

# EVERARD READ

## LIONEL SMIT

(b.1982 Pretoria, South Africa)

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 –often 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.

The artist's subject matter is consistent. The people he paints or sculpts possess a particular quality that appeals to his visual sensitivity. The sitter's face acts, quite simply, as a vessel for Smit's experimentation with colour, stroke and technique.

In recent years, he has continued to expand his sculptural repertoire, creating bodies as well as faces. In both cases, his treatment of bronze reveals it to be especially well suited to the translation of his painterly activities into sculpture. These works 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. Smit uses alternative methods that result in a unique fusion of these 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. The style is immediately reminiscent of his paintings. The patination process, focused enthusiasm for surface gradations and brushstroke-like quality of his sculptural crafting are all indicative of his consistently pushing the envelope.

While retaining all their austerity and peaceful aesthetic, Smit's figures remain highly charged with the emotive and gestural energy of his creative process. His making 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.

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. He was also honoured with a Ministerial Award from the Department of Culture for Visual Art. A highlight of his career was 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.

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## SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2024** *Form*, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2023** *Exposure*, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2022** *Interlude*, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa  
*Pendulum*, Uitstalling Gallery, Ghent, Belgium  
*Interlude*, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2021** *Prelude*, Everard Read, London, UK  
*Discrepancies*, Uitstalling Gallery, Ghent, Belgium  
*Suspended*, Everard Read, Franschoek, South Africa
- 2020** *Reposition*, Uitstalling Gallery, Ghent, Belgium  
*Verso*, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
- 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  
*Premise*, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2016** New Work, Rook & Raven Special Project Space at Armory Art Fair, New York City, USA  
Didrichsen Art Museum, Helsinki, Finland  
*Morphous*, installation in Union Square, New York, USA  
*Echo*, Cynthia-Reeves Gallery, Massachusetts, USA

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*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**

**2024** Winter Collection, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa

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- 2023** *What I Feel When I Think About the Cosmos*, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa
- 2023** Investec Cape Town Art Fair, with Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2022** Investec Cape Town Art Fair, with Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
- Spring*, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa
- 3D in 22: South African Contemporary Sculpture*, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2020** *Staring Straight to the Future*, online exhibition, Everard Read, UK & South Africa
- Masterpiece online, with Everard Read, London, UK
- The Portrait Show*, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
- Pink*, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2019** *Winter*, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
- Art Central Fair, M Contemporary, Hong Kong
- Context Art Miami, with Everard Read, Miami, USA
- ArtXLAGos, with Everard Read, Lagos, Nigeria
- 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

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- 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, 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**

# EVERARD READ

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