

HENK SERFONTEIN

(b. 1971)

Henk Serfontein is an award winning South-African artist. His work has received widespread acclaim and he was the winner of numerous art competitions, including the prestigious New Signatures Award. He holds a degree in Fine Art and has lectured on tertiary level. He has also published widely. He regularly contributes articles on art and popular culture to the online publication, Vrye Weekblad.

Henk Serfontein has participated in numerous curated exhibitions and presented 12 solo exhibitions in his career. Notable recent exhibitions include Winterslaap (Stellenbosch Art Museum), A Walking Shadow (Everard Read, Franschhoek) and The Topography of Skin (Uitstalling Gallery, Genk, Belgium).

Henk Serfontein came to prominence with his hyperreal paintings of nightscapes, featuring the marginal, transitory spaces of South Africa.

Throughout the past decade, Serfontein's abstracts explored similar themes and psychological spaces, questioning the space between European tradition and adventurous, unrestrained African aesthetic as he excavates his own identity: not quite African, not quite European. A deep, enduring attachment to the landscape pervades as an intersection of identity, culture and history.

Serfontein's Maputo Abstracts series relies heavily on confrontative colour as invoked by the ubiquitous capulanas (popular wax-printed cloths). His geometric compositions echo the art deco lines of the Mozambican city's buildings and ceramics.

Serfontein drew on his design sensibility in the creation of the 10m2 mosaic commissioned for Nando's Soho, produced in collaboration with Spier Arts Academy. Inspired by Matisse, Serfontein created this composition by cutting out replicas of his own existing artworks and rearranging them within highly irregular dimensions in a format reminiscent of landscape. Intrinsic to the concept is the relevance of the mosaic materials: included is stone endemic to South Africa, thus literally bringing the landscape to European soil, hence materialising the act of cultural export and intersection.

In Henk Serfontein's recent series of charcoal drawings, Fragile Flora, he continues his investigation into the fragile, the intimate and the ethereal. In his plant portraits he captures with his microscopic eye, indigenous plants with exposed roots in minute detail. Nature is rendered ethereal and glowing with inner light. These are portraits in the full sense of the word. It lends gravitas, dignity and grace to the sitter, and is imbued with compassion and curiosity. The work is submerged in the poetry of light and shadow but his vision is acute and goes beyond the photo realistic. It zooms in on the underlying chaos and astonishing beauty. Every mark and every erasure acts as a poetic investigation.

Henk Serfontein holds a degree in Fine Art (cum laude) from the Tshwane University of Technology (1997) and studied at the Cite Internationale des Arts in Paris, France (1997-1999). He has lectured art at tertiary level, adjudicated national art competitions and is an accomplished curator of exhibitions.

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS:

2024

Winter Collection, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa

2023

What I Feel When I Think About The Cosmos, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa

2020

A Walking Shadow, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa

2019

Winter Collection, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa

2018

Spring Exhibition, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa

2011

Urban Tension, Solo Exhibition, Galeria Alex Telese, Barcelona, Spain.

2009

Travelling the Margins, Solo Exhibition, Ilse French Fine Art Consultancy, Johannesburg

2002

Memorabilia, Solo Exhibition, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town

1997

Labyrinthe de mémoire et mythe, Solo Exhibition, Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris, France

1996

Labyrinth of Remains, Solo Exhibition, Karen McKerron Art Gallery, Johannesburg

1995

Henk Serfontein: Winner of The Reginald Turvey Painting Competition, Karen McKerron Art Gallery, Johannesburg

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS:

ABSA Banking Group, GENCOR, SASOL, Rand Merchant Bank, Pretoria Art Museum, Tswane University, British American Tobacco, Webber Wentzel, SPIER, Nando's United Kingdom. Private collections in South Africa, London, New York, Chicago, Berlin, Tokyo, Ireland, Amsterdam and Paris.

AWARDS:**2011**

Official invited resident artist at the Piramidon Centre of Contemporary Art, Barcelona Spain.

2010

Finalist in the International Guasch Coranty Painting Award, Barcelona, Spain.

1996

Official representative of South Africa at the Sixth International Cairo Biennale, Egypt with fellow artists Trevor Makhoba, Keith Dietrich and Gordon Froud.

1995

Winner of the SASOL New Signatures Art Competition.

1994

Merit Award, ABSA Atelier Art Competition. Winner of The Reginald Turvey Painting Competition.

1992

Winner of the Dr. I.F. Anderson award for most outstanding final year student, Tswane University. Presented with Silver Rectors Medal for outstanding academic achievement, Tswane University.

PRIVATE COLLECTIONS:

Pretoria Art Museum, University of Pretoria, Tshwane University, HOLLARD, British American Tobacco, GENCOR, ABSA Bank, SPIER, Nando's UK, Rand Merchant Bank, Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris