


INTRODUCTION TO THE VOLUME

PETER BIELLA, EDITOR

I am very pleased to introduce this double-issue of *Visual Anthropology Review*, dedicated to the application of visual anthropology to Southern Africa. Published in three versions, hard copy, CD-ROM, and ultimately a web site, thirteen essays in this volume explore the structure and consequences of two recently-completed film series. Issue number I brings applied visual anthropology to the HIV/AIDS pandemic; the second issue explores the transforming fate of Kalahari Ju/'hoansi. This volume is the first of what promises to be many multimedia/electronic editions of the Society for Visual Anthropology's journal. In the electronic versions of this volume, more than a hundred video clips, selected from forty films in the two series, are placed within the essays and identified with the clickable-camera icon, .

Issue Number I of this volume is dedicated to the *Steps for the Future* project, a collection of thirty-six HIV-AIDS education films. Produced in seven Southern African countries, many the *Steps* films have been translated into eighteen languages. Because of their unique production and dissemination properties, they have been unusually successful in initiating HIV risk-reducing behavior change. Five essays, introduced by Faye Ginsburg and Barbara Abrash, tackle the formidable challenges of HIV/AIDS media and argue that the *Steps* films provide models and messages essential for future work in applied visual anthropology.

Issue II investigates John Marshall's new series, *A Kalahari Family*, which documents a period of fifty years of Ju/'hoansi history. The unique achievement of these films led the Society for Visual Anthropology to honor Marshall with its Lifetime Achievement Award in 2003. Seven essays, including an introduction by Robert Gordon, discuss the contributions and controversies of Marshall's *oeuvre* and provide close perspectives on Kalahari regional and cultural crises.

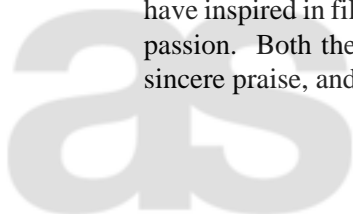
This volume of *Visual Anthropology Review* describes two tragedies of different orders, both of which have inspired in filmmakers dedication, skill and compassion. Both the *Steps* and *Kalahari* series deserve sincere praise, and they receive it in this volume. Yet

the problems they address are of such enormity and the behavior they seek to change is so entrenched that weaknesses of the films deserve as much critical attention as achievements. Visual anthropology has only begun to make sense of the relationship between the partial, multivocalic utterances of a film, the audience's interpretive commitments, and the audience's consequent commitment to behavior change. Whether the change is the reduction of HIV-risk behavior or the realignment of priorities for agenda-driven Kalahari NGOs, visual ethics and the effectiveness of media remain important concerns for applied visual anthropologists. The essays in this volume do not shirk the task.

Within the next two years, *Visual Anthropology Review* will become a publication that is available exclusively online. This digital move is part of the AAA's AnthroSource initiative, through which all American Anthropological Association publications, from 1902 onward, will be accessible on the Web. Because VAR is the most invested of all AAA publications in the analysis of audio-visual materials, our leap into cyber-academe offers us enormous promise. It was my wish for this volume that it provide a first step for digital, audio-visual scholarship.

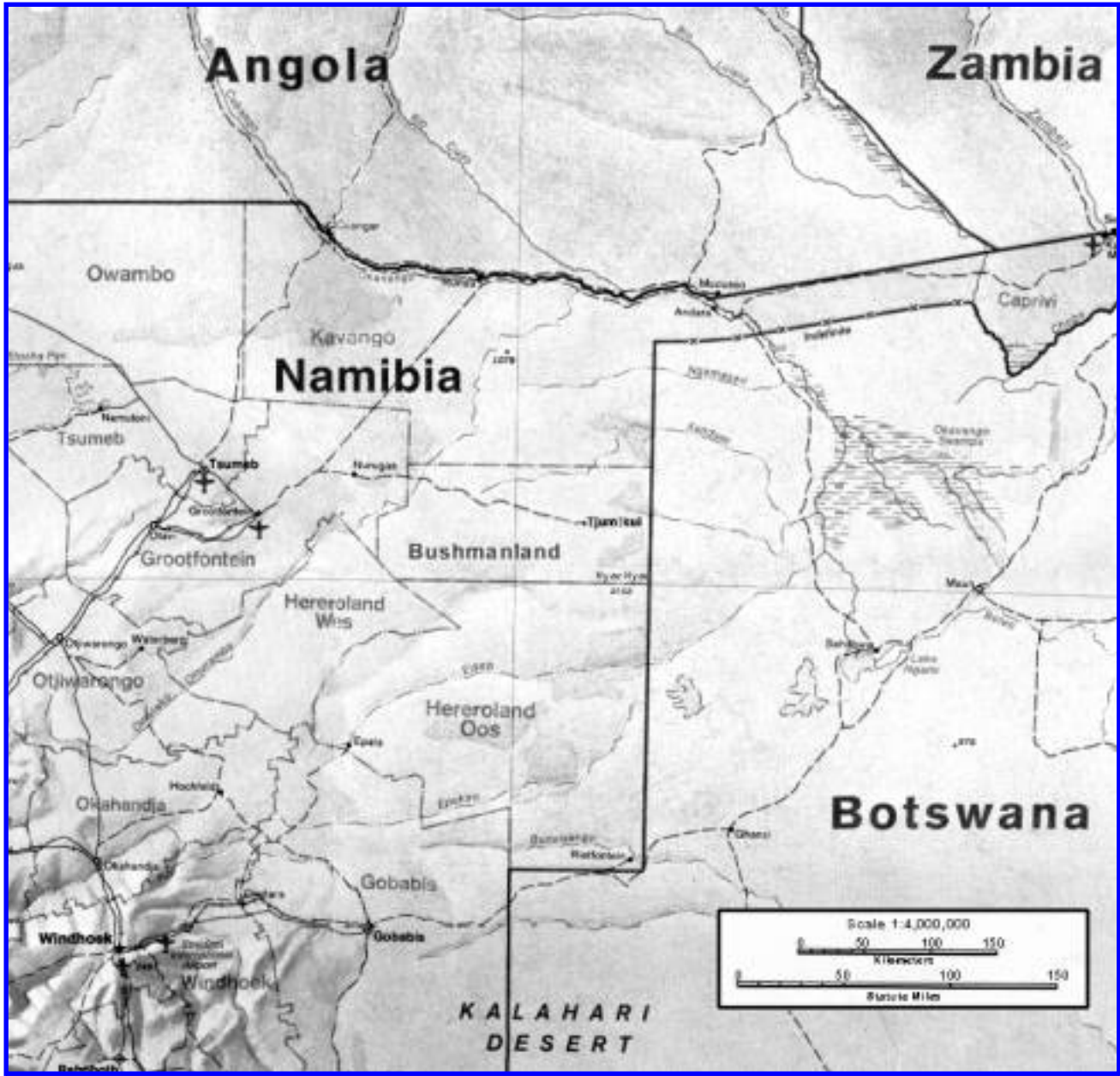
I offer special thanks to Kate Hennessy, multimedia/visual anthropologist, who designed and produced the CD-ROM for this issue. I am also very grateful to Cornilius Moore, of California Newsreel, and Don Edkins, of Day Zero Film and Video, for granting *Visual Anthropology Review* permission to include digital clips from the *Steps for the Future* series; and I thank Cynthia Close, of Documentary Educational Resources, for her permission to produce digital excerpts from *A Kalahari Family*. Their generosity is appreciated, in part because it sets an important precedent for visual scholarship. Their films provide a vista through which we may with wild surmise confront the future of our discipline.

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