

In his discussion of murals, homesteads and beadwork Powell shows how notions of perspective, abstraction and representation influenced Ndebele art and its ultimate need to 'mediate between the culturally "inner" world of tradition and the "outer" world of dominant Western technologies' (p 68). Although not everyone may agree with Powell's analogies between Cubism and the Ndebele style, many of his comments are incisive.

In the concluding section of the book Powell contends that the Ndebele style, images and patterns have only been able to survive because they have been able to adapt to changing circumstances. Thus new mural imagery reflects the urban environment of electric lights, aeroplanes, barber shops and contemporary signage. Traditional beadwork and patterns have lately been used to decorate radios and all manner of consumer items. The Ndebele twins Emmly and Martha Masanabo have succeeded in creating a new genre that has led to their frequent inclusion in exhibitions of African art. Similarly, the influence of Ndebele art on contemporary South African design, for example in the Smirnoff advertisement (pp 152-153), is very significant, and shows the cultural intermingling that has become typical of South Africa in recent years.

This book is illustrated with the historic photographs of Constance Stuart Larrabee and Alfred Duggan-Cronin, as well as contemporary photographs by Mark Lewis. The quality of the visual material throughout is excellent, and has been carefully selected to illustrate pertinent points in the text. The text concludes with a useful glossary of Ndebele terms.

Powell comments (p 9) that most of the research sources he used were written in the 1980s and have already become dated due to the rapid pace of socio-political change. Despite this, and the fact that the book does not have academic pretensions, a bibliography would have been useful.

Ndebele - A People and their Art is structured in such a way that it can be dipped into at random without loss of narrative cohesion, and is an ideal book for the general reader who is interested in South African art and design.

i-juse putting the squeeze on graphic design in a new south africa

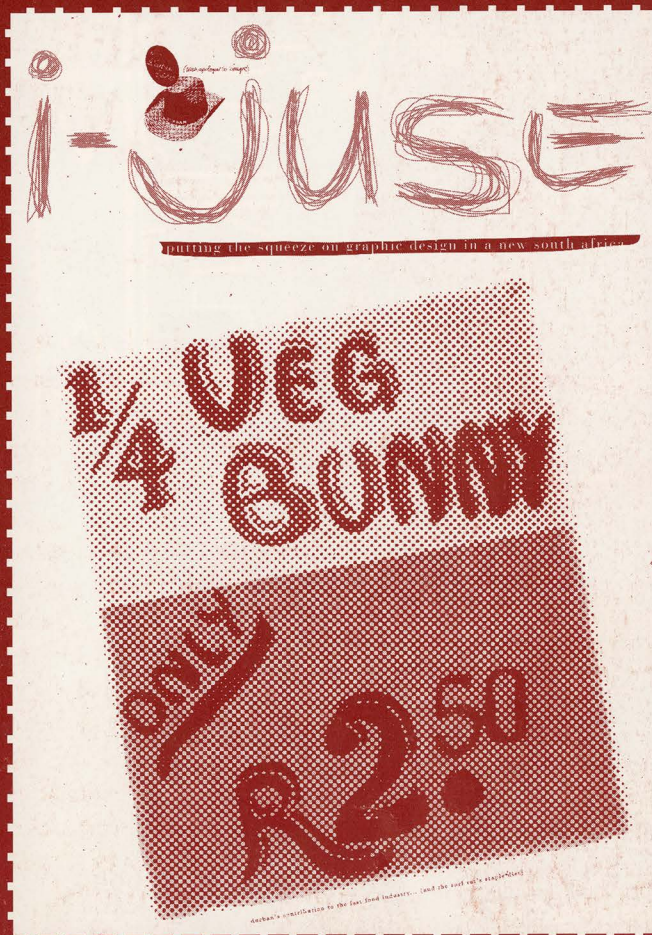
Number 1. 1995. Durban: Orange Juice Design,
8 pp., soft cover, illustrated.

Reviewed by Marian Sauthoff

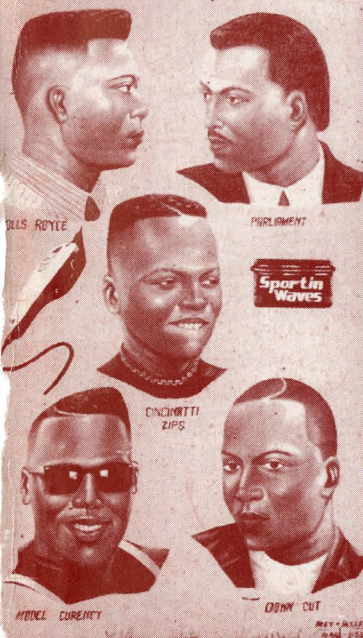
The South African design and advertising industries are often criticised for their tendency to turn to glossy international journals for inspiration, ignoring what is happening on their own doorsteps. *i-juse* (roughly translated as 'juice' in Zulu) a new A3 publication, sets out to illustrate the vibrancy of local street communication which uses uniquely expressive forms of art, typography, photography and advertising to get the message across to audiences.

The intention of this 'Afrocentric advertising and design adventure' is to compile a collection of interesting and diverse examples of indigenous expression which will then be published three to four times a year. Distribution will be to a wide readership which will include both international and national corporate organisations, the design industry and design education.

The first issue of *i-juse* brims with local images and content. Examples of signage range from advertising 'veg bunny', a version of the original Durban take-away, and herbalists who 'sort out all the impossibilities', to hand written instructions like 'Please clean coconuts before entering temple'. A double page spread is devoted to examples of superimposed photographs which are hugely popular with township residents. This thriving business, operated by photographers based at taxi ranks, offers consumers customised



DRINCE OF PEACE HAIR-CUT



alternatives to mass produced cards from chain stores.

In addition to street photography and signage, this first issue features barber signs, art, craft, painted advertising as well as a black and a white designer's interpretation of the same brief. Each topic is supported by a short contextual commentary.

The publication succeeds in reflecting important visual aspects of the society we live in. It provides valuable insight into how one may appeal to a vast section of the local population, a target audience which is perhaps not as well understood as it should be by the creative industries. Many of the examples show how Western and African iconography have been incorporated into solutions typified by a directness, functionality and spontaneity which cannot fail to communicate with the target audience. At street trader level Indian style blends with the African to create utilitarian communication with a distinctly local flavour.

i-juse makes an important contribution to the idea of an indigenous design approach which synthesises characteristics unique to the South African milieu. It represents this idea as being more holistic than the use of superficial imagery or the random incorporation of ethnic elements into design solutions. Highly recommended as an essential addition to the reference libraries of design practitioners, educators and students.

i-juse is distributed by mailing list. If you would like to be placed on the mailing list, please write to Garth Walker, PO Box 51289, Musgrave Road 4062

ITS LOW-PROFILE AND CASUAL STANCE BELIE A DYNAMIC PRESENCE IN THE MARKETPLACE



Finwood Papers started out as an independently run paper merchant and intends to remain so. The company has grown from humble beginnings in October 1991 'in the corner of a small shop in Southgate', to its current status as one of the top paper merchants in the country.

The company name '**Finwood**' was taken from the surnames of Keith Findlay and John Woodnutt, founder members of the company. Current directors are: John Woodnutt, joint managing director responsible for the financial aspects of business; Keith Findlay, joint managing director responsible for sales; Adrian Stevens, marketing and indent sales; Peter Simpson, regional director Johannesburg; Arthur Taylor, regional director Durban; Mike van Vuuren, regional director East London and Hilton Humby, regional director Cape Town. The founder members and all directors emanate from Haddons and/or Star Paper. They each have between 12 to 35 years of experience in the paper industry.

Exceptionally fast growth necessitated a move from the initial 'corner shop'. **Finwood** first moved to Keith Findlay's private premises; then to a double-storey unit in Steeledale; to premises in Driehoek, Germiston; and in May 1994 finally settled into its present environment which was specially created for **Finwood Papers**. The marketing and finance departments are situated in Johannesburg and each branch, including Pretoria, is strongly backed by a telesales department.

The company was created as a smaller merchant 'without frills' which was 'small enough to care', yet big enough to be of notable benefit to the printing and specifying industries. From the start it has committed itself to the establishment of a professional, personalised and non-bureaucratic paper company.