

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** *Permanence*, Everard Read, Franschoek, South Africa
Encounter, Kube, Uitstalling Gallery, Ghent, Belgium
Formed, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
Irreversible, Everard Read, London
- 2023** *Exposure*, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
Veil, KUBE Gallery / Uitstalling Art Gallery, Genk
Reflection of Self sculpture, Freedom Monument Sculpture Park, Legacy Museum, Alabama
- 2022** *Interlude*, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
Pendulum, Uitstalling Gallery, Ghent, Belgium
Collide, M Contemporary, Darlinghurst
Morphous sculpture permanent public installation at Kennedy Plaza, Rhode Island
- 2021** *Prelude*, Everard Read, London, UK
Discrepancies, Uitstalling Gallery, Ghent, Belgium
- 2020** *Suspended*, Everard Read, Franschoek, South Africa
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

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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

2024 Winter Collection, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa

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

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Spring, Everard Read, Franschoek, South Africa

3D in 22: South African Contemporary Sculpture, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa

2021 Art Düsseldorf, Uitstalling Gallery, Germany

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

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

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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

PUBLIC INSTALLATIONS

2023 Freedom Monument Sculpture Park, Legacy Museum, Alabama

2022 Kennedy Plaza, Providence, Rhode Island

2018 Grounds for Sculpture, New Jersey

2018 Sasol Head Quarters, Sandton, Johannesburg

2017 Exposed, Helen Day Art Center, Vermont

2017 Influx, Cynthia-Reeves, Rhode Island

2016 Union Square, New York

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

Delaire Graff Wine Estate, South Africa

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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