

THE HOLLARD CREATIVE EXCHANGE PROGRAMME 2010-2011

This project was sponsored by Hollard Corporate through “*The Hollard creative exchange programme*”, facilitated by “**The Spier art academy and Jeanetta Blignaut Art consultancy**”. It was a year exchange programme with work in studio and research, between Cape Town and Johannesburg which ends up in a touring solo exhibition, called “*Notre Peau*” (a metaphor for African response to the New technology). The first exhibition in Cape Town was realized at the Association for Visual Art, the **AVA Gallery** (opening on 24th January 2011). The second part will be at **Villa Arcadia**, the Hollard Campus in JHB (Date to be confirmed). The project looked at African countries as reliance to mining and technological revolution and vulnerability to low wage labour. (Please see content below). But I personally intend to take the project further with comparison or similarities with Western and Asia, in terms of the impact pressured on cultural identity in diverse population.

Title of the project: “**Notre Peau**”

Artist: **Maurice Mbikayi**

Content:

This body of work is a personal exploration of the technical revolution that has greatly impacted on many African countries. In my country, the Democratic Republic Congo (DRC), the reliance on mining for natural resources for instance, has made its people vulnerable to low-wage labour abuse, as well as a range of issues beyond their control, dictated by international economic markets. This has had a devastating impact on the country's cultural and environmental diversity. In asking myself how as a visual artist I could portray my fascinations, hopes and apprehensions on the subject, I began to obsessively collect found electronic remnants of this rapidly developing technology. The resultant mixed media drawings and sculptures ask questions such as to whom such technological resources are made available and at what or whose expense? What are the consequences impacting on our people and environment?

The title of my exhibition “**Notre Peau**” (translated as “Our Skin”) is a metaphor used to illustrate a distinctly African response to the various impacts of technology on the continent. While exposed to the elements and easily injured, skin can also be described as extraordinarily resilient. It is able to regenerate and repair itself, and change in colour or shade to adapt to its environment.

While working with found objects, I feel exposed to the danger of its effects and I tend to sympathize with people who are on the daily basis systematically exposed to toxic metals in the air.

According to sources, the total e-waste generated is dramatically increasing. This is projected to double in 2012. In 2006, the quantity of e-waste generated by some big cities worldwide had already risen. Most e-waste ends up in poor and unorganized sectors, where labourers with no training and protection dismantle products, often with their bare hands, with the aim of reselling the components.

In the discourse of technologic revolution, and the way the contemporary world has been globalised; it will be foolish to ignore a strong contribution of technology in our daily lives. To reject such endeavours would be unreasonable and go against global businesses and preclude the flow of ideas and knowledge. Thus the dilemma seems a vicious circle and only getting worse.

