

More than the Sum of the Parts

To call him a landscape photographer is akin to describing Table Mountain as a large flat rock. To label him as a graphic artist also leaves much to be desired. A photo-graphic artist? Unwieldy and lacklustre.

The fact of the matter is that Herman van Bon as a photographer and as an artist is not easily pigeon-holed. Words fall short when describing his work and how he achieves it. In this case, his pictures are more than the sum of their parts.

Although a good photographer's landscapes are far from flat, the observer does, in most cases, get what he or she sees: a representation of a country or marine scene.

So far, so good.

For Herman, however, the capturing of a landscape is just the beginning. It is his playground. He starts to experiment

and explore and play, using different kinds of photo-processing and –developing software and techniques, and, organically, his pictures begin to grow.

Layer by layer, the original shot metamorphosises into something extraordinary. Textures, tones, figures, symbols, quirky composites, and what appear figments of the imagination to the eye are included.

This process can take weeks.

The result is a contemporary, deeply personal interpretation, a fascinating fantasia of different forms, as far away from just a landscape full of special effects as you and I could imagine.

Herman describes his work as: “Associations that lead to the awakening of the archetypes part of the universal heritage of humankind; born in prehistoric times”.

Herman explains: “I am a very complex person and this complexity reflects in my work in the sense that I produce landscapes, haikus, photo-graphic mixed media and imaginary photography next to abstract and portrait

photography. Occasionally I paint or apply ‘fluidization’ to my pictures. Sometimes – more often than not – it all comes together.”

Herman’s work is by far more than the sum of its parts. And it isn’t always easy on the observer. When this writer read the following understanding of art by the controversial British street artist, Banksy, she thought, *that’s* what Herman van Bon does:

“Art should comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable.”

Some reviews:

“Born in the Netherlands and currently living in Napier, South Africa, Herman van Bon explores the poetic qualities of photography — sometimes literally, like in his series of photo haiku. His images highlight the ethereal beauty of the landscapes around him, and the above photo is no exception; we loved how so much of the visual action takes place in the sky, with terrestrial life — trees, grass — merely a secondary character in a much bigger story”. – Ben Huberman (WordPress)

“Wat T.T. Cloete in sy gedig sê is waar: ‘die aarde is deur een dichter gemaak’. Mensen soos Herman van Bon het die gare om dit dmv fotografie vast te lê Dankie!” – Awie van Wyk

“The Hieronymous Bosch of the digital era”. – Lizia Nieman (RIP), L’Art Niemaclature

“Absolute fantastic”. – Hettie Saayman

“In the Eye of the Beholder of Herman van Bon is a surprising and lovely image from South Africa” – Review of groups exhibition in LAC Los Angeles in LA-Times

“Herman van Bon has an amazing eye for capturing beauty”. – Kamalini Govender in Tales and Dreams (USA)

“You’re so welcome – I just love the inventive, nuanced, beautiful and surprising work you keep doing. Keep it up!” – Douglas Moorezart

“For the love of BEAUTY the photography of Herman van Bon this kind of work really hits me so deep that i feel sparks flying inside my head and the inspiration to

produce MORE art than just wells up naturally within me.
Thank you, Herman van Bon” – Johan J. Steyn

EXHIBITIONS:

Permanent exhibition since April 2017 in Private Gallery,
Napier, South Africa.

24 July 2014: Self Portrait on Times Square, NYC, USA.

December 2015/January 2016: Los Angeles Center of Art,
LA, USA (groups exhibition)

October-December 2016: Baardskeerdersbos Art Gallery in
Baardskeerdersbos, SA

December 2016/January 2017: Breytenbach Gallery,
Wellington, SA

May/June 2017: “The invisible visible” in Oslo, Norway,
groups exhibition organized by UNESCO. Curator:
Georgeta Negraru (previous curator PRADO, Madrid).

