

EVERARD READ

PHILLEMON HLUNGWANI

(b. 1975, Giyani, Limpopo, South Africa)

WORK

Phillemon Hlungwani is recognised as one of the most accomplished contemporary artists now working in South Africa. Known predominantly for his large-scale charcoal drawings depicting scenes from rural life and formal and informal settlements, his work is rooted deeply in a sense of community and the traditional values that endure there. Many of his recent drawings include proverbs in his first language – xiTsonga – as -titles. These proverbs are often difficult to translate into English but they communicate an essential moral idea – showing how members of a particular community are either sustaining or betraying the values of the people living there. The people are inseparable from their environment, although his more recent images have introduced colour into the clothing of his protagonists to help them stand out in all their vibrancy and humanity. The scenes he depicts are usually full of motion and life – the characters bursting with thoughts, opinions and yearnings, which are communicated further through the arcs and lines that weave the different parts of each drawing together. Everything is connected. There is no distinction between the internal or the external, the animate or inanimate, the material or the spiritual. As a boy, Hlungwani used to herd goats and cattle and look after chickens – and this relationship with the animal world is often present in his work. Trees were also a source of shade and food – both for animals and people – as well as providing places for community debates, ceremonies and prayer. Sometimes, as in the work entitled *Vutlarhi bya lava kulu ka hina* (The Wisdom of the Old People), trees embody and stand for the human – carrying in their roots and leaves and fruit all that has passed beneath them. Hlungwani is suggesting throughout his work that people who live in the simplest places with few possessions can still lead good, dignified lives and remain happy. They may have places to go and things to do, but they know who they are – where they have come from and where they are going.

BIOGRAPHY

Phillemon Hlungwani was born in Thomo Village, Giyani, in the Limpopo Province. He attended Thomo Primary School and Hanyani Thomo High School, where he developed his skills under the guidance of his art teacher, motivator and friend Muxe Moses Mthombeni – and Queen Mtileni. Having attained an A for Art in Matric, Hlungwani studied at the Johannesburg Art Foundation before studying printmaking under the mentorship of Kim Berman, the late Nhlahla Xaba and Osiah Masukameng at the Artist Proof Studio. Hlungwani later completed a teacher's training course in Art at the WITS School of Art. He has since been based at the Artist Proof Studio, where he has facilitated classes, been a unit manager for papermaking and was the coordinator for community outreach and special projects at the studio. He has also worked in a range of advisory and mentoring projects. Sponsored by the prestigious Ampersand Foundation Fellowship, Hlungwani went on an extensive study tour of printmaking studios in the United States. In addition to his drawing and graphic work, Hlungwani has completed and facilitated many wall murals including the mural at the Standard Bank Art Gallery (for the Picasso in Africa exhibition) and the mural for Bell Dewar and Hall. He has also been commissioned by the JDA (Johannesburg Development Agencies), MTN and the South African Governmental offices. Awards include winning the King Korn competition (2000 and

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2001) and the SABC Radio Station Munghana Lonene FM Log Design Award (2003). He was also one of the finalists for the Absa Gallery competition in 2001, 2002 and 2009.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2021** *A Wu Xi Tivi Lexi Nga Mbilwini Ya Mani*, Everard Read, Franschhoek
- 2019** *Ntsako Wa Xibelani*, Everard Read, Johannesburg
- 2018** *Nwansati wa matimba a nga heli mongo*, Everard Read, Cape Town
- 2017** *Rirhandzu Ra Manana / the Love of Women*, Everard Read Gallery, London
- 2016** Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg and Grande Provence Gallery – From Giyani to Alexandra Online Christmas Collection, Everard Read Gallery, London
- 2014** Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees (Titled: Mi Kondzo Ya Tinghawi/In the Footsteps of Heroes) Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg – Qunu Drawings
- 2013** John Martin Gallery London – Cullinan Drawings sponsored by Petra Diamonds plc
- 2011** Everard Read Gallery Johannesburg
Knysna Fine Art
- 2009** The Irma Stern Museum in Cape Town
'Tshungulo wuyisiwa e mahlweni' / The Healing Process, Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg
- 2008** *'Xitsonga l ndzuti wa Xigaza' / The Tsonga is the Shadow of Xigaza*, ABSA Gallery, Johannesburg
- 2006** The Gallery Premises, Braamfontein, Johannesburg
- 2000** First one-man show in Soweto, sponsored by Kaya FM, The Sowetan, Sunday World and Absolut Vodka

GROUP EXHIBITION

- 2021** *Spring Show*, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
Offering, Everard Read, Franschhoek
- 2020** The Portrait Show, Everard Read, Johannesburg
Imago, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa
Staring Straight to the Future, Everard Read Gallery Group Online Exhibition
TINY, Everard Read, Johannesburg
Odyssey, Everard Read, Johannesburg
- 2019** Southern Aspect: A Group Exhibition, Everard Read, London
- 2017** Reality Check, Everard Read, Cape Town
Winter Collection: Group Exhibition, Everard Read, Cape Town
- 2016** CIRCA London
- 2015** 1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair London
- 2014** FNB Johannesburg Art Fair
- 2013** Art 13 London



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- 2012** India Art Fair, the 4th Edition of India Modern and Contemporary Art Fair
The 21st birthday celebration of Artist Proof Studio exhibition, Johannesburg Art Gallery
FNB Johannesburg Art Fair
- 2011** FNB Johannesburg Art Fair
Horse Exhibition (multiple views of a singular beast at Circa and Everard Read Gallery)
Art Angels Charity Art Auction
- 2010** 'A View from the South', Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg
- 2009** ABSA L'Atelier Art competition finalist
Printmaking Council of New Jersey 'Studio Arrabbiata'
Boston Art Academy
RENDEZVOUS Focus original lithography, an exhibition of more than 100 South African and French artists' artworks touring and exhibited in South Africa.
Gallery on the Square, Nelson Mandela Square (Titled: 'The 50s: An Interpretation')
- 2009** Exhibited in Johannesburg Art Fair with Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg, and the Artist Proof Studio
- 2008** Knysna Fine Art
David Brown Fine Art, Johannesburg
Aspire Contemporary Art Gallery, Pretoria
Gallery on the Square, Nelson Mandela Square
- 2007** Thomson Art Gallery in Melville
SASOL, Rosebank
- 2006** Gallery on the Square, Nelson Mandela Square
Spark Gallery
Art on Paper
UJ former RAU Gallery
- 2005** Touring exhibition to the Gulf of OMAN Community Art Center, Qatar Hotel, Salala
- 2003** The Gallery Premises and the Johannesburg Art Gallery
- 2000** Polokwane Art Museum
Heritage Day for Arts and Culture Exhibition in Belgium
- 1997** Polokwane Art Museum

COLLECTIONS

Ascot Diamonds
Bell, Dewar and Hall, Johannesburg
Bidvest
BLP Merchandising Solutions
Brait,
Centurion Hotel, Pretoria
Ellerman House, Cape Town
Irma Stern Museum (UCT) , Cape Town
Johannesburg Development Agency

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Karoo Hotel outside Cape Town
Medscheme Holdings
MTN print exchange
Nando's
Nedbank, Johannesburg
Norman Borlaug Institute for International Culture, Texas
Raphael Suites and Michelangelo Towers, Sandton
Rand Merchant Bank Corporate Collection
Sasol Collection
South African Reserve Bank
Standard Bank Art Gallery, Johannesburg
UNISA Art Collection
Vodacom