automotive paints

2001

600 x 440 x 140mm

Private Collection

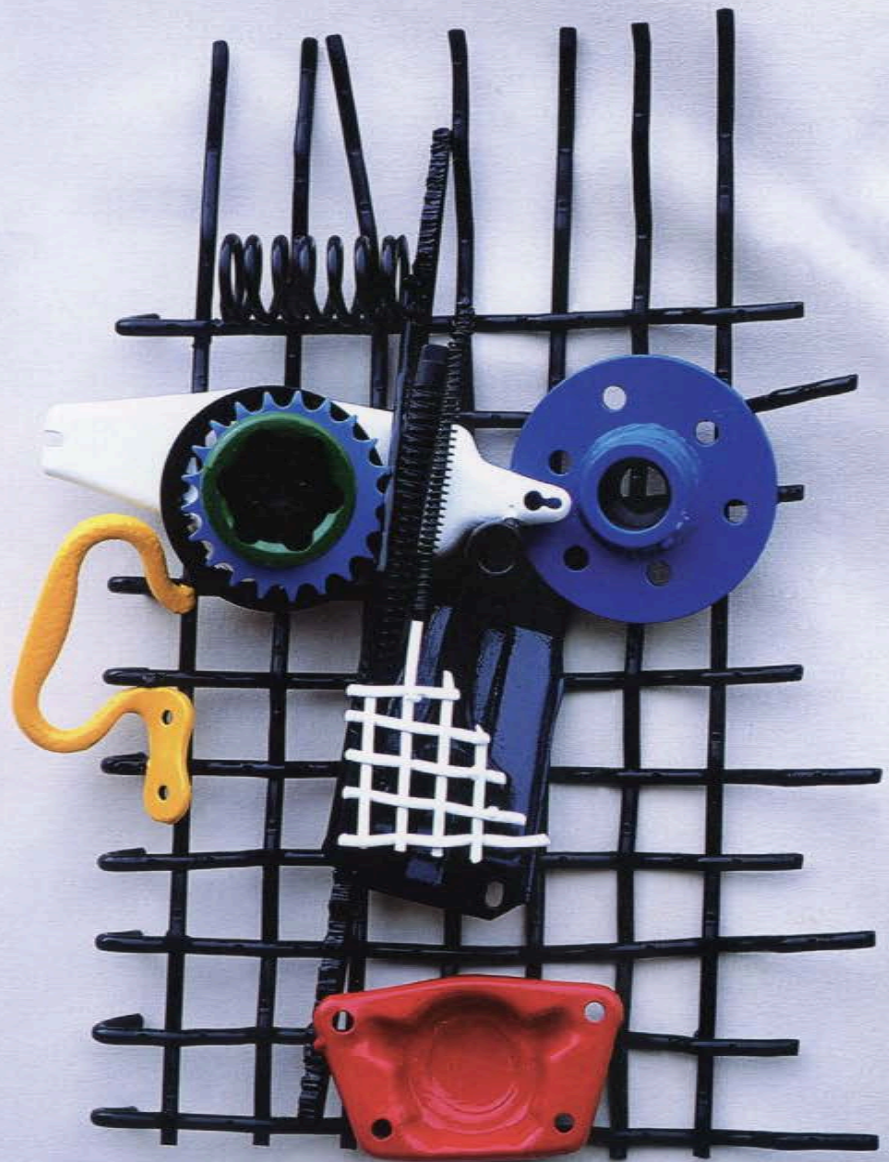
MAGNETIC STORM

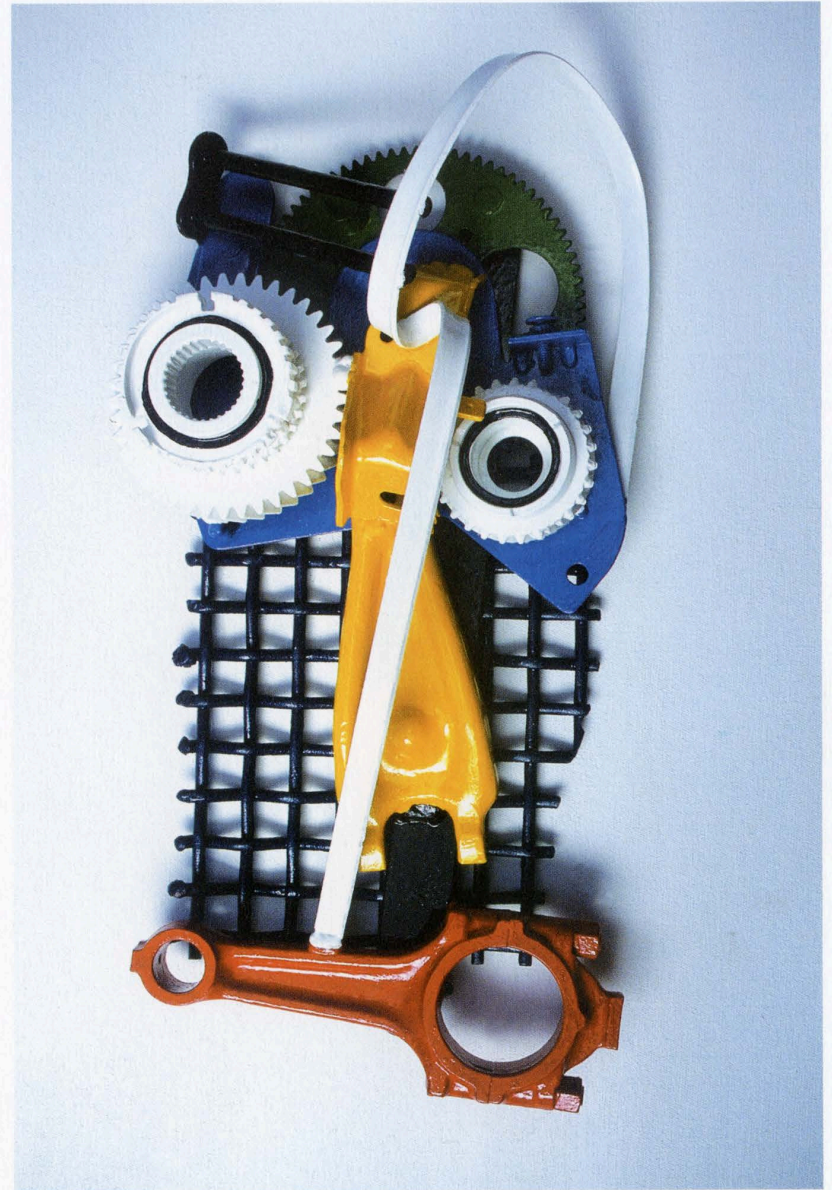
Found industrial metal, joined by fusion with an
electric arc & painted with automotive paints

2001

620 x 470 x 190mm

Private Collection





CLING

Found industrial metal, joined by fusion with an
electric arc & painted with automotive paints

2001

430 x 230 x 90mm

Private Collection



STATIC

Found industrial metal, joined by fusion with an electric arc & painted with automotive paints
2001

520 x 260 x 110mm

Private Collection

paintings





TREND-SETTER

Oil Paint & Impasto paste on canvas

2001

800 x 800mm

Private Collection



TRACE ELEMENTS

Oil Paint & Impasto paste on canvas
2001
1.2 x 1.4m



GOOD BAD UGLY
Oil Paint & Impasto paste on canvas
2001
2.6 x 1.5m
Private Collection







SOME DAYS ARE BETTER THAN OTHERS

Oil Paint & Impasto paste on canvas

2001

1.2 x 1.4m



CLOSELY RELATED

Oil Paint & Impasto paste on canvas
2001
500 x 600mm



SURPRISE!

Oil Paint & Impasto paste on canvas
2001
500 x 600mm



CURVED CONTINUOUS

Oil Paint & Impasto paste on canvas
2001
500 x 600mm



WALK UNAFRAID SERIES
Oil Paint & Impasto paste on canvas
2001
1.5m x 900mm



WALK UNAFRAID SERIES
Oil Paint & Impasto paste on canvas
2001
1.5m x 900mm



WHAT'S THE FREQUENCY

Oil Paint Et Impasto paste on canvas

2001

1.2 x 1.4m



JOSIE BORAIN

Josie Borain's life has been synonymous with photographs for the last twenty years. She lived and worked in Paris and then in New York as a model, at the same time developing her interest in photography and taking portraits. Her photographs have been published in French Photo Magazine and in Elle, among others. Since returning to South Africa she has worked as a fashion editor for a major monthly magazine, and now spends her time juggling photography and motherhood.

All photographs in this catalogue by Josie Borain



CHRONOLOGY

BY JACQUELINE BUSCH

Paul du Toit was born in Johannesburg on 31 October 1965. From an early age Paul showed great interest in art and sold his first painting, at age 12, to his aunt who was instrumental in developing his talent. In 1976 he contracted Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis and for the next three years he was confined to a wheelchair and hospitalised during the critical stages. On 24 December 1979 he left the hospital and no traces of the illness were found in any subsequent tests. In 1994 Paul entered a national art competition held by the Association of Arts in Bellville and won the first prize in the category "Best Artist with no Formal Training".

Two years later, in 1996, Paul - with his wife Lorette and daughter Danielle - moved to Hout Bay, Cape Town. 1997 saw Paul being one of the first artists in South Africa to set up a portfolio of his art on the Internet. His son Joshua Paul du Toit was born in September 1997. In 1998 he secured his first solo exhibition in Paris. His work was also included in major international exhibitions, including: '70 Over 2000' Travelling Exhibition & the 2001 Florence Biennale for Contemporary Art. He was also nominated for the Daimler Chrysler Sculpture Awards 2002.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Paul