

IDENTITY

brand freedom

South Africa has an image problem. More than a decade after the end of apartheid, and despite its growing economy and booming tourism, the country is still seen as a nation of “street gangs and a pseudo-colonial experience,” says Gary Harwood, creative director of Johannesburg branding agency HKLM. To help close this perception gap, the Design Indaba, South Africa’s annual design conference, held in Cape Town in February, invited HKLM and fellow South African agencies Switch Design and Two Tone to create bold, unifying national identities. HKLM borrowed Nelson Mandela’s handwriting from a prison letter for its symbol; Two Tone morphed the tail feathers of



the blue crane, the national bird, into a tapestry with the flag’s colors. Switch wanted an abstract symbol that could be recognized in Timbuktu, says creative director Gaby de Abreu. Avoiding images of Mandela, so as not to identify the nation too closely with one personality—“the Fidel Castro syndrome”—Switch merged the lowercase “s.a.” (also incorporating the flag’s colors) into a swirling, free-flowing ribbon (above), representing freedom without beginning or end. Changing a nation’s perception with a single identity can be tricky, and at the Design Indaba, the three brand overhauls stirred much debate—but no agreement—on how to sell South Africa to the world. ERNEST BECK

SATIRE

communist cuisine

Lenin’s Call, a restaurant that opened last year in St. Petersburg, Russia, is filled from floor to ceiling with busts of Lenin and Stalin and draped in red velvet. But it’s not a place for nostalgic old Communists. The decor is “a fashionable manner of pop art,” says Sophia Volkova, an editor at *[KaK]* magazine. Embodying Russia’s new awakening to old Soviet imagery (see “Hammers and Symbols,” *PRINT*, May/June 2005), these monuments are on every surface imaginable here, which, she says, “creates a feeling of surrealism.” That’s an understatement. Before entering the main dining room, customers must be photographed bowing before a Socialist Realist painting of Lenin wearing a gold chain and holding a mug of beer—not for KGB documentation but for a growing collection of portraits (including Gérard Depardieu, musician Boris Grebenshikov, and former St. Petersburg governor Vladimir Jakovlev) that might become a book. Still, Lenin’s Call offers a touch of



class: Its food earned the emblem of the French Guild of Gourmets, and the music—*ah, the music!*—is by 8os Vinyl, a Russian-gypsy ensemble that would have had even the old commissars tapping their leaden feet. STEVEN HELLER

PUBLIC SERVICE

fairly legal



In July, 3 million soccer fans will storm Germany’s World Cup, crushing beer cans, bloodying jerseys—and lining the purses of prostitutes. Despite the nation’s pool of 400,000 licensed sex workers, the EU fears that the summer’s heightened demand will lure some 40,000 illegal workers to Germany with promises of legitimate jobs but realities of forced labor. Ever *praktisch*, some World Cup cities hope to limit streetwalking by maintaining drive-in “performance boxes” (some underwritten by the Catholic Church) near the stadiums, featuring free condoms and panic buttons. Germans are also breaking ad campaigns urging men to watch out for disoriented, frightened, or underage prostitutes. “Red Card,” Saatchi & Saatchi’s campaign named for the on-field expulsion penalty, puts the choice bluntly: “Are you in or out? Say no to forced prostitution.” And Berlin agency Schiebe, Preil & Bayer’s posters (above) appear above urinals and aim below the belt: “Responsibility can’t be measured in centimeters.” JUDE STEWART