

ICONA!

An exhibition of artworks that rewire religious imagery hopes to shock, amuse and provoke introspection, writes **Oliver Roberts**

If you're in a provocative, conflicted or even spiritual mood, you should head to the University of Johannesburg's Art Gallery for its Deconstructing Dogma exhibition. Curated by UJ's professor Karen Von Veh, the show features a collection of works by various artists, each examining the influence of Christian symbolism and iconography on South African society.

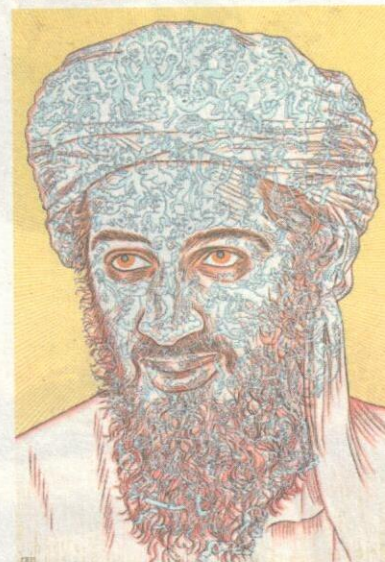
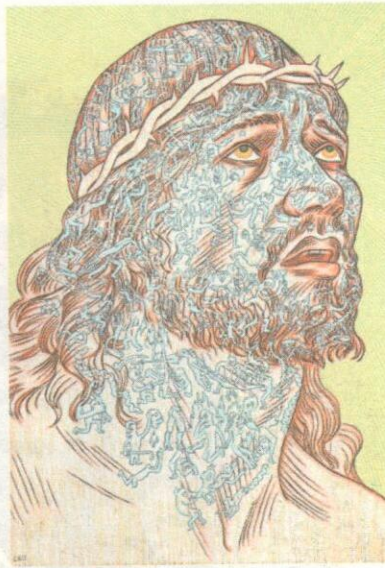
"We're looking at the way in which the history of religious imagery has been implicated in the control of society, historically," says Von Veh.

Works are grouped together in categories, exploring, for example, Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Mary, Christ, saints, patriarchs and martyrs, and the Church. Artists include Conrad Botes, Wim Botha, Majak Bredell, Christian Diedericks, Christine Dixie, Gordon Froud, Lawrence Lemaona, Julie Lovelace, Jacki McInnes, Diane Victor and Derek Zietsman.

Some of the more standout works are a life-size salt sculpture of a prostrate Lot's wife by McInnes, a typically dark and disturbing installation of Victor's smoke drawings on glass (made to look like stained glass) entitled *No country for old women*, two enormous, psychedelic paintings of Christ and Osama bin Laden by Conrad Botes, a rendition of Leonardo Da Vinci's *Last Supper* featuring pink outfit-wearing rugby players (and rugby posts in the background) by Lemaona and several bleak, haunting etchings by Zietsman.

"A lot of these works are made deliberately to force a reaction," Von Veh says. "Otherwise people just sit there and carry their little beliefs around and they don't think about what it is they believe in, and how it reacts in a contemporary world where stuff has changed." **LS**

● Deconstructing Dogma runs at the UJ Art Gallery, Kingsway Campus, until tomorrow. There will be a walkabout today at 10.30am. Call 011-559-2099; aedempsey@uj.ac.za



'Communist and Socialist' (diptych)
Conrad Botes

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