

EVERARD READ

LIONEL SMIT

(b.1982 Pretoria, South Africa)

South African artist Lionel Smit is best known for his contemporary portraiture executed through monumental canvases and sculptures. Perhaps more than anything else, Lionel Smit's art is defined by a deeply rooted symbiotic relationship between sculpture and painting.

Each of Lionel Smit's works offers us an entry point into the variety and richness that lies beneath every face we encounter in life, whether applied in bronze or in paint. The blending of techniques across genres is a display of Smit's work in multiple media, all bearing visible overlap.

His paintings start with abstract lines and swaths of colour that establish a base for the subsequently overlaid image of a face or bust – in most cases posed by anonymous models from the Cape Malay community. For Smit, the Cape Malay woman epitomises hybrid identity within a South African context, and reflects the disintegrating construction of identity within our increasingly globalised world. His work is loaded with both historical and aesthetic precedent; clearly focused on the dialogue between the figurative and expressive abstract. Smit thus translates his own understanding of identity - drawing from images in his daily surrounds.

Smit's subject matter is consistent. The people he paints or sculpts possess a particular quality that appeals to his visual sensitivity, but nothing more in the way of social influence. The sitter's face acts, quite simply, as a vessel for Smit's experimentation with colour, stroke and technique. In regards to bronze, Smit's treatment of the medium reveals it to be especially well suited to the translation of his painterly activities into sculpture.

Smit's bronzes are created using the lost wax casting method - one of the oldest known metal-forming techniques. Patinas commonly available to artists working in bronze include natural browns, blacks and greens. However, considering the importance of colour to Smit in his painting, he uses alternative methods that result in a unique fusion of intensely saturated patinas onto the bronze.

Brilliant streaks of blues and greens enrich the grooves of an ear, while the natural shadow of an eyelid is intensified by the deepening of rich black patinas. Combining his ability to manipulate the patination process and his focused enthusiasm for surface gradations - Smit's avant-garde approach to the medium has allowed him to consistently push the envelope.

Smit continues his visual and tactile exploration of hybrid identity and its ever changing and emerging nature within South Africa's psycho-social landscape. While retaining all their austerity and peaceful aesthetic, Smit's figures remain highly charged with the emotive and gestural energy of his creative process.

Based in Somerset West, Cape Town, Smit's process as an artist today remains adaptive, inventive, and physically engaging. Through this he has achieved success all over the world including sell-out exhibitions in London and Hong Kong. His work continues to inspire and captivate the minds of art novices and experts alike from Europe to America.

Smit's painting has been exhibited at the National Portrait Gallery in London where it received the Viewer's Choice Award, as well as selected as the 'face' of the BP Portrait Award 2013 for all campaigns. In recent years he has also been honoured with a Ministerial Award from the Department of Culture for Visual Art. A highlight of his career has been the publication of one of his paintings on the cover of Christie's Auction Catalogue. In June 2016, Smit, in collaboration with Cynthia-Reeves Gallery, installed a public art installation, *Morphous*, in Union Square, New York.

Over the past 10 years he has established a substantial international following with collectors ranging from the Standard Chartered Bank to Laurence Graff Art Collection at Delaire Graff Wine Estate.

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SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2021 Prelude, Everard Read, London, UK
Discrepancies, Uitstalling Gallery, Ghent, Belgium
- 2020 Suspended, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa
Verso, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
Reposition, Uitstalling Gallery, Ghent, Belgium
- 2019 Destructure, Everard Read, London, United Kingdom
Manipulated Image, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2018 Obscura, Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami, USA
Divide, Art|Life Gallery, Los Angeles, USA
- 2017 State, Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
Emerge, M Contemporary, Sydney, Australia
Faces of Identity, Everard Read, London, UK & Didrichsen Art Museum, Helsinki, Finland
Premise, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2016 New Work, Rook & Raven Special Project Space at Armory Art Fair, New York, USA
Didrichsen Art Museum, Helsinki, Finland
Morphous, installation in Union Square, New York, USA
Echo, Cynthia-Reeves Gallery, Massachusetts, USA
Trace, Rook & Raven, New York, USA
- 2015 FNB Joburg Art Fair, Everard Read booth, Johannesburg, South Africa
Close/ Perspective, Everard Read Johannesburg, South Africa
Origins, Rook & Raven, London, UK
Recurrence, M Contemporary, Sydney, Australia
Obscura, Everard Read Cape Town, South Africa
Accumulation of Disorder installation, Independent Art Projects, MASS MoCA Campus, USA
- 2014 Morphous, CIRCA, Johannesburg, South Africa
Cumulus, Rook & Raven, London, UK
Conronym, Cat Street Gallery, Hong Kong
- 2013 Art Miami Fair, featured artist, Cynthia Reeves, Miami, USA
IS Sculpture, IsArt, Tokara, Stellenbosch, South Africa
Strarta Art Fair, Saatchi Gallery, Rook & Raven, London, UK
Fragmented, Rook & Raven, London, UK
- 100 Accumulation, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
Wonder Works Exhibition, The Cat Street Gallery, Hong Kong
- 2012 Compendium, 34FineArt, Cape Town, South Africa
Strata, Rook and Raven, London, UK
- 2011 Surface, Artspace, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2010 Submerge, 34FineArt, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2009 Relate, Grande Provence, Franschhoek, South Africa

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2021 Summer, Everard Read, London, UK
In Conversation, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
Offering, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa
- 2020 Bronze, Steel, Stone & Bone, Everard Read, London, UK
Staring Straight to the Future, online exhibition, Everard Read, UK & South Africa
Masterpiece online, with Everard Read, London, UK
Odyssey, online exhibition, Everard Read, UK & South Africa
Imago, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa
- 2019 Winter, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
Art Central Fair, with M Contemporary, Hong Kong
CONTEXT Art Miami, with Everard Read, Miami, USA

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- 2018 Winter, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
Sydney Contemporary, with M Contemporary, Sydney, Australia
- 2017 Exposed, Helen Day Art Center, Vermont, USA
Art Miami, Cynthia-Reeves Gallery, Miami, USA
Art Central, M Contemporary, Hong Kong
- 2016 Opening Gallery Exhibition, Everard Read London, UK
Investec Cape Town Art Fair, Everard Read booth, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2015 Bronze, Steel & Stone, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
FNB Joburg Art Fair, Everard Read Gallery Booth, Johannesburg, South Africa
Art Miami Fair Featured Artist, Cynthia Reeves Gallery, USA
- 2014 Summer Season, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
Art Taipei, Cat Street Gallery, Taiwan
Fugitive Identity, Cynthia Reeves, USA
- 2013 BP Portrait Award Exhibition, Viewer's Choice Award, National Portrait Gallery, London, UK
Metal Work Public sculpture, Stellenbosch, South Africa
- 2012 Accumulation of Disorder, University of Stellenbosch Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa
Winter, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
Robert Bowman Gallery, India Art Fair, India
Joburg Art Fair, Everard Read Gallery Booth, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2011 34FineArt, ArtMonaco '11, Monaco
MOMAC, Group Exhibition, Roberta Moore Fine Art, England
- 2010 Out of the Office, Kunstmuseum Bochum, Germany
Cynthia Reeves Projects, Art Miami, USA
We are not Witches, Saatchi Gallery, London, UK
- 2009 F.A.C.E.T., Charity Auction, Christie's, London, UK

AWARDS

- 2013 Visitors' Choice Award, PB Portrait Award, National Portrait Gallery, London, UK
Ministerial Award from Department of Culture for Visual Art, Western Cape Government, South Africa
- 2009 Merit Award, Vuleka, Sanlam Art Competition, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2008 Achievement Award, Pro Arte School of Arts, Pretoria, South Africa
- 2000 First prize in the MTN Art Colours Awards of Gauteng, South Africa
- 1999 Best painting student Pro Arte School of Arts, Pretoria, South Africa

SELECTED CORPORATE COLLECTIONS

- Delaire Graff Wine Estate, South Africa
- Ellerman Contemporary, South Africa
- European Investment Bank, South Africa
- Grainvest Futures, South Africa
- Johannesburg City Council, South Africa
- Johann Jacobs Museum, South Africa
- Laurence Graff Collection, South Africa
- Parkdev, South Africa
- Rand Merchant Bank, South Africa
- Saronsberg Wine Estate, South Africa
- South African Embassy, Nigeria
- Standard Chartered Bank, South Africa