NIC BLADEN
(b. 1974 Pretoria, South Africa)

South African artist Nic Bladen is known for his extraordinary botanical sculptures, which demonstrate the technique he pioneered of casting entire plants in bronze and sterling silver. Born in 1974 in Pretoria, Bladen trained in the field of dental technology, a discipline that requires incredible precision and attention to detail. After working for eight years making gold and porcelain crowns in various dental laboratories in South Africa and the UK, Bladen developed an interest in sculpture and began working at the Bronze Age Foundry, learning large-scale bronze casting as well as all aspects of metalwork. Knowledge of the two seemingly different fields of dental technology and bronze casting precipitated Bladen's experimentations in 2001: casting flowers and leaves. In marrying the micro and macro disciplines, he pioneered a way of developing perfect castings of organic matter. His way of preserving/fossilizing plants and flowers involves a method known as 'lost wax casting' (or *cire perdue*) and it involves creating moulds from actual organic material, and then transforming these into once-off sculptures of entire plants.

Bladen's first solo exhibition, *Peninsula*, held at Everard Read, Cape Town in 2013, focused on the richness of botanical diversity that surrounds the artist's Simon's Town studio, which is situated within the heart of the Cape Floral Kingdom, the smallest yet richest of the world's six floral kingdoms. For this show, concessions from landowners on the peninsula enabled Bladen to harvest such rarities as a Blue disa and the endemic *Serruria villosa*, amongst others.

In 2015, Bladen worked as an Artist in Residence at Tswalu Kalahari, a private game reserve in South Africa's Northern Cape Province. The sculptures that he created during this time, a depiction of iconic, beautiful and strange Kalahari desert plants and trees, formed his second solo exhibition: *Kalahari: A season at Tswalu*, held at Everard Read, Johannesburg, in October 2015.

Several solo exhibitions at the Everard Read galleries both in South Africa and London have followed since, looking primarily at the spectacular and diverse plant families of the Western Cape.

Bladen's unique works can be found in the Standard Bank Art Collection, Ellerman House Cape Town, BMW and Oppenheimer Collections, as well as in many other prestigious private collections, both locally and abroad.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2026 Field Notes from Grootbos, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa
2025 Grootbos, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
2024 Hinterland: Botanical Explorations, Everard Read, London, UK
2022 Baskloof, Everard Read, Leeu Estates, Franschhoek South Africa
2021 Botanical Studies in Bronze & Silver II, Everard Read, London, UK
2020 Arid, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
2020 Proteaceae, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
2018 Botanical Studies in Bronze and Silver, Everard Read, London, UK
2017 Even at this unfavourable dry season, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
2016 New Works, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
2015 Kalahari: A season at Tswalu, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
2013 Peninsula, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2026 FNB Art Joburg, with Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
Winter Collection, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa
Art Paris, with Everard Read, Paris, France
Leigh Voigt & Nic Bladen, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
GreenPop Gala, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa
Directors Selection | September 2026, Everard Read, London, UK
Directors Selection | Cerulean Blue, Everard Read London, UK
2025 EXPO CHICAGO, with Everard Read, Chicago, USA
The Armory Show, with Everard Read, New York, USA
2024 Inner Sanctum, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
2022 Things I'd like to remember, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
3D in 2022: South Africa Contemporary Sculpture, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
Végétal - L'École de la beauté | Botanical - Observing Beauty, Palais des Beaux-Arts de Paris, France
2021 Spring Show, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
Myths, Martyrs, Monsters & Masterpieces, Everard Read, Leeu Estates, Franschhoek, South Africa
Oasis, 25th anniversary exhibition, Everard Read, Cape Town
2020 Offering, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa
ODYSSEY, Everard Read, South Africa & London, UK (Online)
IMAGO, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa
Us, Everard Read, South Africa & London, UK (Online)
2019 Masterpiece Art Fair London, Everard Read booth, London, UK
2018 FNB Joburg Art Fair, Everard Read CIRCA booth, Johannesburg, South Africa
2017 Off the wall: A group sculpture exhibition, Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
2014 Exact Imagination: 300 years of botanically inspired art in South Africa. Curated by Cyril Coetzee. The Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
Design Miami/Basel 2014, Southern Guild Collection, Basel, Switzerland
2012 Conversation Series, with Astrid Dahl, Jane Eppel and Katherine Glenday, Amaridian Gallery, New York, USA
SOFA (International Exposition of Sculpture Objects and Functional Art), with Amaridian Gallery, New York, USA
2011 Rare, joint show with Lisa Strachan at Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
Natural Selection, with Jane Eppel at Rust en Vrede Gallery, Durbanville, South Africa
2010 SOFA (International Exposition of Sculpture Objects and Functional Art), Amaridian Gallery, Chicago, USA
2009 Realisme, Art Fair, Amsterdam, Netherlands
2008 Group Exhibition at KZNSA Gallery, Durban, South Africa
2007 Greenhouse, group exhibition at Bell-Roberts Gallery, Lourensford, South Africa