

# 6PC NETWORKING

Volume 41 January/February 2008

## MEMBERS' ARENA



Dear members,

Here is the Newsletter for the season: Winter in most countries, Summer in others.

Our summer holidays seem long behind us... Mine was in the Mediterranean, where I had the opportunity to catch up with Achim, our Technical Officer, on the island of Mykonos. On board of the ship my husband and I were on (an Atlantis cruise), we also had the pleasure of meeting up with member Shann Carr again. Shann is Comedian and TV Producer, lives in Palm Springs and is a long-standing artist with Atlantis. Check out her website [www.shanncarr.com](http://www.shanncarr.com)

Informal 6PC get-togethers took place in Washington DC, Atlanta, South Africa, Chile, the Netherlands and Vancouver. Coming up: South Africa, the Netherlands, and...?? If you feel like attending one, contact your Country Coordinator.

Achim and his team are working on improvements on the 6PC website. You can see three new features on the site: a Special Interest Platform section, Country pages and an FAQ. Have a look! All are still under construction, but you can see what the first two are going to look like by viewing the example of Australia. We hope to show you more soon - in the meantime, if you think you can contribute, please contact Achim or your CoCo.

The Special Offers section will be revamped soon, if you have an offer or want to contribute - let me know.

Over the past few months we have had a database clean up: over 900 member profiles were deleted because the e-dress bounced. As this is the only way you can be contacted, it is important you keep your e-dress up to date! Remember to update your profile now and then...

In general: please be polite and respond when another member contacts you with a question, even if you cannot answer it. The power of networking is communication!

All the best,

**@Ifred Verhoeven**  
**Chairman**  
**Amsterdam**

**THE 6PC WEBTEAM IS STILL LOOKING FOR  
VOLUNTEERS:  
CONTENT MANAGERS,  
WEBMASTER,  
PROGRAMMERS.**

**IF YOU ARE ABLE AND  
WILLING TO HELP,  
PLEASE CONTACT ACHIM**

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# MEMBERS' ARENA

## BOARD MEMBERS

Alfred Verhoeven, Chairman, [alfred@6PC.info](mailto:alfred@6PC.info)  
Achim Feller, Technical Officer, Vice Chairman, [achim@6PC.info](mailto:achim@6PC.info)  
Kate Burrows, Board Member Women and Americas, [kate@6PC.info](mailto:kate@6PC.info)  
Alex Lee, Legal Officer, [alex@6PC.info](mailto:alex@6PC.info)

## THE COMMUNICATIONS TEAM



ASSISTANT EDITOR  
Omar Talib  
[omar@6pc.info](mailto:omar@6pc.info)



DESIGN/LAYOUT  
Vernon Westhluzen  
[layout@6pc.info](mailto:layout@6pc.info)



PROOFREADER  
Willie Knoetze  
[proofing@6pc.info](mailto:proofing@6pc.info)



We are finally in the Year of the Rat. A strong sign and the first of twelve animals in the Chinese Zodiac. It is the start of a new cycle and can be interpreted that the year will bring growth potential both personally and in business. It certainly has done the opposite for businesses in Kenya after the Presidential elections. Two articles, from Mwangi Githahu and Hans van Schooenveld highlight the post election results and turmoil that the country is currently in. While corruption at high levels are prominent in African Nations they are also found in first world countries. Billion dollar scandals by key players are not anything new however the situation in Kenya has been made into a "tribal" issue when in fact it is not. To put it bluntly it would be as if it were a racial issue in a first world country and no one group should be treated in the ways that the Kenyans have treated their countrymen. Thousands are homeless, thousands are jobless, thousands hunger, thousands have died. The economy has suffered greatly and it is unsure when and how the country will repair itself and move forward.

The US Presidential race is getting a lot of attention and is going to be one of the most exciting. Is the US ready for a woman President? Is the US ready for a black President? Why not, is the US ready for a GOOD President!!!! We have not seen one in eight years. Someone to make change and someone to rebuild the nation and its reputation.

I do hope you enjoy this first issue of 2008. Comments and articles are always welcomed.

Happy networking!

**Reid Yoshimoto**  
CHIEF EDITOR / 6PC NETWORKING  
[reid@6pc.info](mailto:reid@6pc.info)

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## GETTING INTO ..... THE INTERNET INDUSTRY

BY BRIAN SMITH  
BROADCASTER & JOURNALIST



**O**ur final look at the media industry and I've kept the best for last - The Internet.

So why do I call it Broadcast Media? Simple, because it uses all the technology and skills of traditional broadcast media - and has turned it on its head.

The Internet is by far the greatest advancement in communication this planet has seen. It has brought the world closer together like no other media has done in the past.

Getting into the world of the web isn't that hard. With so many outlets crying out for web designers, web producers, writers and graphics people, the list is quite endless.

3

Qualifications for getting a web job vary depending on what you want to do. Clearly you need to isolate what it is you

want to be and then get your examination results. Check your local colleges and University's for web courses - you'll be surprised at what is on offer.

The Internet is causing something called 'convergence,' a term that is creeping in to the media industry and frightening them to death. It means things like traditional radio and TV and newspapers are all heading towards being online and with literally billions of internet enabled households and businesses across the world, you can see why it's scaring the pants off them.

And the reason for telling you this? Get some internet skills and you're laughing.

To find out what you want to do in the web world, take a look at any ISP provider's site and look through their various portals and see what they have. There's graphics and a lot of multi media, i.e. online radio or on demand video, all of these need staff with skills to create the content.

Contact your favourite website and see what vacancies they have, if they don't have any, make an enquiry anyway, they may well store your details on file.

A portfolio of work will be required, so if you design websites then great, otherwise keep a selection of your work to send them.

Of course, it's an electronic world they live and work in, so they'll expect you to know about electronic formats like PDF files, JPEG's, MPEG's and all those other crazy things!

If you can, my top tip is to get your own website, design it and keep it up to date with your work. This will be your shop window to the world you want to work in - and the costs for this are nominal. Domain

names are pretty cheap, especially if you just want your name at '.co.uk' or '.com' (or whatever your country designation may be) and hosting/server costs are coming down all the time.

A lot of people in this industry are freelancers working from home. Make sure you benefit from this. Consider setting up as being self-employed. This will give you more options and freedom - and has tax benefits as well! Just make sure you live in an area that has good high speed broadband connections.

Apart from the design skills, do get web writing skills as well. Writing for the web is different to newspapers, radio and TV. You have to be more concise, punchy, to keep your viewer hooked. Articles need to hyperlink to other articles or material allowing the user to seamlessly continue their journey of exploration.

And who knows, you might come up with the next big thing that makes you a millionaire. Like the student who created the website selling pixels for a \$1 a time, to clear his student debt. How surprised was he when he made a million and such a simple idea. Doesn't it make you sick?

So that's my media world explained to you.

Yes, I haven't touched on the music industry, the advertising and PR industry - and there's a reason: if there's someone out there who wants to write this column on those subjects then get off your arse and give me break! I've given already.

Whatever you do, wherever in the world you're reading this, have fun and go get that job of your dreams - I did!

# HEALTH MATTERS

## **GAY BODIES, GAY SELVES: UNDERSTANDING THE GAY MEN'S HEALTH MOVEMENT (PART TWO OF TWO)**

GORDON YOUNGMAN,  
BCom, MBA, MPH, CONSULTANT GAY & BI MEN'S HEALTH ISSUES

### **HOW GAY BECAME SICK AGAIN**

**D**uring the first decade of AIDS response, many of us were so caught up in the day-to-day work of prevention, care, and political activism that we didn't note the profound shift that was occurring in the ways social institutions, health care providers, and gay men themselves looked at gay men's relationship to health. While internal community battles were clearly about whether we still believed gay was good or whether gay men could care for themselves and each other (I'm thinking here about struggling with how to have sex in an epidemic, the closing of bathhouses, or making a distinction between being an "AIDS victim" and being a "person with AIDS"), many of us were so focused on the tasks at hand that we barely had time for big-picture thinking. Before we knew it, the 1990s had arrived, the tidal wave of AIDS had crested, and we were looking out over a vastly different landscape of gay men's health with vastly different understandings of gay men's communities and cultures.

By 1993, it became clear to many of us that one of the most pernicious consequences of AIDS was the way it re-pathologized homosexuality, particularly male homosexuality. And the most painful part of this return to gay-men-as-diseased-pariahs was that gay men were the most prominent mouthpieces espousing these beliefs. The same voices that spent a decade overstating, over-praising, over-citing gay men's "sensible" and "prudent" response to HIV/AIDS—the gay medical establishment, gay public officials, gay mental health workers, and queer journalists—now seemed intent to balance their earlier pronouncements with an intense demonization of gay men, gay social structures, and, particularly, gay men's sexual cultures.

All of a sudden, it seemed like the wisdom of gay liberation was seen as a relic: homey sentiments and sweet, dated rhetoric of another era. Clearly an epidemic as extreme as HIV demanded more than self-

care, more than "gay-is-good" sloganeering, more than political action linked to health services.

In the minds of many, AIDS proved that gay liberationists were wrong. Gay men were, in fact, not capable of caring for themselves and others; in fact, not only did homosexuals bring this epidemic onto themselves, but they were responsible for HIV becoming endemic by repeatedly and knowingly infecting one another. All of a sudden gay men became damaged goods—damaged by homophobia, damaged by AIDS, damaged by out-of-control sexuality, damaged by addiction. Damaged goods demand a paradigm of health promotion different from a community empowerment model, one focused on surveillance, control, discipline, and punishment—a paradigm that treats adults like children, a model focused on the colonizer and the colonized.

Hence by the mid-1990s, the dominant understanding of gay men and health was one where gay men were seen as spinning out of control, incapable of self-care, and terribly self-destructive and irresponsible. Medical providers, researchers, journalists, and AIDS prevention leaders—gay and straight-looking at our sex, substance use, community rituals, and social structures seemed almost unified in their assessment: gay men sought pleasure at the expense of health, self-care, and community responsibility. Even a thoughtful, well-planned 1994 conference—the National Summit on HIV Prevention for Gay Men, Bisexuals and Lesbians at Risk, held in Dallas and hosted by the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association to draw attention to continuing seroconversions—deteriorated into frustrated finger-pointing and blaming. I recall one respected lesbian leader wagging her finger and expressing her frustration and her horror that gay men couldn't keep "keep their dicks zippered up" during a health crisis.

Throughout these years, some of us tried to offer more nuanced arguments rooted in our gay liberation values. When issues arose, we tried to understand gay men's

behavior from our own perspectives: What were such behaviors really about? What needs were being met? We tried to approach community controversies with an eye towards empowerment rather than punishment. When debates flared in 1996 about circuit parties, bathhouses, and bare backing, we tried to offer arguments that understood gay men's sexual cultures outside a pathology model. We held two "Sex Panic" summits alongside the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's Creating Change in San Diego and Pittsburgh where about two hundred of us came together to provide ideological and personal support for fighting local battles, during an era when the tide of public opinion had clearly turned against us. But even those efforts were diminished in much of the mainstream media and the gay press that depicted us as delusional, sex-obsessed perverts out of touch with the realities of the times.

The forces that saw gay men as essentially sick, diseased, and irresponsible became dominant on the pages of newspapers and at AIDS conferences. Whether the topic was new infections among young gay men, bare backing, crystal use, circuit parties, or even same-sex marriage, the discussion was dominated by an overarching vision of gay men as sexually obsessed, self-destructive, and uncaring. At worst, we were seen as menaces to society. At best, we were excused as victims of societal homophobia, racism, and indifference. In both cases, we were seen as deficient: deficient in self-control, deficient in social responsibility, deficient in health and wellness.

This rhetorical frame for gay men's cultures began to seep into the consciousness of regular gay men and soon appeared to dominate the thinking of gay men themselves. It became common to run into friends, tricks, and social acquaintances who repeated the new party line about bare backing or circuit parties or crystal use; some of us recoiled in disgust and disappointment. All of a sudden a rank and file gay male population saw itself and others through the disease lens. It was a return to

pre gay-lib days. The homophobes had won the battle!

When we attempted to work in partnership with friends in HIV prevention organizations we faced surprising challenges. They'd repeatedly affirm that they shared our beliefs about gay men and health, embraced "sex-positive" values, and were committed to "empowerment" (a term that had, by the 1990s, been so overused and misused that it immediately made some of us skeptical), and then they'd launch advertisement campaigns that were condescending, patronizing, and deeply anti-gay. An AIDS prevention industry clueless about how to limit new infections tried almost anything, including buying into all the foundational assumptions of the Right that gay men were evil vectors of disease.

It came as no surprise that gay men began to see one another, not as brothers and caregivers and lovers and comrades in gay liberation, but as opponents, threats, and enemies to one another's health. HIV prevention asked us to treat every man we sexed with as if he were infected, in order to ensure compliance with the condom code, even when not necessary. We were told to distrust men's identified antibody status because "men lie." We were force-fed campaigns like "HIV stops with me," which worked ironically to drive home in case anyone doubted it—that there were legions of positive men out there eager to pass on their virus to vulnerable, clueless uninfected men.

The sorry state of HIV prevention, the effective re-pathologizing of gay men as a class, and a rising sex panic emerging from the collusion of gay male journalists and neo-liberal public officials, finally drove some of us to organize. Not only did public conversation about gay men in the early and mid 1990s cause us tremendous heartache and inspire contentious internal community splits, but it also motivated some of us to intervene in the discourse and organize alternative sites where more progressive analyses might be shared.

encouraged gay men to begin "to get their act together beyond HIV/AIDS." This motivated me to work with a small group of other activists sharing similar values and visions, to issue a call to the first national gay men's health summit.

Coming as much out of frustration with HIV prevention work as from the current sex panic sweeping over gay communities nationwide, our team of good-hearted organizers volunteered to do what needed to be done to create a space where people concerned about the health and wellness of gay male communities could come together and explore the issues outside of the paradigm of disease and self-destructiveness that had overtaken other venues. After eight years of intensive gay men's health organizing efforts occurring outside the purview of any national gay organization, we have finally succeeded in creating an alternative to the disease model of working on gay men's health issues, an alternative that, while far from dominant, is being embraced by more and more organizers and more and more rank and file gay men who sense that there is something very wrong with how journalists and medical experts continue to talk about gay men's communities.

The model we put forward at the first three gay men's health summits (2000, 2001, 2003) included at least three beliefs that contrast dramatically with the beliefs of the disease model. First, we believe that gay men, at root, i.e. radically are individually and collectively healthy, reasonable, life-affirming, and successful in creating fulfilling and meaningful lives. Second, we take an asset-based approach to gay men's communities, rather than a deficit-based approach; we look at and build on inherent community strengths, resources, skills, and values that demonstrate gay men's commitment to survive and thrive even under formidable circumstances. Third, we share in a commitment to approaching gay men as savvy, reasonable people with a baseline commitment to self-care, community-care, and disease prevention. Ultimately, we believe that gay men do exist who appear unreasonable and destructive to themselves and others, but we believe the current paradigms misrepresent all gay men for this small group. At the same time, we refuse to separate ourselves and our movement from these men, create programs only for "goodies" and avoid the "baddies," or write them off as inhuman or inhumane.

We organized our small group of national summits with the intent of dispersing these ideas and values widely throughout

the nation in a manner that was decentralized, unstructured, ultimately beyond our control. Inspired by Alberto Melucci's work on contemporary social movements and Michel Maffesoli's work on neotribalism, we believed that, in today's world, paradigm shifts can result from new, creative organizing techniques. We rolled up our sleeves, got down to work, and now, several years later, see a changing landscape to which we have contributed.

I know I share the joy and satisfaction of many organizers who've marveled at the growing influence our nascent gay men's health movement has had and the many projects and events that seem at least partially inspired by our work. Over 30 local and regional gay men's health summits have been held throughout the nation, including not only events in urban centers such as New York, San Francisco, and Seattle but summits in Wilmington, Delaware; Salt Lake City, Utah; and Hartford, Connecticut. Summits have been held focused on African-American and Latino gay men, rural Southern men and young gay men.

In the United States, the origins of the term "gay men's health" are rooted in the gay liberation movement and at least one organization utilizing the term in its title remains from that period (Berkeley's Gay Men's Health Collective). However, during the 1980s, after New Yorkers named their first AIDS organization "Gay Men's Health Crisis," the term seems to have become a euphemism for AIDS. As an activist has pointed out, HIV so overwhelmed the community that "gay men's health" became synonymous with "HIV/AIDS."

When we began agitating for a national "gay men's health" summit in 1998, we seized on the term in an attempt to strategically move its meaning beyond HIV/AIDS. Our intent was twofold: (1) we hoped to promote a holistic view of health that incorporated not only medical and mental health but emotional, political, spiritual, and community health concepts as well; (2) when we did focus on health threats to gay men, we wanted HIV/AIDS simply to be included as one of the many ailments facing gay men, alongside cancer, heart disease, street and domestic violence, syphilis, obesity, and addiction.

We find ourselves at an unusual moment now, where the term "gay men's health" has acquired a certain cachet and is being increasingly taken up by a diverse range of projects and used in several different ways. Not all of these projects attempt to tackle the range of health challenges facing gay

## THE CREATION OF A GAY MEN'S HEALTH MOVEMENT

In 1998, when the annual National Lesbian and Gay Health Conference, which drew together people working on LGBT health issues nationwide, ceased to exist—its host organization went bankrupt—discussions took place about finding a new organization to host the event. At the time, lesbian activists wanted to organize on their own for a few years and several key leaders

men. Few of the projects attempt to shift to a wellness model and away from the disease model of gay men's cultures and communities. Also surprising to many of us is the way the term has been embraced in other countries, especially Canada, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Australia and New Zealand, and, recently, France; we have been surprised by the large numbers of international participants at the first three national gay men's health summits.

Gay men's health activities currently take the form of organizations, projects, and campaigns and appear to cluster in at least three different models:

- Projects focused on community wellness that tackle a range of health challenges facing gay men, and were not originally HIV organizations: This includes not only many of the national, regional, and local gay men's health summits, but also organizations such as San Francisco's Magnet and Seattle's Gay City Health Project. These efforts tackle a broad range of challenges to gay men and attempt to utilize holistic, sex-positive, and gay-positive approaches. Outside the United States, programs such as Dialogai in Geneva include a strong health and wellness focus.
- HIV/AIDS organizations that substitute "gay men's health" language for "HIV prevention," and also begin to work broadly on non-HIV health issues affecting gay men's communities: Dozens of AIDS organizations throughout the English-speaking West have incorporated "gay men's health" in their organizational name or as the name of a project under their jurisdiction, but few seriously take on a broad menu of health issues facing gay men and fewer still resist the disease model. Such projects that do take on health issues broadly include the Institute for Gay Men's Health, a joint project of AIDS Project Los

Angeles and Gay Men's Health Crisis that defines health broadly to include spiritual and community health and appears to conscientiously avoid utilizing the pathology model when scrutinizing subcultures of men who have sex with men. Philadelphia's Safeguards began as an HIV prevention organization for gay men and has now broadened into an LGBT health advocacy agency. Internationally, Australia's ACON has more recently also shifted from solely HIV/AIDS to a broad LGBT health matters, as has the Terrence Higgins Trust and Gay Men Fighting AIDS in London.

- HIV/AIDS organizations that substitute "gay men's health" language for "HIV prevention," even as they continue largely to work narrowly on HIV/AIDS: Tucson's Gay Men's Health Project, which augments a strong HIV prevention focus with social activities, is an example of this type of effort, or San Francisco AIDS Foundations' Gay Life program which maintains a narrow objective of HIV prevention, though might tackle it through other health issues affecting infection rates, such as programs currently being developed to fight crystal use among gay men. New Zealand AIDS Foundation's Gay Men's Health Teams seem to fit this model as well.

The work ahead seems daunting but the path forward seems clear. We must work hard to augment narrow HIV prevention programs for gay men with a full range of activities addressing the overall holistic wellness of local and regional gay men's communities. At the same time, we need to focus on affirming the overarching framework of community health that we bring to these efforts. Our goal is not only to blanket the nation with diverse gay men's health projects as we blanketed the nation in the

1980s with HIV prevention projects. Instead we need to shift from seeing gay communities and subcultures as problematic or diseased, to seeing them as healthy, happy, and life affirming. This is the bottom line for any gay men's health movement.

Recently I attended a dance party, one of the many evenings of intense music and cavorting available to thousands of gay men each weekend. I looked over the crowd of primarily twenty-something and thirty-something men, shirtless, gyrating, arms reaching to the heavens. I thought immediately at how the doomsayers criticize this population of young gay men, saying things such as, "I didn't work my ass off during the past 30 years to create a culture of drug use and unprotected sex and self-centered me-me-me attitudes. This is not what the gay movement was all about. This is not what we envisioned when we tried to save lives during the worst of the AIDS years. This is not the world we were trying to create."

And then I realized something, something surprising and simple. As someone who has spent the last 30 years working on gay liberation and AIDS activism and sexual liberation, what I saw before me was precisely the world I was trying to create. When we fought during the 1980s and 1990s to prevent gay men's sexual cultures from being destroyed, when we worked to preserve certain values about gender play, friendship, and erotic desire, when we quietly worked behind the scenes to ensure that certain spaces would survive gentrification and public health crackdowns, we were fighting to preserve the ability of new generations of gay men to create worlds of pleasure and desire.

As I looked out over the sea of dancing men, I realized, despite all the battles we've lost in terms of politics and discourse and the media, gay men and gay sexual cultures had managed to survive and, indeed, thrive.

# ART & ENTERTAINMENT

## WIM HELDENS AND DUTCH REALIST PAINTING

BY JOHN BORSTLAP

In the course of the 16th and 17th century, painting in the Low Countries - as the Netherlands were then called - developed an original type of realist painting. The Low Countries liberated themselves from Spanish rule in a long war from 1568 till 1648 and settled for a typical bourgeois nation, with a prince symbolically at its head - but mainly ruled by representatives of the citizens. This war for independence made a deep impact upon national identity: great neighbouring nations were suspected, whilst individual freedom and enterprise was encouraged. The absence of a court culture, together with an increasing general wealth during the 17th century (when the Netherlands were a very important factor in European trade and politics), made a highly individual and bourgeois art possible. Commissions for paintings did not come from a powerful church or court, but from individual citizens - often wealthy merchants. But lower middle-class people also commissioned paintings: visitors from abroad observed, to their astonishment, that high-quality paintings were a normal and common ornament in bakeries, butcher shops, inns and in any household which had some money to spend on a nice interior. With the rich merchants, portraits were popular, whilst with the middle- and lower classes, imagery from the environment of their daily life were much in demand: street scenes, interiors and all places where people got together. Paintings were, all in all, considered as a safe investment: one could always sell them in times of economic difficulties.

7 Hence a typical tradition was born, in which real life depictions mirrored the buyer's environment. While subjects could be rather pedestrian and unassuming, in the hands of a real master, the pictorial qualities could rise to olympian heights - such as the works of Rembrandt, Vermeer, Hals, van Mieris, Heda, Steen, ter Borch, Metsu, Cuyp, van Ruysdael, and van de Velde en Kalf demonstrate. Characteristic is that many of the painters depicted their own, personal environment, sometimes even restricted to their own rooms as is the case

with Vermeer. This tradition faded away at the end of the 17th century when, with the rise of France as a cultural force, painters began to meet the increasing demand of 'chique' painting, not tainted with the 'vulgarity' of daily life, following the fashions of the French court.

In the 18th century, Dutch painting reached a low ebb only to be revived in the course of the second half of the 19th century. The genre of 'environmental realist painting' was occasionally taken-up again, and sustained itself since then as a typical but marginal phenomenon, until modernism in the 20th century seemed to seal it definitely to the 'museum of the past'. But after the Second World War, realist painting again appeared as a subversive counter-movement, in protest to the 'official' abstract painting and conceptual art, finding its way to foreign collectors and galleries. Henk Helmantel, Matthijs Röling and many other artists ignored the mainstream fashions and followed their own creative instincts; genres like portraits, interiors and still-lives could apparently still offer inexhaustible variation and individual interpretation. The official museums however, keen on following international trends of concept art, to this day ignore the re-emergence of Dutch realist art - oblivious of the gradual change currently occurring in the western art world, where realist art of



any kind is a(t many places) already an accepted option, next to all the other options.

The work of Wim Heldens occupies an individual place in the contemporary art scene of the Netherlands. Understanding that the re-emergence of realist art as a counter movement to modernism was opening-up new perspectives, and realising that his main interest was the human condition and life as it unfolded around him, he quickly discovered that his talents could best develop in the portrait genre and the context of ordinary life, thereby picking-up an old Dutch tradition. But although much of his technique is traditional, the imagery is contemporary, and it is in this combination of the 'old' and the 'new' that Heldens found his originality.

Wim heldens was born in 1954 in Sittard, in the south of the Netherlands. He showed an obsessive fascination with drawing from an early age and when he applied to various academies, he already had an impressive body of work. Nevertheless, his unusual talent was not recognized and he was not admitted. Disappointed, but still determined, he applied to the Kunstacademie in Frankfurt (Germany) in 1974 and was immediately accepted. But when the good news came, he had just moved to Amsterdam and decided that, now he had proven his worth to himself, he preferred to go his own way.

Making a living from portrait commissions, Heldens developed the genre as a means to explore the human condition in a more general way. While around him the modernist revolution was gradually being accepted as a general norm, Heldens explored renaissance techniques and three- and two-dimensional form, including abstract structural patterns (the influence of abstract notions of form is always very close under the surface). Also, the treatment of light by masters of Dutch 17th century painting like Vermeer, Terborch and Nicolaes Maes held his fascination. He began to be asked regularly for exhibitions in galleries in the Netherlands. Various trips to Italy in the seventies were a great stimulation; the greatest impression in these years was the psychologically dramatic work of Carravagio.

The discovery of the art world in New York opened a new field of stimulation and experience. In the period 1990 - 95 Heldens divided his time between New York and Amsterdam, easily mixing in the exciting American artistic community where he, within a couple of months, saw his work on show at the Henoeh gallery in SoHo, later

to be followed with exposure at the Ganymede Gallery and the Open Studio PS122, both in NY City. The wide variety of different trends - from abstract via pop art to photo realism - which he saw in East Village, where he had a studio, gave him the inner freedom and confidence to pursue and further develop his psychological realism. He viewed his personal style as a possible way forward after modernism had lost most of its credibility. He painted various portraits in commission, among others for the collector Raymond Saroff, who possesses an impressive collection of American native art. In 1995 Heldens participated in the exhibition 'Representation Represented' in the Arnot Museum in Elmira (NY) together with Janet Fish, Gregory Gillespie, Paul Cadmus, Claudio Bravo and Michael Leonard, where Heldens' contribution drew much attention.

From 1995 onwards, Heldens increasingly focussed on Amsterdam where he found his canvasses more and more in demand. In later years, he increasingly embarked upon free, i.e. not commissioned, paintings, to be able to concentrate upon a more versatile expression of human drama in contemporary life. The psychology behind his work gradually became more complex and ambiguous, claire-obscur more striking, contrasts sharper - all along with a continuously developing technique. Striking exam-

ples are the following canvasses:

### THE CHAMPION

This painting from 1996 depicts Heldens' adopted son in a specially arranged setting. The different planes are subtly balanced; the father is seen in the reflection of the glass door in the background, possibly worrying whether the glass will be safe? The format of this canvas is extraordinary: 130 x 200 cm, which makes - with the relative short perspective - a striking impression. The swagger and vulnerability of the boy are brilliantly struck (the eyes!); the big format makes him all the more seem small and grotesque in the rather pompous setting. The colour combination is, in fact, an almost 'impossible' one: red, white and green, and the fluent way in which light and shadows are as yet balanced makes this very unusual painting a veritable tour de force.

### THE MIRROR

The 'story' of 'The Mirror' (2001) - again a big format, measuring 200 x 210 - is quickly deciphered: a gay couple embracing in the corner of a room which is being restored, is being laughed at by a teenager, drawing the viewer into the scene with his gestures. Behind the boy a rather big lady administers a reprimand (or is it a transvestite?). In a mirror we see another couple of people,



apparently part of the scene, a working man (laughing as well) and another boy rebuking him, thus mirroring the scene itself with other protagonists. At the top of the mirror, an idyllic scene represents something like a harmonious life. The whole scene breathes movement and life and seems to be a snapshot. The perspective draws the viewer in, as does the vista through the mirror where we see things on a much smaller scale. The floor with the square tiles adds movement to our focus and points to the centre of the scene, which is the couple in the corner. The asymmetrical arrangement, and balance of forms and colours, is complex yet natural; the teenager seems almost leaning out of the picture. This painting leaves nobody untouched: seen once, it is burned on the retina.

### THE TEACHER

This canvas is related to a bit of dark Dutch history: the slave trade, one of the

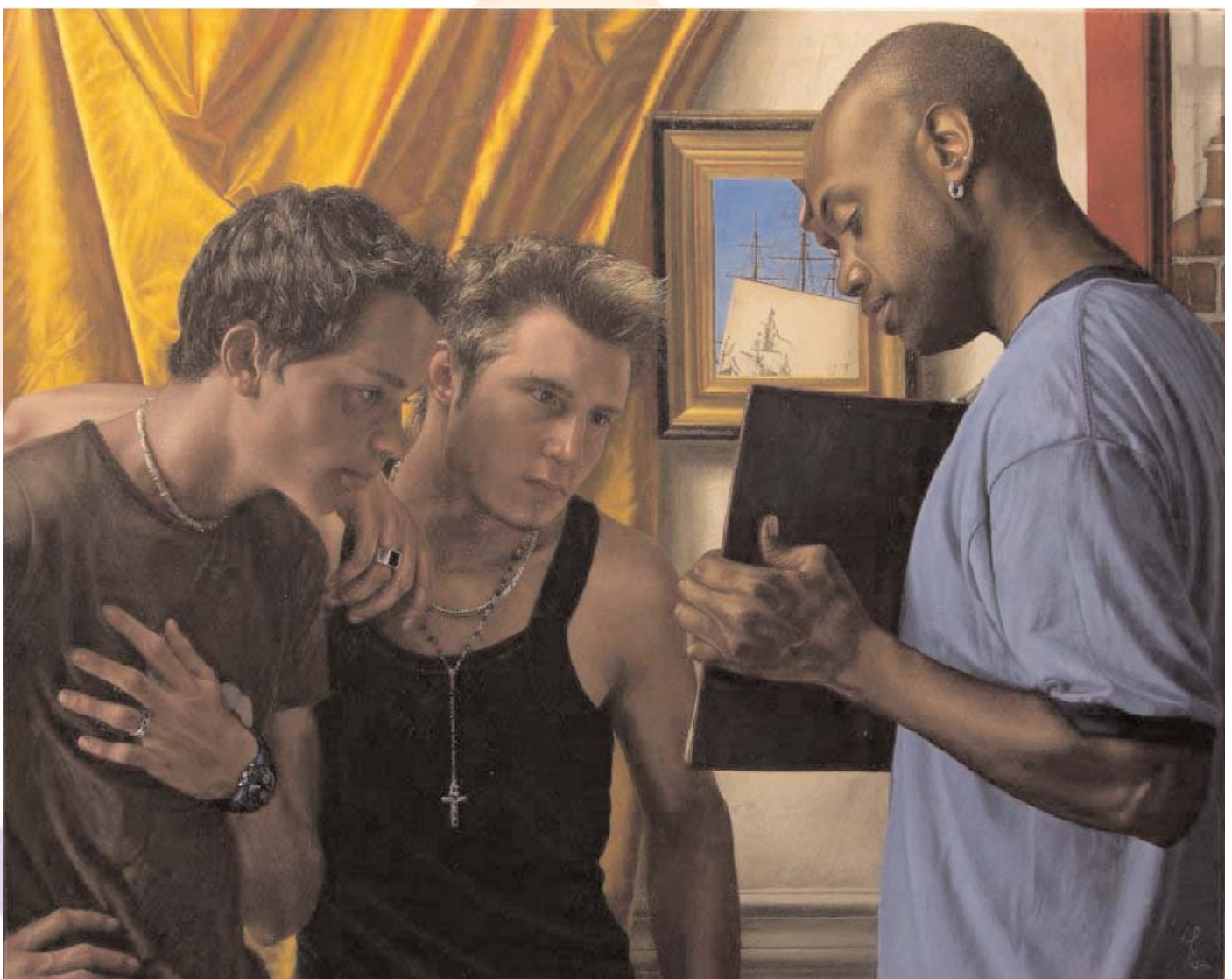
sources of Holland's wealth in the 17th century, the knowledge of which was suppressed in the 19th and 20th centuries. Only recently attention has been given to this unpleasant part of the past. We see two typically 'cool' contemporary Dutch teenagers watching intently at a picture, held up by - apparently - a descendent of black slaves. The strong contrasts in light and darkness, and of colours, suggest a great depth, enhanced by the mirror which reflects a double image: a part of the picture in the room itself which is shown to the kids, but also a mast which seems to be outside. In Amsterdam this is also reality: a beautifully restored ship from the 17th century is moored at a quay and can be visited as part of the Navy Museum. The striking combination of elements, the expression of surfaces and tissues, and the supple and quasi-spontaneous way lines and colours form a well-balanced whole, show how the old-Dutch tradition of detailed realist painting

can be re-interpreted and made contemporary.

Helden's paintings found their way into private collections in the Netherlands, England, Germany and the USA and into the collections of the Arnot Art Museum, Elmira New York U.S.A., the Academic Hospital and the ING Bank in Amsterdam, the Bank Nederlandse Gemeenten in The Hague and the City Council in Sittard.

Helden is one of those artists who know from the beginning what they want to do. For him, painting is a psychological analysis, a narrative of inner life and experience. His realism, which is rooted in renaissance painting and the 17th century Dutch realist tradition in particular, gives form to the human condition in modern life while stressing the continuity of a valid and, in the 21st century, important pictorial tradition.

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# SOCIAL & CULTURAL EVENTS

## ON THE HOME FRONT

### STATE OF KENYA BY MWANGI GITHAHU

If you follow the international news, then it cannot have escaped your notice that there's been rather a lot of ugliness and bad trouble in the erstwhile paradise known as Kenya.

However, and I should know having been a reporter for 18 years, the media both local and foreign do have a tendency to play up the negative and hardly ever accentuate the positive.

So as a result, many people who are seeing Kenya from abroad might think the whole place was on fire and absolutely everyone is sitting in their little house, flat or even mansion, suffering from a really nasty attack of cabin fever.

For a few days at the beginning of the

troubles I must admit that this was exactly how it was for the majority of Kenyans across the board.

But after a few days the adventurous never say die spirit took over and while things have not been quite as hunky dory as normal, Nairobi life has gone back to as almost back to normal.

The bars and restaurants are open again, they may not all be doing a roaring trade, but at least they are open, their staff can get into work and their customers are able to go out at night.

As for the gay scene, most of the usual Nairobi "gay friendly" bars seem to back in business after a January of uncertainty.

In fact the only big gay event that seems to have been postponed because of the troubles was a huge underground party that was being referred to in whispers and

furtive mobile phone text messages as the "Gay Gang Bang."

The party was set for a Sunday night (not very popular with Kenyans as a night to go out and party) and it was set for a time when people were still a tad nervous about going out at night.

Of course the party might have taken off, it was all very hush, hush, but none of the people I know on the scene, and there are a fair few, went so I can safely assume it was called off.

• • •

There have been concerns in certain quarters that with all the tribal clashes and the targeting of people in major urban areas on an ethnic basis in the post election violence, it would not be long before the gay and lesbian community were targeted.

However, so far there has been no reports of any homophobic attacks.

## SOCIAL

### BREAKTHROUGH TO SUCCESS AN INVITATION FOR FREE TICKETS FROM JESSICA MCGREGOR JOHNSON

Last year a good friend of mine sent me free tickets to **BREAKTHROUGH TO SUCCESS**. She had taken this course (twice!) and both times had had huge breakthroughs in two different areas of her life very soon afterwards (work and relationships). The first time she told me about this I thought to myself – "wow I'd love to do that course" but the cost (£1790 for two) was way out of my budget. The second time she told me about it she offered me some tickets and I snatched them out of her hand!

It was a fantastic three days – inspirational - and I came away with some great tools to use to ensure that it didn't stop there. Since doing the course I felt more confident, motivated and excited about achieving the things I want in my life. I also went on and booked other trainings with the group as I was so impressed.

I highly recommend this course if you have any questions about any area of your

life. Not only is it a great three days to help you get clear and motivated but it also showcases the other trainings they offer. But, what I so liked is that there is no obligation to book anything further, and this one seminar is a gem in itself. It sets you up with clear goals and tools to make them happen.

The good news is that these tickets cost you nothing! By clicking this link below you can sign up for free (no catches I promise) and what's more you can bring as many people as you want – bring a party, it's fun to do it with friends, there were six of us who did it last year. Please feel free to pass this onto anyone you feel would benefit from coming, maybe even if you don't want to come they might. I just love that I can give away something so good for free.

• • •

The next courses are on the:  
14 – 16 March in London,

4 – 6 April in Auckland

16 – 18 May in Los Angeles.

Check website for other USA and Australian venues

• • •

Click on this link below for more information and click the enrol button. Each person needs to enrol separately for the course.

<http://champions.christopher-howard.co.uk>

Having taken this course I really do know the value of it (I came out of it saying that I would have actually paid the full value) and have seen it work for many people and I hope that you can make it for the weekend, it will be one of the best spent weekends for a long while. This is one of those weekends when by putting 100% in you get 120% out! What have you got to lose;-)

Looking forward to seeing you there as we shall be there on the support team. Remember that half of success is just showing up and taking action!

## Breakthrough to Success WEALTH AND POWER WEEKEND

# SOCIAL & CULTURAL EVENTS

## HAPPENINGS

### **KENYA, WHEN TWO BULL ELEPHANTS ARE FIGHTING, IT IS THE GRASS THAT SUFFERS. (TRANSLATED...WHEN THE " BIG GUYS " ARE FIGHTING, THE " SMALL" PEOPLE ARE SUFFERING )**

**PERSONAL IMPRESSION BY HAN VAN SCHOONEVELD  
C.C. AFRICA**

Kenya went trough:

**JOY** on the 25<sup>th</sup> December as elections where near;

**SATISFACTION** as voters showed up peaceful and in huge numbers;

**ANXIETY** on the 28<sup>th</sup> December waiting for the election results;

**ANGER** on the 30<sup>th</sup> December as the results were announced and proved to be flawed;

**DESPAIR** on the 1<sup>st</sup> January as killing each other started, followed by

**BITTERNESS** during the following days, seeing the horrible images on TV - and then **CONFUSION** for the whole month of January...

**AFRAID** now, as the future looks bleak!

*Questions are coming up, and no answers ...*

How - and why - would neighbors turn against each other? And why would a Nation that is 80% Christian, 15% Muslim and 5% others, turn against itself like this??

And how did it happen that the 2 large tribes, Kikuyu and Luo, turned against each other? Especially in a time when mixed marriages and long time family friendships between them are common??

It is a major drama that: in a normally peaceful and gradually less and less "tribe conscious" country, people are now in a hate/hate situation! It will take a long time for healing to take place - or to understand how and why this happened.

The ethnic violence took place mostly in Rift Valley, north of Nairobi, in towns like Navaisha, Nakuru, Molo, Ekdoret etc. There's hardly been any on the Coast, where I live. Having no TV, I did not see the burning houses; people killed, injured and aimed by the police and their neighbors - and in the end, the horrific sight of fleeing families on the road with the possessions they could save.

"This cannot be Kenya!" is the thought of many!

Malindi, a tourist town 120 km from Mombasa at the Coast and 700 km from Nairobi, was packed with tourists and we were looking forward to the best Season in years. Income generated through this tourism directly benefitted the local population and suppliers, generating money for hotels to upgrade their facilities. That was the 2nd of January... but with the negative travel advisories and security alerts, all the tourists left within two weeks. Air-charters to Mombasa were cancelled and Malindi became a desperate town. Almost all the hotels closed down and staff sent home.

This is especially tragic since many locals took out loans, bought cars, started building or extending their homes in anticipation of a good tourist season. A good tourist season, in turn, would have translated to good income... but these people are now unable to meet their obligations. No work equals no money - and again, the guy in the street suffers.

What hurts most is that Malindi has been a peaceful town throughout: different tribes living and working together, being friends as usual and going on with their life. There were no demonstrations, no killings or street fights with the police and nobody needed to flee their homes. BUT, realizing the impact of the problems facing the country, the people of Malindi are the victims of happenings they had no control over, did not want, did not like and did not support!

The situation as I write this article (1st week of February '08) is still the same. People are leaving Malindi now and returning to their rural homes - only to sit there, under the trees, asking themselves how all this could

have happened... and what the future holds. Will I be able to feed my family, take care of my parents, grandparents and extended family and, most of all, how can I give the most precious gift in life - a good education to my children?

As I am involved in the tourist industry and film productions, the "almost civil war" has affected my business dramatically. A film production planned in January has been rescheduled to be shot in another country, all safaris are cancelled and deposits had to be refunded. Two large groups of athletes, who wanted to train in Malindi, cannot come - as international funding was stopped. And another two film productions planned for later in the year, have been put on stand by. They will, in all probability, be canceled.

In short, this whole year is lost and Malindi, the people and the tourist and film industries will suffer enormous losses. When calm and sanity will be restored remains a mystery.

Again, bad news is coming from Africa....

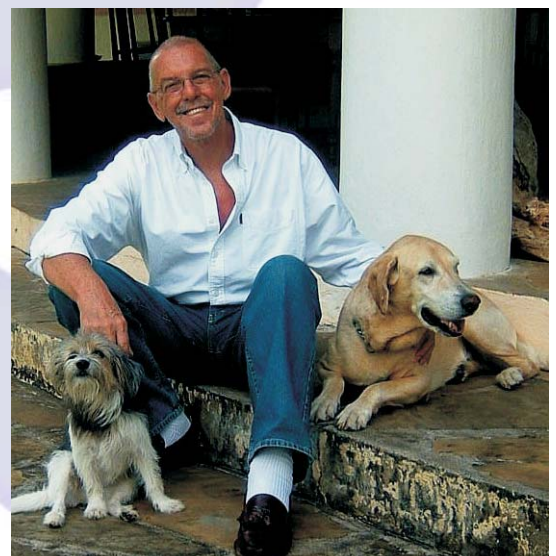
The bulls are still fighting and the grass is still suffering....

**Han Van Schooneveld  
AFRO CINE TOURISM**

[www.cinetourism.net](http://www.cinetourism.net)

[Kenya@cinetourism.net](mailto:Kenya@cinetourism.net)

+254-726-311-555



# SOCIAL & CULTURAL EVENTS

## HAPPENINGS

### INTERNATIONAL GAY AND LESBIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

#### ARRESTS OF GAY MEN IN SENEGAL: LGBT GROUPS EXPRESS OUTRAGE AND CONCERN

HOSSEIN ALIZADEH,  
IGLHRC COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR,  
212-430-6016  
(NEW YORK, MONDAY FEBRUARY 4, 2008)

In a letter to Senegalese Minister of Justice, the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) and PAN-Africa ILGA have demanded the immediate and unconditional release of up to 20 gay men believed to have been arrested on suspicion of homosexuality in Senegal in the past week.

At least 7 and perhaps as many as 20 gay men have been arrested in Dakar, the Senegalese capital, since the morning of Sunday 3 February after a popular local magazine, *Icons*, published photographs of a marriage ceremony between two Senegalese men. The wedding is believed to have taken place in a discrete location in Dakar more than a year-and-a-half ago. Sources report that the photographs were sold to the sensationalist magazine by the photographer for 1,500,000 (\$3000) CFA francs. The arrests were reportedly undertaken upon the orders of Mr. Asane Ndoye, head of the Senegalese Police's Division of Criminal Investigation. It is unclear where the men and women are being held.

"Mass arrests of people simply because they are gay terrorize the entire community," said Paula Ettlbrick, IGLHRC's executive director. "The inhuman treatment of gay men and lesbians must stop. We call upon the world community to enforce international human rights law." The U.N. Human Rights Committee affirmed in its decision in *Toonen v. Australia* (1994) that existing protection against discrimination in Articles 2 and 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

(ICCPR) incorporates sexual orientation as a protected status.

"We are afraid for our lives, especially those of us shown in the photographs," said Jean R., a Senegalese gay activist who spoke to ILGA and IGLHRC from a hotel where he is seeking refuge. "Some of us have gone into hiding and others are fleeing the country."

Senegal is one of the few Francophone African countries that penalize homosexuality. Under Article 3.913 of the Senegalese penal code, homosexual acts are punishable by imprisonment of between one and five years and a fine of 100,000 (\$200) to 1,500,000 (\$3,000) CFA francs. While there are occasional arrests and convictions of gay men under the Article, social stigma and blackmail are the most prevalent abuses faced by gay men in the country.

"Many consider Senegal to be one of the most progressive African countries on the issue of homosexuality," said Joel Nana, IGLHRC's Program Associate for West Africa. "The government has included a commitment to fighting HIV among men who have sex with men in its national AIDS response plan since 2005. That's why we found these arrests to be very distressing."

Senegal has strong political and economic ties to a number of conservative Islamic governments and institutions, and will be hosting the summit of the Organization of Islamic Conference in March. The OIC has invested heavily in the rehabilitation of Dakar's infrastructure in preparation for the Summit.

Under the circumstances, IGLHRC and Pan-African ILGA expressed concern as to whether Senegal is well-suited to host the upcoming International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA), scheduled to take place in Dakar in December 2008.

"There will be no room for an open and inclusive discussion on the human rights dimensions of HIV in the face of such harassment," said Danilo da Silva, co-chair of Pan-African ILGA, a federation gathering over 40 lesbian and gay groups from all parts of Africa. "We expect more from a leading country like Senegal."

• • •

The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) is a leading human rights organization solely devoted to improving the rights of people around the world who are targeted for imprisonment, abuse or death because of their sexuality, gender identity or HIV/AIDS status. IGLHRC addresses human rights violations by partnering with and supporting activists in countries around the world, monitoring and documenting human rights abuses, engaging offending governments, and educating international human rights officials. A non-profit, non-governmental organization, IGLHRC is based in New York, with offices in Johannesburg and Buenos Aires. Visit <http://www.iglhrc.org> for more information

email: [executive\\_director@iglhrc.org](mailto:executive_director@iglhrc.org)  
phone: 212-268-8040  
web: <http://www.iglhrc.org>

The Mission of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission is to secure the full enjoyment of human rights of all people and communities subject to discrimination or abuse on the basis of sexual orientation or expression, gender identity or expression and/or HIV status.

International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission | 80 Maiden Lane, Suite 1505 | New York | NY | 10038