

Editorial

When a “Call for papers” is circulated, an editor can only hope that the response will be meaningful. The SAJAH’s experiment with special issues started in 2007 in a very ambitious way with two special issues. Volume 22(2) contains a wide-ranging collection of articles under the heading “The complexity of the South-African context”. The response came from art historians, architects, anthropologists, aestheticians and practitioners whose research is related to the visual disciplines that the journal includes under the umbrella of “Art History”.

The present journal is the outcome of another experiment. I wondered who in the twenty-first century would still be interested in beauty, ugliness and/or sublimity. After all, modernism and postmodernism have engaged with all of those and most intellectuals may be bored by them. The risk paid off and the response, once again, came from academics in a variety of disciplines who have not given up on beauty, but are aware of ugliness and willing to introduce new applications for the sublime in visual artefacts.

I shy away from an attempt to systematise the articles in this issue. They are by intellectuals who all have an original point of view. Beauty, it seems, can be discovered in slums and representations of violence and ugliness in the work of talented designers. Above all, various authors have convincingly shed new light on ancient disputes and introduced new methodologies.

I extend my sincere gratitude to the authors who responded to my “Call” and enabled me to compile a memorable special issue which hopefully will give this journal the national and international exposure that will bode well for our future.

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