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**Deconstructing Religion through Art
Wim Botha's Images of Christ**

South African artist, Wim Botha, is known for his post-modern reinterpretations of religious iconography, yet Botha states that he is not interested in religion *per se* but is motivated by a concern for historical systems of representation and visual communication, with the intangibility of *religion as a concept* as his starting point. Through his work he investigates both the past and the present understanding of a religious "truth" and the way that 'truth' has been presented in visual terms to convey a message that far outweighs the physical fact of the elements involved (a man on a cross, or a woman with a baby, for example). Religious iconography is a perfect vehicle for parody and/or "quotation" in a post-modern sense as it has a long historical presence and conveys certain messages that are understood by many people. This allows for complex layers of meaning that result sometimes in extreme responses, ranging from outright condemnation for some works, and others which function as devotional aids, despite Botha's non-religious intent. This paper investigates selected sculptural images of the crucified Christ by Botha, and the implications they raise for contemporary viewers, both Christian and agnostic.