

# DRUM

wayne barker

Featuring  
8  
OLD SCHOOL  
SILKSCREENS

10  
new oils on  
canvas

2  
Glass Beaded  
Works

EXCLUSIVE ITW By Matthew Krouse

*“And the work is about the dirt, and the beauty, and the love, and the hate, and the fucking trauma of living, of gravity, in a way.”*

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“

IT'S LIKE I WORK IN A CAVE,  
I LIVE IN THE STREETS.”



Drum Dance | 2018 | GLASS SEED BEADS ON BOARD | 134 x 100 cm



This page:  
*Oumie* | 2018 | MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS | 171 x 124 cm  
Opposite page:  
*Cultural Defiance* | 2018 | MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS | 156 x 120 cm



# DRUM

In This Issue:  
CAPE CRIME: DISTRICT SI  
African National Congre



A DAY ON DURBAN BEACH  
See Pictures Inside

Africa's Leading Magazine  
FEBRUARY



This page:  
*Bush War* | 2018 | MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS | 172 x 131 cm  
Opposite page:  
*Sunshine* | 2018 | MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS | 168 x 125 cm



This page:  
*Milk and Money* | 2018 | MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS | 167 x 125 cm

Opposite page:  
*When the Saints go Marching In* | 2018 | MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS | 156 x 120 cm





This page:  
*Fire Earth Gas* | 2018 | MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS | 163 x 124 cm  
Opposite page:  
*Blue Indigo* | 2018 | MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS | 151 x 120 cm





**DRUM**  
interview by  
Matthew Krouse

**Matthew Krouse: What is the Drum series about? Tell us about the journey.**

Wayne Barker: Some of the headlines in the Drum magazine are ridiculous. Like one claims it's 'The End of the World', and another is about a 'Human Cigarette Lighter'. One just has to laugh at the insanity of the media. But there was also Scope magazine. When I was in the army, and I was in the psychiatric ward, there was a guy who would draw the Scope magazine and then he would put stars on the [model's] breasts.

The main headlines were about the war, or the ANC, and then you've got these sexy women. We were part of this so-called Struggle, doing our cultural things, and it's almost like that has been lost. We are back to another weird, other regime in a way. So, the series is almost like looking back, romanticizing the whole Sophiatown era, and all of that love and energy that one remembers. Remember we ran a venue called Gallant House and had jazz bands. So, in a way the series is referencing the past, and saying that the future hasn't changed really.

**M: It reminds me of the craze in big international exhibition titles with ideas about the present and the future. There was the 2015 Venice biennale curated by Okwui Enwezor titled All The World's Futures. A meditation on whether or not we are encountering the future that people imagined they would have.**

W: The energy in the 1980s, the cabarets and the parties, these beautiful old musicians who actually worked as security guards. And then at Gallant House we would support them, we bought them pianos and shit. That beautiful soul of Johannesburg seems to be lost. The born-frees seem to be a lot more materialistic than then. They wouldn't even know what June 16 is. So, in a way it's a reminder. The Drum represented a popular image and vibe about what was happening then. All that excitement.

**M: Interestingly, you still live in Troyeville. You have had this remarkable art journey and you've been to many places and had solo exhibitions, but you still maintain the methods that you began with. Your work seems to have maintained something about the context you work in.**

W: It's the type of artist that I am. I've tried to do commissions and they just don't work. So, I'm quite narcissistic in that way. If I don't feel it, then it doesn't work. I have ideas to just paint flowers. Then it somehow crashes. I feel like I live very much in Johannesburg, I have an Orlando Pirates helmet in the back of my car. All the jollies, the homeless guys, wherever I drive, run up to me shouting 'Mr Buccaneer!' And I open the window, and they're all my chommies [chums] and they protect me on my journey through the very fucked up crumbling city of Jo'burg.

It's because of this image, of Orlando Pirates, and this white guy who's got this thing. The same thing happens when my wife and a friend are driving in the car, they see these white girls in the car and they think they are Orlando Pirates supporters. Somehow that object, that binding object of football, and the fact that these white people have this Orlando Pirates thing in their car cheers people up remarkably. Because normally when you're in your car, these people come over and they want to clean your car, or they beg, and there's no interaction. Whereas I have an enormous interaction in the city because of this funny little icon, the makaraba. It's amazing. And then I'll be driving on the highway and there'll be a hooter and then I'll think 'oh fuck' and someone will shout, 'Up the buccaneer!'

For me there were things that untied us in the Eighties, when we weren't allowed to have black people staying in our place. A woman, one of the lead singers from the hit show Ipi Tombi, would often stay at my place. And through all that, music and all the stuff, we bonded. We made a connection with the 'other' through art.



I never took up arms. I just didn't do the army because I didn't want to take up arms. But culturally we bonded and with all the 'jollies', with [musicians] Tony Nkosi, Allen Kwela and the Jazz pioneers. And I think the Drum magazine reminds me of that time, because of the dancing and the 'Coon' image with the lips, jumping and jiving. It reminds me of that state of emergency, that things would have to change. I'd be lying in my flat in Beryl Court, in Troyeville, and I'd be thinking, 'at some point things are going to have to change and it's going to be beautiful.' And you see all these beautiful African women with all this African cloth, and the colour of that. It was a fantasy. Now Troyeville is full of Congolese, and others. That colour, and the different cultures meeting; we knew that would happen. But I used to fantasize about the graphicness in a way.

In the eighties, when I was first living in Troyeville, I used to think about those things. We were dreaming about this utopia. That was what we wanted, just to get on, to live together. The people from Soweto, Sophiatown and Alexandra would come to our place and play music. But it was a dream. It didn't quite happen like that.

“ **The main headlines were about the war, or the ANC, and then you've got these sexy women.**”

**MK: What's interesting is the duality. You've maintained this presence on this side of town. You have chosen to stay in a place like Beryl Court. And yet on the other side are you pressurised to move on from the type of art practice where you work communally, or collectively, in real spaces? Now that you're attached to a major gallery.**

As a human being I'm still there. Because of the makaraba. And getting back to the Drum magazine, they are like popular iconic images of what was happening while we were behind our walls, to the majority of the people. I'm amazed that every single person has totally related to them. I'm not quite sure why or how. And the fact that I've painted on them.

In the beginning, I suppose I was as an iconoclast, destroying the Pierneef paintings, questioning the culture and the meaning of the art that we were fed. And at this point I'm still doing it. I suppose this will be the last show in which I do the Pierneefs. Because in between that I've always gone back to the landscape. In the beginning the landscape was that of horror and fucking apartheid fascism, the land given to the white people and all that stuff. So now I'm almost owning the Drum images in terms of the emotion that I used to feel then. I feel that I won them. I feel that I'm part of that. I had the woman from the famous musical staying at my place.

So, somehow, I feel that I'm being honest to experience and emotions that I had then, with the whole jazz thing, and the Sophiatown thing, but which we recreated in the Eighties. I think that's why I feel that I can paint them with a certain amount of integrity and meaning, to me. And I think that's why they may work.

I would like to do still life, maybe next year or in five years' time, I'd like to do just beautiful still life. But at the moment I haven't allowed myself that privilege. So, there's still a questioning of the vernacular, everything around me. Now you'll go to a nightclub, or a jazz bar, and you cannot smoke. It's becoming very politically correct. So, in a way I yearn for the dirt, and the patina of like fucked up jazz musicians falling off their chairs, like Allen used to do.

Think about the realism of the eighties, and probably the fifties when Drum started, I'm still in that and I live like that.

**MK: Do you lament the loss of an arts community?**

I totally do. When Allen [Kwela] Died and Philip Tabane died, and Mahlatini of the Mahotella Queens, died – when that shit happened -- musicians died penniless. Because at that point they weren't getting royalties, they weren't getting money. It was fucked up on a whole other level. So, in interfacing with the Drum I'm lamenting about that, clearly, and I live like quite a hedonistic life. But I'm quite serious about culture and how it effects the community.

For example, take Twilsharp Studios [gallery

in Bertrams], the Spaza [gallery] or even Nando's Art Collection: there still are pockets out there. There was a vibe, and I've continued that legacy. I carry on doing my stuff, and I carry on painting. And, of course, there's new digital mediums. So, in a way I have maintained it. I don't think I'm stuck in that my art is always about here. Some of the projects, like when I worked with the children on the borderline of the bread line from Beryl Court making art out of wax in beehives.

What I did was I gave them honey, not money.

In the beginning, I was quite vulnerable. I'd go to UCT (University of Cape Town) and I was this guy with big ears from Pretoria, from a military family. So, I was quite vulnerable. I had to break into my feelings and views about the world through my own journey. Getting over racism was just like a natural thing that happened. And that's why I feel like I can own the idea of the Drum [magazines], and the fact that I'm painting them.

**MK: Yes, tell us about the actual process of creating the Drum works.**

On the Drums we have the background painted. They are digitally printed and then I paint on top of them. But in the old days when I would do the Pierneef works I would draw them because we didn't have the new technology. Now I am using the new technology, then I'll paint on top.

An example is the Jo'burg scene with a picture of a guy, which reads 'Shadow over Jo'burg'. I have called it The One Legged Drummer. It's heavy. It's almost like the giant of Goya, which they say he didn't paint.

Anyway, I am looking at this painting. I have just been mugged at the Spar, held up by guys with AK47s. I come back, and I unwrap this painting that I'm going to rework. I see it as little Wayne who is driving around with the makaraba helmet in his car, greeting the jollies and the glue sniffers, getting mugged. All of those emotions and that reality come out onto the painting. It just happens like that.

That particular one is very dark, in terms of the content. Even before I started it said 'Shadow over Jo'burg', and in it there's a guy with a hat, like a pantsula. So, reality then comes into the popular images, even with the

Pierneefs, or anything that I've actually copied, as found objects.

The work is successful when I've somehow translated, in my crazy, very untidy expressive way. Then it's like the real Wayne. All the emotions and fucked-upness of the society come out through those squiggles.

It's like I work in a cave, I live on the streets. I feel I am part of the fabric of the fucked up, wounded South Africa. I treat all people the same. And I get quite interesting feedback, from the glue sniffers to other people. It's like community art that I am doing. I've worked with bead workers and with children.

And the work is about the dirt, and the beauty, and the love, and the hate, and the fucking trauma of living, of gravity, in a way.

*Interview with Wayne Barker, 15 August 2018  
By Matthew Krouse*

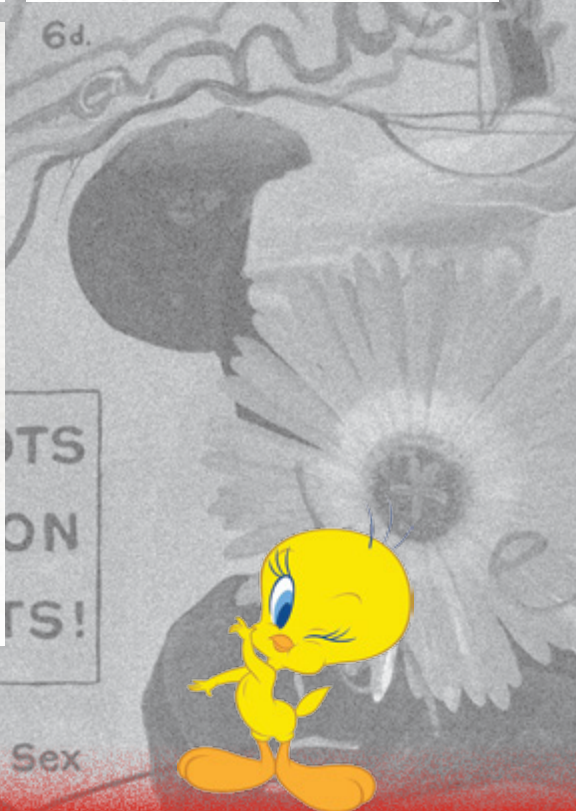


Detail of *The One Legged Drummer is King*  
2018 | MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS | 168 x 120 cm

“ **I GAVE THEM HONEY,  
NOT MONEY** ”





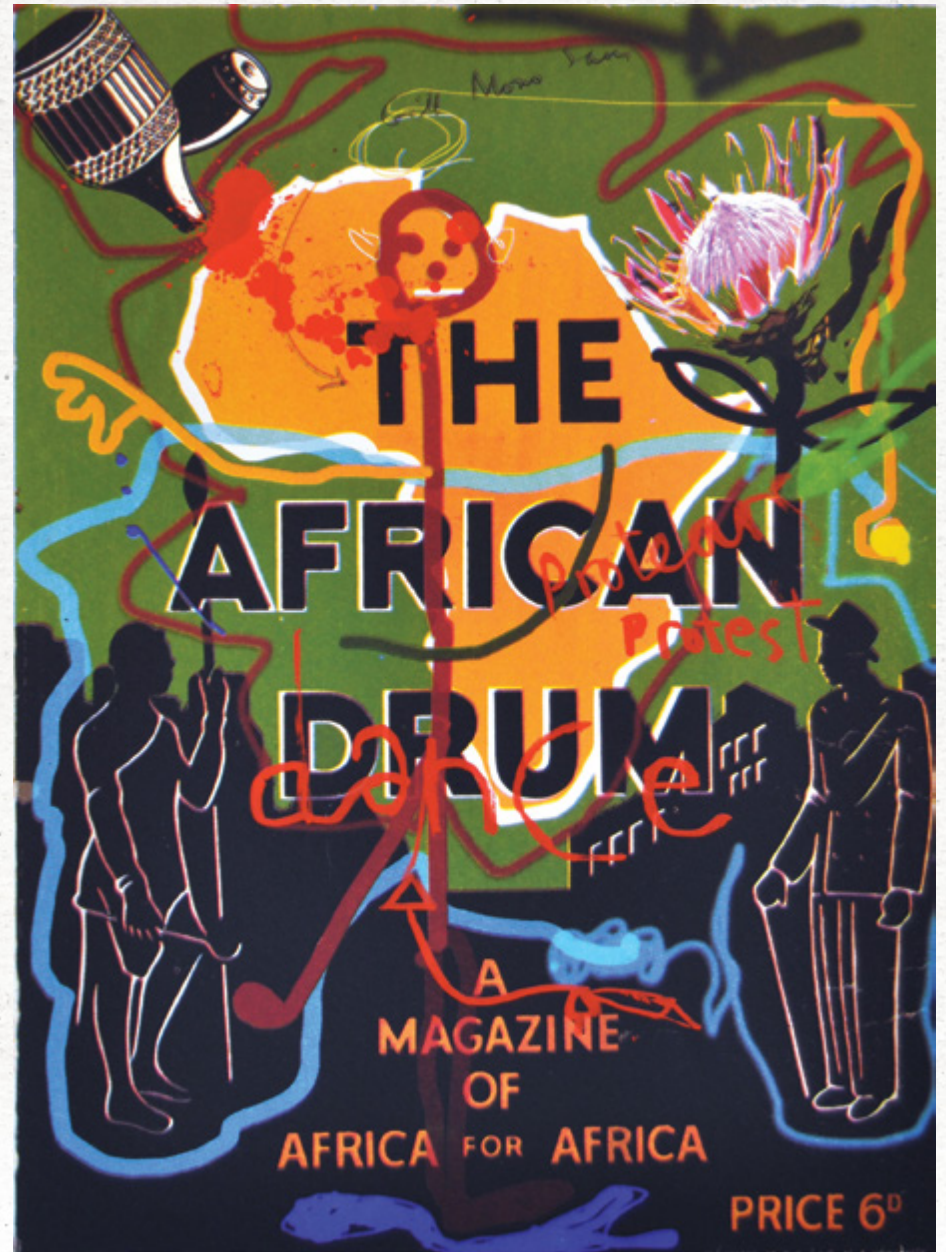


This page:  
*Ink Milk* | 2018 | SILKSCREEN ON FABRIANO | 76.5 x 56 cm | ED. of 9  
 Opposite page:  
*Dark Light Embrace* | 2018 | SILKSCREEN ON FABRIANO | 76.5 x 56 cm | ED. of 9  
*Shoe Shine* | 2018 | SILKSCREEN ON FABRIANO | 76.5 x 56 cm | ED. of 9  
*Bananas* | 2018 | SILKSCREEN ON FABRIANO | 76.5 x 56 cm | ED. of 9

*I carry on doing my stuff, and I carry on painting.*



*Homage to Madzitatiguru* | 2018 | SILKSCREEN ON FABRIANO | 76.5 x 56 cm | ED. of 9



*Drum Dance* | 2018 | SILKSCREEN ON FABRIANO | 76.5 x 56 cm | ED. of 9



*Ego* | 2018 | SILKSCREEN ON FABRIANO | 76.5 x 56 cm | ED. of 9



*Ghost* | 2018 | SILKSCREEN ON FABRIANO | 76.5 x 56 cm | ED. of 9



Lagos | 2018 | GLASS SEED BEADS ON BOARD | 134 x 110 cm

CIRCA  
cape town



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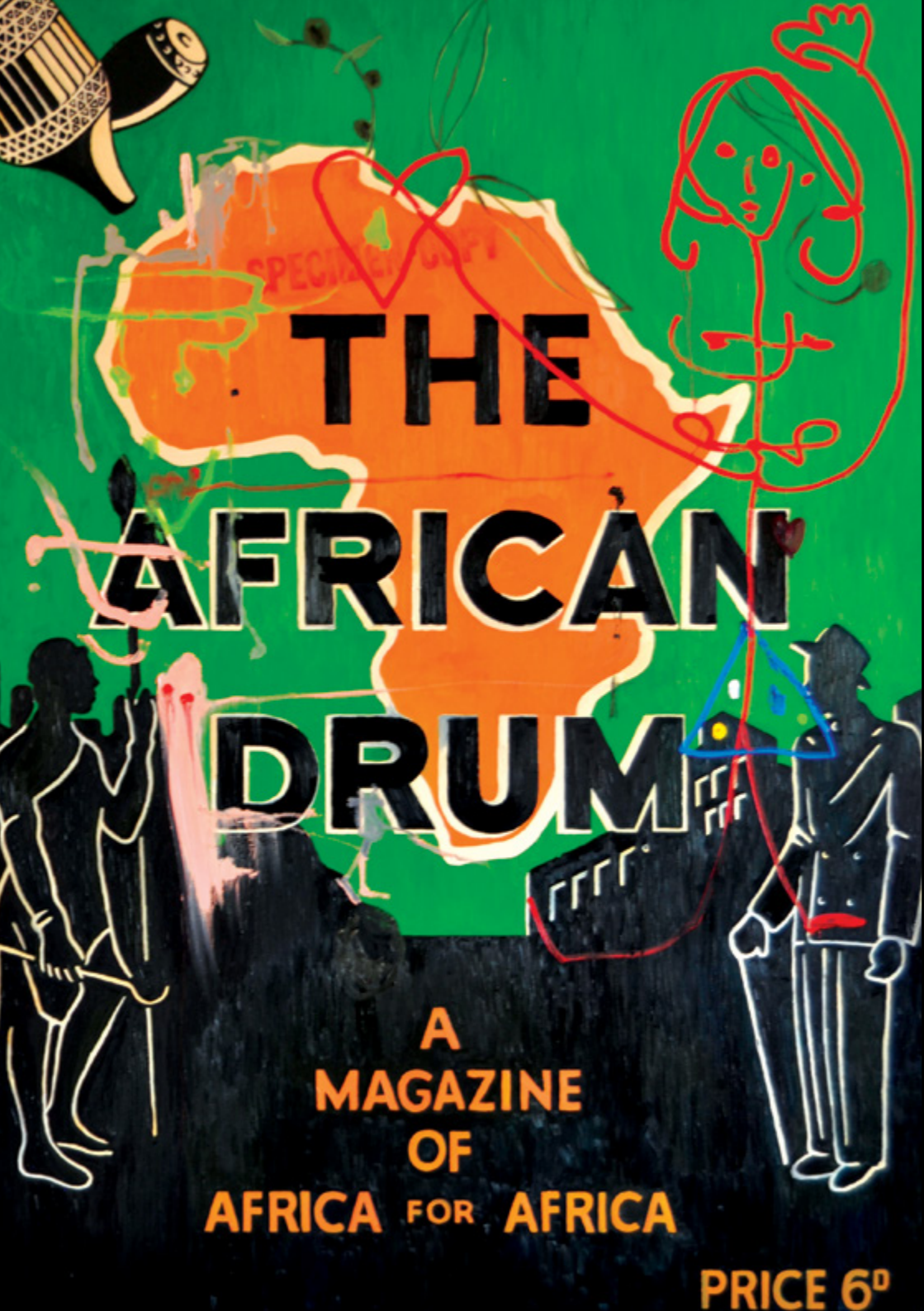
THE  
AFRIC  
DRUM



SOME OF THE HEADLINES IN THE DRUM MAGAZINE ARE RIDICULOUS. LIKE ONE CLAIMS IT'S 'THE END OF THE WORLD', AND ANOTHER IS ABOUT A 'HUMAN CIGARETTE LIGHTER'. ONE JUST HAS TO LAUGH AT THE INSANITY OF THE MEDIA.

BACK COVER

Drum- Nut | 2018 | MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS | 160 x 120 cm



SPECIAL GIFT

# THE AFRICAN DRUM

A  
MAGAZINE  
OF  
AFRICA FOR AFRICA

PRICE 6°