

# ANGLOW

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## FOCUS: SPECIAL INTERVIEW

### South Africa's cinematographic 'New Wave' : an interview with film director Teddy Mattered

By Pauline LAVAGNE d'ORTIGUE

Hollywood and Bollywood super-productions have been colonising most African screens for decades, but the continent has now begun regaining its cinematographic independence.

Thanks to a new generation of film-makers and a carefully crafted funding system, post-Apartheid South Africa has become one of the leading film-producing nations in Africa. Its biggest international success was Gavin Hood's *Tsotzi*, which won the 2006 Oscar for best foreign language film, and grossed almost 1 million dollars. This was not a lone shooting star, but paradoxically inadequate film distribution and a lack of audience still mean that South African films are often easier to see in London than in Johannesburg.

Film director Teddy Mattered, who directed the outstanding and critically acclaimed *Max and Mona* (2005), explains what South African cinema has been going through since the end of Apartheid and where it stands now.

#### **- How and why did you choose to become a filmmaker ?**

It started when I was a kid. We were forced to pool our monies together and send two friends to the local cinema and they would return and re-create the movie for us by the fireside on the street corner. One would explain the action while the other did the sound.

It was then that I knew that I would like to find out what lay beyond the magic of the silver screen.

#### **- How would you describe the changes in film production that took place since 1994 in post-apartheid South Africa?**

The reality of South African filmmaking before 1994 was that, in many ways, opportunities were almost non-existent for black scriptwriters or directors to create their own images on the screen. So the changes after 1994 have been amazing. After a long battle our Department of Arts and Culture created a National Film and Television Foundation to develop the funding and facilitate the production of numerous films, both locally and internationally. This includes a series of co-production treaties that have been signed and films co-produced between South African companies and their international partners.

We had a historic year in 2005 when over ten films made by Black South Africans made it to the screens in South Africa, the African continent and worldwide.

Our cinema is still under construction and, like our forerunners in Africa, Europe and the U.S.A., we are grappling with our identity, not necessarily a definitive one but an art form that reflects our experience and our aspirations whether they be political, creative or business oriented.

Owing to the recent international success of South African films, there is a certain feeling of excitement and euphoria at the moment. This has enabled many more filmmakers to produce

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quality work and get their message across, but we still need to channel this intensity. We are far from having found our identity yet.

**- What are the most recurrent themes in the fiction and documentary films of young South African filmmakers ?**

It hard to respond to that question because I don't have my eyes constantly focussed on the television, which is where most themes are explored. Instinct tells me that race and gender is at the heart of it but I may be wrong.

While we all try to hide and say we are "artists" and that we are not pre-occupied with a national identity, it is at the centre of our work.

But like everywhere else in the world, there are many, many young people just splurging out their visions with creativity that surpasses that of my generation. Writing is our nemesis and we still need to get solid teams of writers everywhere in our country to tell our stories...properly!

**- How much has the digital age changed South African cinema as a whole?**

The digital age has helped tremendously. The use of DV cameras has spread since 2000, opening up new possibilities for filmmakers who no longer need large budgets to create.

The production company that I work with, DV8 Films, has just produced the world's first feature film shot on mobile phones for cinema: *SMS Sugar Man* by Aryan Kaganof.

But without good stories to tell what is the point of having the technology if you can't use it effectively.

**- What do you think of 'Nollywood', the Nigerian video feature film industry which produces 1 200 films a year ?**

I think the Nigerian model suits that country. We need to work out our own. I appreciate their capacity to reach audiences but I am a little less convinced when it comes to the aesthetics of their cinema. Of course I am not talking about all Nigerian cinema here. The films made by Tunde Kelani and Newton Aduaka (whose film *Ezra* just won this year's golden stallion at the FESPACO) stand out. They are world class.

**- How do you usually fund a feature film ?**

The state funding comes through the National Film and Video foundation, the Department of Trade and Industry which offers fiscal incentives, and the Industrial Development Corporation which has invested over 61 million euros in film production since 2001

Then there is television which works hand in glove with film production interests. Networks such as SABC (public) and M-Net (private) help funding both TV and feature films and documentaries.

Local distributors can also help, and of course co-productions (mostly from Europe).

**- How are South African films distributed and who is their main audience?**

Television is one of our main distribution outlets and of course the two big theatrical distributors Styer- Kinekor and Numetro.

I would guess that the audience is 60/40 between Blacks and Whites respectively. It all depends on the film. At around 8 euros, tickets are quite expensive.

**- How do you see the future of the film industry in South Africa ?**

South Africa holds the key to the immediate success of African cinema and I hope we will be able to pass the key on to others on the continent when their turn comes. We must be wary of becoming the new cultural imperialists.

**- What is your next project?**

There are many. I have a childhood story about a boxer who was turned inside out by Apartheid and his own troubled life. Then there's the story about a notorious Khoisan tracker used in the old South African Army to hunt down anti-apartheid guerrillas in Angola but loses it and betrays his colonial masters. There's so much I am busy with...just like any other filmmaker...many irons in the fire!

**For more information, see <http://www.dv8.co.za/>**

## POLITICS & SOCIETY

### Tribal minorities of Canada and India unite !

By Guillaume LEFEVRE

**A leader of Canada's indigenous Innu people has asked the government of India to learn from the mistakes of the colonial past, and help its own Jarawa community to survive.**

A report by *Survival International*, a charity which defends tribal people and world minorities, has revealed that the Jarawas who live in the southern reaches of the Bay of Bengal on the Andaman Islands, are threatened with extinction. In 1950, the Jarawa community had 8 000 members; in 2006 they were a mere 270.

George Rich, the Canadian leader of the Innu people, was shocked by the report and has pledged to help India avoid making the mistakes Canada made. The Innus live in West Quebec and Labrador; their population was estimated at around 18 000 in 2003. By the middle of the twentieth century, wood and ore exploitation had driven virtually all to abandon their traditional nomadic way of life. Hunting and gathering disappeared within a generation as the Innus were encouraged by the government, along with the Anglican and Catholic churches, to leave their lands and settle in villages. The Innus then exchanged self-reliance for dependency. Rich has depicted the dire consequences of such sedentarisation policies in the Indian press. "Children as young as 12 have hung themselves ; other have lost themselves in solvent and drugs. Our communities have some of the highest suicides rate on the planet,"\* Rich told the *Times of India*.

Even though the Indian government has promised that it will not attempt to assimilate Jarawas forcibly, and that it wants them to remain on their forest lands and retain their traditional way of life, based on hunting and gathering, Rich remains suspicious. In his view, the Indian government is taking the exact same course as the Canadian one, and the consequences are the same: "Alcohol, drugs and sexual abuse, all of which have ravaged my people, are being introduced by local settlers and sometimes, as with the Innus, by the very people the government has sent to 'look after' them. And the Jarawas, much more than the Innus, are in danger of being wiped out by new diseases brought by outsiders."\*

The United Nations is not convinced by the Indian government's policies either. The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has just issued a scathing report urging India to "protect tribes such as the Jarawa against encroachments on their lands and resources by settlers, poachers, private companies or other third parties and implement the 2002 order of the Indian Supreme Court to close the sections of the Andaman Trunk Road that runs through the Jarawa reserve." \*\* By refusing to close this highway, the Indian government has been defying its own Supreme Court for more than four years now.

Rich says that the Indian government must learn from the Innu tragedy and seek an alternative to protect the Jawaras. The figures are certainly telling. Between 1990 and 1997, the suicide rate among Innus was 12 times higher than the Canadian national average. In 2001 *Survival International* reported that 50% of Innu children aged 5 to 14 had already taken drugs, while 20% were fully addicted; 48% of adults were alcoholic, 42 % suicidal and 28 % had actually attempted to commit suicide.

So far the future of the Jawaras does not look any rosier.

Sources: \* "Survival At Stake," *Times of India* 14 February 2007.

\*\*« UN – Road must be closed to protect isolated Jarawa tribe, » <http://www.survival-international.org/> 12 Mar 2007.

"Please Take Our Children Away," *The New York Times* 17 may 2001.

## POLITICS & SOCIETY

### « I fought for the flag, but the flag never fought for me »

By Sophie LEFRANC

**In the U.S. nearly 200,000 veterans —many from the Vietnam war— sleep on sidewalks every night. Between 500 and 1,000 U.S. soldiers returning from Irak and Afghanistan are currently struggling with homelessness too.**

Approximately 40% of homeless men in the US are veterans, although veterans make up only 34% of the adult male population.

As is the case with non-veterans, homelessness among veterans is mainly due to high housing costs and unemployment. In addition, some of them have to live with war injuries or posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)\* and that often leads them to drink or use drugs to cope with their physical and mental suffering.

Of course there are shelters for homeless veterans, but with only 15,000 beds in the country, there are not enough available beds to accommodate all of them.

Charities such as Volunteers of America (a nonprofit housing group for veterans) try to help, but unfortunately the crisis will not be solved overnight.

Even though the Department of Veterans Affairs has released \$24 million in February 2007 in order to improve the situation of homeless vets, only 1,000 new beds are to be added in VA-funded shelters.

Although the U.S. government is more and more aware of this problem, not enough is done and a lot of veterans have to face a new battle every night.

\*PTSD is a psychological illness which somebody suffers as a result of a terrible experience such as war in the case of veterans.

Sources: "Hundreds of Iraq Vets Are Homeless," *Newsweek* 24 February 2007.  
Volunteers of America's website: <http://www.voa.org/>

## POLITICS & SOCIETY

### Harvard names its first woman president

By Romain DONDELINGER

**Harvard University, one of the most elite universities in the US, has nominated its first-ever woman president: Drew Gilpin Faust. This has re-kindled the heated debate about sexual equality at great institutions.**

Drew Gilpin Faust, 59, is a civil war historian. She taught at the University of Pennsylvania and was the dean of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study. On February 11<sup>th</sup> she became the 28<sup>th</sup> president of Harvard, and the first woman to ever reach such a position in the 371-year long history of the university. She was elected by the seven-member Harvard Corporation, the school governing body, and her appointment was then ratified by the 30-member Board of Overseers. She now has to govern 11 schools and colleges with 24,000 employees and a budget of \$30 billion.

Her appointment is the result of a two year search for a successor to Lawrence Summer, Harvard's highly controversial former president. Summer, who was treasury secretary in the Clinton administration, headed Harvard between 2000 and 2005. He became infamous by claiming that genetic gender differences may explain why few women are rising to top sciences jobs in universities nowadays, and adding that women present a lack of "intrinsic aptitude" for the sciences. Accusations of sexism, targeting both the university and Mr. Summer, led to his departure in January 2005. Interim President Derek Bok took over and will serve until July 1, when Ms Faust takes over.

Ms Faust's nomination is a watershed but it is not welcomed by all. Some Harvard professors grouse that no scientist has had the top job since James Bryant Conant, a chemist who retired in 1953; the last four presidents have all come from the fields of classics, law, literature and economics. Moreover, Ms Faust's appointment is challenged by some because she is the first president of Harvard who did not receive an undergraduate or graduate degree from the university since Charles Chauncy, who died in office in 1672. Ms Faust attended Bryn Mawr College and the University of Pennsylvania.

Most, however, view Ms Faust's appointment as a great step forward for gender equality. "It's a very public symbol of the progress women have made in being seen as equal", said Carol Christ, president of the Massachusetts-based Smith College.\*

Ms Faust has a long record of fighting against sexual and racial discriminations. At the age of 9 she wrote a letter to President Dwight D. Eisenhower urging him to end segregation, and as she explains in her book *Shapers of Southern History : Autobiographical Reflections* (2006) she rebelled early on against the secondary role her mother expected her to play.. She can proudly say: "I'm not the woman president of Harvard. I'm the president of Harvard."\*\*

She is not completely alone in her category. Half of the Ivy League (made up of the eight most elite universities in the US), now have women presidents, as Harvard has finally joined the University of Pennsylvania, Princeton and Brown.

Sources: \* "After 370 years, Harvard gets first female president," *The Independent* 12 February 2007.

\*\* "Harvard names 1st woman president," *Chicago Tribune* 12 February 2007.

"Harvard Names 1st Female President," *The New York Times* 11 February 2007.

"Harvard's board names school's first female president," *The Los Angeles Times* 11 February 2007.

"Harvard names first female president," *Washington Post* 12 February 2007.

"Harvard to name first woman president," *The Guardian* 10 February 2007.

## POLITICS & SOCIETY

### UK school weigh-ins challenged as obesity epidemic spreads

By Julie LE COZ & Nicolas TREVILLOT

**Each year, obesity causes the premature death of some 30,000 people in the UK and costs the British economy over £2.5 billion.**

The current figures are scary but the future does not look any brighter: child obesity is spreading rapidly in the UK. It has doubled in the last 10 years. Nowadays, around one in four 11 to 15-year-olds is considered obese. Overweight problems increase the risk of diabetes and cancers; both sexes are involved.

So far the main suggestion put in place by the British government has been very controversial.

In order to detect obesity among children whose parents do not visit their GP often enough, the government has decided to increase school weigh-ins. They thought that weighing children at key points in their school career would help raise awareness, and that scales would be a good motivation to reinforce positive behaviour changes.

The other advantage was that this seemed a cheap and simple scheme to implement. For one health professional to weigh 20 children in one school on one day appeared to be much easier than creating an extended programme of home visits.

However, the school weigh-in program did not go down well with many parents who considered it a humiliating measure. About 52 per cent of parents, including those of the fattest children, refused to allow their children to get on the scales.

Studies show that obese children are often depressed and de-motivated. Spotlighting obesity in the classroom can easily create a stigma and increase children's anxiety. Being called out of the classroom to see the school nurse, can induce a strong feeling of shame.

The Government has therefore been forced to admit that school weigh-ins would not be the miracle solution to stop the national epidemic.

Any suggestions on how best to warn parents about their children's waistlines welcome!

#### Sources:

"Child obesity has doubled in 10 years," *Daily Mail* 21 April 2006.

"Overweight children need help at school – not humiliation," *The Times* 15 January 2007.

"Government will target parents in fight against childhood obesity," *Daily Mail* 24 January 2007.

## POLITICS & SOCIETY

### [Child-soldiers: the commitment of NGOs, politicians and movie stars but still a grim future](#)

By Thomas BORDIER & Marie-Dominique BEAU

**It is estimated that between 200,000 and 300,000 children under the age of 18 are currently involved in warfare as soldiers. They have been given front page treatment in international circles and media since the beginning of the year, but the recruiting and fighting still goes on.**

Most child-soldiers are to be found in roughly 12 countries, mainly in Africa and in Asia. Burundi, Chad, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Nepal are the countries which host the highest numbers of child-soldiers.

On February 1st, 2007, as many as 58 countries signed a Paris Commitment to end the recruitment of children in armed conflicts. Several NGOs such as The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers were closely involved in the drafting process of this Paris Commitments document. However, it remains to be seen how such a political gesture will translate on the ground.

So far, *Blood Diamond*, the Hollywood feature film starring Leonardo DiCaprio and released in December 2006, has probably been more effective than the Paris Commitments at raising public awareness about this issue. Set against the backdrop of civil war in Sierra Leone, this fictional film depicts the recruiting of a child into a militia involved in diamond trafficking.

10,000 child soldiers fought in Sierra Leone's 10-year civil war, which began in 1991. The conflict, initiated by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and led by Foday Sankoh, resulted in tens of thousands of deaths and the displacement of more than 2 million people, or over one-third of the population, most of whom became refugees in neighbouring countries.

The International Education and Resource Network, iEARN, is one of several NGOs devoted to helping children who have suffered from war and war's effects to re-adapt to civil society. iEARN SL has three centres in Sierra Leone, where they strive to rehabilitate youths through education and cultural exchanges. iEARN SL teaches computer skills and literacy. It also promotes peace education in schools and proposes activities such as creative writing, music, drama or cinema. So far over 850 war affected youth and school-age children have benefited from iEARN's efforts to open doors onto a wider and more peaceful world. But there are still thousands who need help.

Sources: «Move to end use of child soldiers,» *The Guardian* 6 February 2007  
<http://www.earnsierraleone.org>

## ARTS & BOOKS

### Paintings in Californian Wonderland

By Claire PESLHERBE & Ségolène PRADEAU

**Visitors coming to Mark Ryden's new exhibition in Los Angeles are expected to be wearing brown and green clothes to experience fully the artist's "Tree Show."**

Mark Ryden's most recent paintings will be on display from March 10th to April 28th 2007 at the Michael Kohn Gallery in Los Angeles. This gallery, created in 1985, previously hosted the works of modern masters such as Picasso and Andy Warhol. This new exhibition, entitled "The Tree Show," features many wondrous forest-scapes and fantastic garden scenes by one of the most en vogue contemporary American painters.

Ryden was born in 1963 in Oregon. He lives and works in Los Angeles where his first solo exhibition "The Meat Show" took place in 1998. His last major museum retrospective, "Wondertooneel," travelled from the Frye Museum of Art in Seattle to the Pasadena Museum of California Art in 2005.

While both "Wondertooneel" and "The Tree show" are loosely inspired by *Alice in Wonderland* and its dream-like universe, Ryden's paintings can be rather disquieting. His canvasses are often filled with young children covered in blood and strange toy-like animals. Infants, slabs of meat, religious and alchemical symbols are juxtaposed in cartoon-like landscapes that are as colourful as their subject is actually dark. Ryden's work is loaded with echoes of surrealist paintings as well as classical references to Bosch and Bruegel. His masterful technique and painting skills are widely celebrated.

Ryden's works are not confined to art galleries though. In the last few years he has created several famous album covers such as Michael Jackson's *Dangerous* or the Red Hot Chili Peppers' *One Hot Minute*. Ryden is said to have many collectors in show business. Stephen King, Leonardo DiCaprio, and the composer Danny Elfman for instance are among his most faithful admirers.

Sources and links to pictures:

<http://www.kohngallery.com/>

[www.markryden.com](http://www.markryden.com)

[www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

## ARTS & BOOKS

### Rap wars and (almost) peace

By Benjamin SAFAR

**A decade ago East Coast and West Coast rappers were at daggers drawn, literally. Today they are planning concerts together. How did this happen ?**

In 1996, Tupac Shakur a charismatic West Coast rapper from Death Row records was shot dead in Las Vegas. Notorious B.I.G., the leading star of Bad Boy records and paragon of East Coast-style rap music, was killed the following year in Los Angeles. These two gruesome murders crowned years of violent rivalry between East and West Coast rappers, during which insults, threats and public fights were recurrent.

West Coast or gangsta rap became popular in the eighties with artists like Ice Cube and Dr Dre, who created Death Row records with Suge Knight in 1991. This leading label produced Tupac Shakur and, later on, Snoop Dog. Nowadays, leading West Coast rappers include Snoop Dog, Xzibit, Coolio and The Game.

Experts claim that East Coast rap has darker, less funky tones and more spasmodic rhythms than the West Coast variety. Its first heroes were rappers like Notorious B.I.G. and NAS; today it features artists like Eminem, 50 Cent and P.Diddy. P.Diddy owns Bad Boy records, founded in 1992. He was Notorious B.I.G.'s producer; when the latter died, P. Diddy composed the famous song "I'll be missing you," which he performed with Notorious B.I.G. partner's Faith Evans.

In the last few years, the rivalry between these estranged families has gradually abated—so much so that P.Diddy and Snoop Dog will give a concert together in Amsterdam at the end of March. This would have been unthinkable ten years ago !

However, there are still serious bouts of violence in the rap world. Actually, the violence never really stopped. For instance, in 1999, Bugz (one of D12's original members) was shot dead in Detroit; in 2000, 50 Cent was shot and wounded in New York. Last year, two of Eminem's longtime friends were assaulted in Detroit; Obie Trice was shot and wounded, and a few months later, Proof (another D12 member) was killed outside a nightclub. However, these violent episodes are no longer directly linked to the East Coast / West Coast feud.

The murders of Notorious B.I.G. and Tupac are still quite present in their fans' memories. Two years ago, there was a new episode in Notorious B.I.G.'s lawsuit, in which the plaintiffs claimed that a corrupt officer had planned the slaying of the rapper. Last year, Tupac's ashes were transferred to South Africa, his country of origin.

#### Sources:

"Rapper's Family's Suit Goes to Trial," *Los Angeles Times* 22 June 2005.

"Family of Notorious BIG wants to expand Lawsuit" *Rap central.co.uk*. 13 July 2006.

[www.notoriousbig.co.uk/](http://www.notoriousbig.co.uk/)

[www.2paclegacy.com/](http://www.2paclegacy.com/)

## BUSINESS & MEDIA

### Supermarkets vs. Indian mom-and-pop shops

By Aude CORDONNIER

A major change is taking place in the Indian retailing landscape. The launch of a chain of super and hypermarkets could bring about a complete switch in Indians' consumption habits.

Reliance Industries, an oil, petrochemicals and textiles group, is India's biggest private sector company. On 30th January it opened its first supermarket in Noida, a growing city in the suburbs of Delhi, after having opened eight shops in and around Delhi and almost forty in Southern India in three months. These new, medium-sized shops herald the arrival of the supermarket era in India. This is somewhat of a revolution: India has over a billion people but no organised retailing network. For centuries, Indians have bought groceries, stationery, clothing, appliances, and medicine from small neighbourhood stores, where the quality and availability of goods is unpredictable. Today, Indians still buy 97 percent of their goods from those 12 million mom-and-pop shops.

These small family-owned shops will probably suffer from this harsh competition. Reliance Fresh outlets, with air-conditioned aisles, shopping carts and automatic doors offer extremely competitive prices. Small businessmen obviously feel threatened, but the head of Reliance Retail claimed that the new shops would create half a million jobs in three years. The CEO, Mr Sanjeev Asthana, commented that "*The market is big enough for the organised players and the estimated 12 million traditional stores to co-exist. Our venture will not affect the common kirana shops or the farmers.*"\* Reliance intends to open 100 stores in Delhi alone within the next two months. It also plans to invest 5.7 billion dollars in 5,000 shops nationwide. Their claim that the traditional, owner-manned low-cost general stores will not be hurt clearly seems a trifle far fetched.

The threat to the *kirana* shops is particularly evident when one considers that the pioneering example of Reliance Fresh could open the way for foreign companies to invest in India's retail industry. They had no right to do so until last year when new rules were introduced. So far, several foreign firms have taken 51% equity stakes in shops that sell only their own brands. Foreign firms are also allowed to establish wholesale operations, which has led to several joint ventures in which Indian retailers will be supplied exclusively by foreign wholesalers.

Naturally, the prospects are more than tempting: after 15 years of decent economic growth, India's masses are ready to spend. India ranks as one of the ten largest emerging markets in the world; its middle class has been rising since the liberalisation of the economy in the 1980's and it has acquired a substantial purchasing power.

This is just the very beginning for super and hypermarkets in India. Mom-and-pop-shops beware!

Sources: \*« Reliance to build focus on niche retail formats, » *The Hindu Business Line* 29 January 2007. <http://www.businessline.in/>

\*\*« Getting cheaper and better, » *The Economist* 1 February 2007.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### Eggs for Science

By François BERLAND

#### **In Britain, women can now donate eggs altruistically for medical research.**

On February 21, the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA), which is the British government's fertility regulator, approved recommendations by its ethics and law committee that women who are not themselves undergoing fertility treatment should be permitted to donate their eggs altruistically for medical research. This decision follows a six-month public consultation.

Until then, clinics were not allowed to accept eggs unless they were a byproduct of either fertility treatment or sterilisation. This led to a chronic shortage of eggs for scientific research.

The new supply of donated eggs will be used to create cloned embryos from which stem cells will be harvested. This should foster research into medical conditions such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and motor neurone diseases.

Unlike in the US where women can be offered up to \$10,000 for their eggs by some fertility clinics, it is illegal in Britain to pay donors. Under the new scheme, women will receive around £250 compensation for lost earnings, with extra payments to cover expenses such as travel costs and childcare.

This landmark decision stirred a controversy in medical circles.

Donna Dickenson, an emeritus professor of medical ethics and humanities at the University of London, said "the HFEA could be unwittingly opening the door to the barter and sale of eggs."\*

Some opponents of the scheme fear that donors could be pressured for financial reasons or by relatives hoping to benefit from stem cell research.

Others, such as scientists from the University of Padua and pressure groups like Human Genetics Alert, also believe that the risks involved in donating eggs are too great. The hormonal treatments used to stimulate women's ovaries can lead to a condition called 'ovarian hyper-stimulation syndrome', which is fatal in some very rare instances.

How this new scheme will develop remains to be seen.

Sources : \* "Women will be paid to donate eggs for science," *The Observer* 18 February 2007.

"Women set to sell eggs in Britain," *Sydney Morning Herald* 19 February 2007.

"Watchdog gives all clear to charitable egg donors," *The Guardian* 21 February 2007.

"Row over cash for women donating eggs," *The Guardian* 21 February 2007.

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority ' official website : <http://www.hfea.gov.uk/>

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### [More chances to get pregnant if you don't watch your figure](#)

By Valérie SINTOBIN

**An American study, published on March 1, revealed that eating low-fat dairy products could damage women's fertility by impeding ovulation.**

This study was published in the *Human Reproduction* journal (Oxford University Press). It was based on a population of 18,555 women, aged from 24 to 42 years old, who had tried to become pregnant between 1991 and 1999. The women's ovulation successes or failures were, for this purpose, compared to their eating habits. It was found that women eating low-fat dairy products run an 85% higher risk of suffering lack of ovulation than women consuming high-fat milk and ice cream.

Even though doctors insist that women who want to conceive should not increase their calorie intake and should limit their consumption of saturated fats, this study shows that if you want a baby, you can indulge in extra creamy dairy products without feeling too guilty!

Source : "Low-fat food is 'bad for you'," *The Times* 28 February 2007.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### Richard Branson, the new space conqueror

By Emma SARPEDON

**Sir Richard Branson, owner of Virgin Air, Virgin Trains and Virgin Records, has now decided to launch a private spaceline: Virgin Galactic.**

Based on the successful 2004 flights of SpaceShipOne, the world's first privately funded spacecraft, Branson intends to carry civilians on a thrill ride more than 100km up into space. During this two-hour adventure, passengers will experience four minutes of weightlessness, discover what zero gravity feels like, and have a quick look onto space.

For this new project the ambitious British entrepreneur has gathered specialists such as the physicist Stephen Hawking, the pilot Alex Tai, and the famous aircraft engineer, Burt Rutan.

The first flight should take off by 2009 with the first 100 passengers on board. These "Founders," as the company calls them, will have to buy \$200.000 tickets to enjoy the Virgin Galactic experience.

Sources: "The Space Cowboy," *Time* 5 March 2007.

"Hawking to fly in zero gravity," *Sydney Morning Herald* 2 March 2007.

"Renowned physicist Stephen Hawking to make Florida flight in zero gravity," *International Herald Tribune* 1 March 2007.

## ENVIRONMENT & TRAVEL

### India: an E-waste dumping ground ?

By Simon CARLI & Jean-Baptiste LUSIGNAN

**E-waste is a global environmental hazard. Each year, about 10,000 to 20,000 tonnes of discarded electronic equipment is exported from developed countries to India's scrap yards in Meerut, Bangalore or Mumbai, to get dismantled by poorly-protected workers.**

More often than not, electronic devices do not age well. Most of them become e-waste before they turn two years old, whether they are out of order or simply not up-to-date anymore. E-waste is not your ordinary trash. Recycling clapped-out and old-fashioned computers is a lucrative business. When dismantled, computers release hidden treasures such as gold, platinum and copper. However, those elements are usually found in composite form, which means that they need to be salvaged using dangerous chemicals such as strong acids. This ought to be done by specialised workers with proper equipment, but seldom is.

Given the cost involved in recycling e-waste, countries like Canada and the United States regularly ship obsolete computers all the way to Asia. It is estimated that about 80 percent of the e-waste generated in the US goes to backyard recyclers in India, China and Pakistan. There are a few modern recycling factories in developing countries, but they are thin on the ground: India, for instance, has only one, near New Delhi. But most of the time, e-waste is processed by low-paid workers in small, local businesses. They sometimes work in the open or on the floor of street stalls without any protection save a paper mask that will not prevent serious damage to their health. There are about 25,000 such workers in Delhi alone. According to K. K. Shajaban, principal consultant at the India Institute of Material Management in Bangalore: "although the waste trade sector in India is known as part of the informal sector, it has a system that is highly organised with extensive co-ordination in an established network."\* Some companies knowingly burn monitors, keyboards, cables and toner cartridges in the open along with garbage. This releases huge amounts of toxic metals into the atmosphere; some materials such as cadmium, mercury and chromium cannot be recycled at all.

Unregulated recycling by inadequately-protected workers is not only an environmental and health problem. It is also a moral and political issue. E-waste is making its way from all over the world into Asia by "underground" routes too. Donations for instance are a case in point. Many irresponsible industrialized countries claim to help India get wired by giving away computers well past their sell-by date. But these charitable gifts are often less benevolent and generous than they seem. They enable many states and corporations to dispose of inconvenient trash tax-free while respecting international law.

In the last few years, the amount of e-waste generated globally every year has skyrocketed from 20 to 50 million tonnes. Given the ever-diminishing lifespan of electronic devices, the electronic scrap-heap is bound to grow faster and faster as developing countries increase their own production. Currently Asia discards about 12 million tonnes a year.

Sources: "Hello? Steve? This is Green my Apple calling on the iPhone", <http://www.greenpeace.org/india/news/> 15 January 2007.

\* "The e-waste problem," <http://www.greenpeace.org/india/news/campaigns/toxic-free-future/> 17 August 2005.

"India to have e-waste recycling plans soon," <http://www.expresscomputeronline.com> 24 September 2005.

"Now a cemetery for dead PCs in Bangalore," <http://www.expresscomputeronline.com> 08 October 2004.

Official e-waste take-back website <http://www.computertakeback.com/>

Related information on Wikipedia [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green\\_Electronics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_Electronics)

## ENVIRONMENT & TRAVEL

### Reduce, Reuse and Recycle Australian Water

By Amy KRAFT

**Residents of Queensland, Australia, are heating up as the government pushes to introduce recycled water into the state's drinking supply.**

Recycled water has been a point of debate in Australia for some time now as a record-breaking decade-long drought in the southern states has brought about a need for drastic change. With a current population of 6 395 000, the drinking supply for residents is quickly drying up.

Treated effluent is already topping off drinking water supplies in Singapore, Namibia, and various U.S. cities, while wastewater has been recycled and used in aquatic recreational facilities in Australian towns for decades. However, the water treatment plan proposed in Queensland is much more than "topping off" as the entire drinking supply is expected to derive from treated effluent.

Since talk of recycled water began, residents have created "yes" and "no" campaigns, both of which are very logical. The "yes" campaign promotes the safety of the proposed purification process and the necessity for a larger water supply in Australia, while the "no" campaign is more concerned with the psychological effects on residents who might be drinking water that once sat in a toilet, along with doubts about the safety of the purification process.

In a recent poll, residents of the city of Toowoomba in south-east Queensland rejected the idea of recycled water, and a group of residents collected nearly 10 000 signatures for a petition opposing the project.

The southern Australian city of Goulburn-Mulwaree is also considering a similar effluent recycling plan to ease water shortages, and the town's mayor Paul Stephenson says he will not wait to see what Toowoomba is doing before they start work on the project.

The project to introduce recycled water is being primarily funded by the Australian Research Council and the Federal Government. The Australian Research Council discusses the project in further detail on their website: "Toowoomba would have been the first city in Australia to use recycled sewage for drinking water, with its proposal for a new \$68 million wastewater treatment plant to top up potable water supplies at Cooby Dam. The Goulburn proposal – which is still being considered – involves building a new wastewater plant as part of a \$32 million project to recycle effluent and return it to the Sooley Dam catchment."\*

Proposed purification methods for sewage water, groundwater and seawater include distillation, freezing, reverse osmosis, electro dialysis or ion exchange. According to the Australian Academy of Science, "[R]esearchers and water authorities in Australia say there's no scientific or health reason that recycled wastewater can't be safely used as part of drinking water supplies if treated properly."\*\*

So the main problem for Australians is getting over the "yuk factor" and not thinking too hard about what they are drinking. Australian plan commissions have discussed the maintenance of confidence and trust between water agencies and their consumers to ensure the effectiveness of this project. Once plans in the southeast [...] are accepted, the Australian government hopes to introduce recycled water to all major Australian cities within the next 20 years.

Sources: \* "Making Every Drop Count," <http://www.arc.gov.au> August 2006.

\*\* "The Water Down Under," <http://www.science.org.au.nova> February 2007.

"Australians to Turn To Recycled Water," *The New York Times* 30 January 2007.

## SPORTS

### British remedies to end hooliganism to be tried in Italy ?

By Sebastien GERBAULT

**British football fans have long been considered as the most uncontrolled and violent in the world. They have not all become gentlemen overnight, but UK stadiums are now among the safest in the world.**

In mid-February, the Italian Interior Minister Giuliano Amato met with British Home Secretary John Reid to ask for advice on combating hooliganism. After an unprecedented wave of football-related violence that culminated in the death of a policeman in Sicily, Mr Amato came to learn about the measures implemented to end disorders in and around British stadiums.

In the last fifteen years, close coordination between the government, the police, clubs, the game's authorities and supporters has been cardinal in dramatically reducing the disorders.

Among the various measures introduced, the system of banning orders has been particularly effective. This national register of trouble-makers enables the authorities to stop around 3,500 convicted or suspected troublemakers in England and Wales from attending games at home or abroad.

The strong increase in tickets prices has also been very effective. Attending a football match has become a rare luxury for most, while tickets are more and more difficult to get hold of.

As a result, after decades of hooliganism, Britain has finally restored order to its football stadiums where high wire fencing is now a thing of the past. Unfortunately, the proximity between supporters and players, who are hardly one meter away from one another, still seems unimaginable in Italy, Germany or France.

Source: « Italy ask UK for advice on hooligans, » *The Observer* 18 February 2007.