

JOHN MEYER

*A Selection of Major Works  
from Private Collections*

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21 JUNE - 15 JULY 2017



*BORDERLINE (DETAIL)*  
2013  
mixed media on canvas  
110 x 138 cm



*ALL I DIDN'T KNOW (DETAIL)*  
 2007  
 mixed media on canvas  
 92 x 122 cm

## FOREWORD | *Charles Shields*

I have had the privilege of knowing John Meyer most of my life and being his dealer for more than half of it. Perhaps no one artist I have had the pleasure of representing has infused me more with a love of paint than he, for it is perhaps that single love affair that is at the heart of his enduring prominence as an artist. The magical properties of paint and his ability to conjure nuances with it, whether it be the way the light falls on a landscape, illuminating and spotlighting our mysterious world, or capturing the minutiae of musculature and attitude in humans so as to present enigmatic, suspended, yet living moments, is at the heart of his preoccupation with painting. This has haunted, inspired and propelled him as an artist for nearly 50 years to create some of the most memorable images to have graced our galleries' walls. Totally uninterested in fashion, Meyer has singelminedly wrestled with paint to do his bidding almost as if he found a worthy foe and accomplice in 1972, and there is not enough time in this short human life to fully exhaust the possibilities that the conundrum of the entanglement with paint has presented. Ironically, though Meyer's concerns appear to be an obsession with presenting reality, it is actually his preoccupation with manifesting his imagination as reality, that has won out. His success in this would suggest he is winning the tussle with paint. Many of the landscapes he paints do not exist, however intimately we feel we know them. This is his genius. They rather present his and our memory of landscape, and how it feels or might feel to be in these places. Similarly the human narratives throw out both observations and hypotheses of human relations. In this sense both his landscapes and human narratives are at once intimately recognisable, and yet a fantasy; real and surreal - probably because, when immersed in reality, it is difficult to be both in the moment and be witness.

It is with great delight that we are able to present this collection of work which really amounts to a serendipitous retrospective. John Meyer's exhibitions are always a highlight at our gallery inviting a great deal of immersion, discussion and admiration, for all the reasons I mention above, but also because, unlike the oft heard audience's lament. "I could do that myself", we feel when surrounded by his work that we unequivocally couldn't.

**LANDSCAPES**



CG HULLE  
2009  
mixed media on canvas  
114 x 153 cm



*DIEPKLOOF*  
2014  
mixed media on canvas  
75 x 104 cm



*BERG PATTERNS*  
2014  
mixed media on canvas  
75 x 104 cm



CHANGING SEASONS  
2014  
mixed media on canvas  
138 x 208 cm



HEADING HOME - CAMDEBOO  
1992  
mixed media on canvas  
80 x 110 cm



NEAR THE SWARTBERG PASS  
2004  
mixed media on canvas  
48 x 59 cm



*LATE AUTUMN, HEX RIVER*  
1994  
mixed media on canvas  
104 x 155 cm



*BORDERLINE*  
2013  
mixed media on canvas  
110 x 138 cm

**NARRATIVES**



*DREAMS OF THE CITY*  
2008  
mixed media on canvas  
113.5 x 151.5 cm



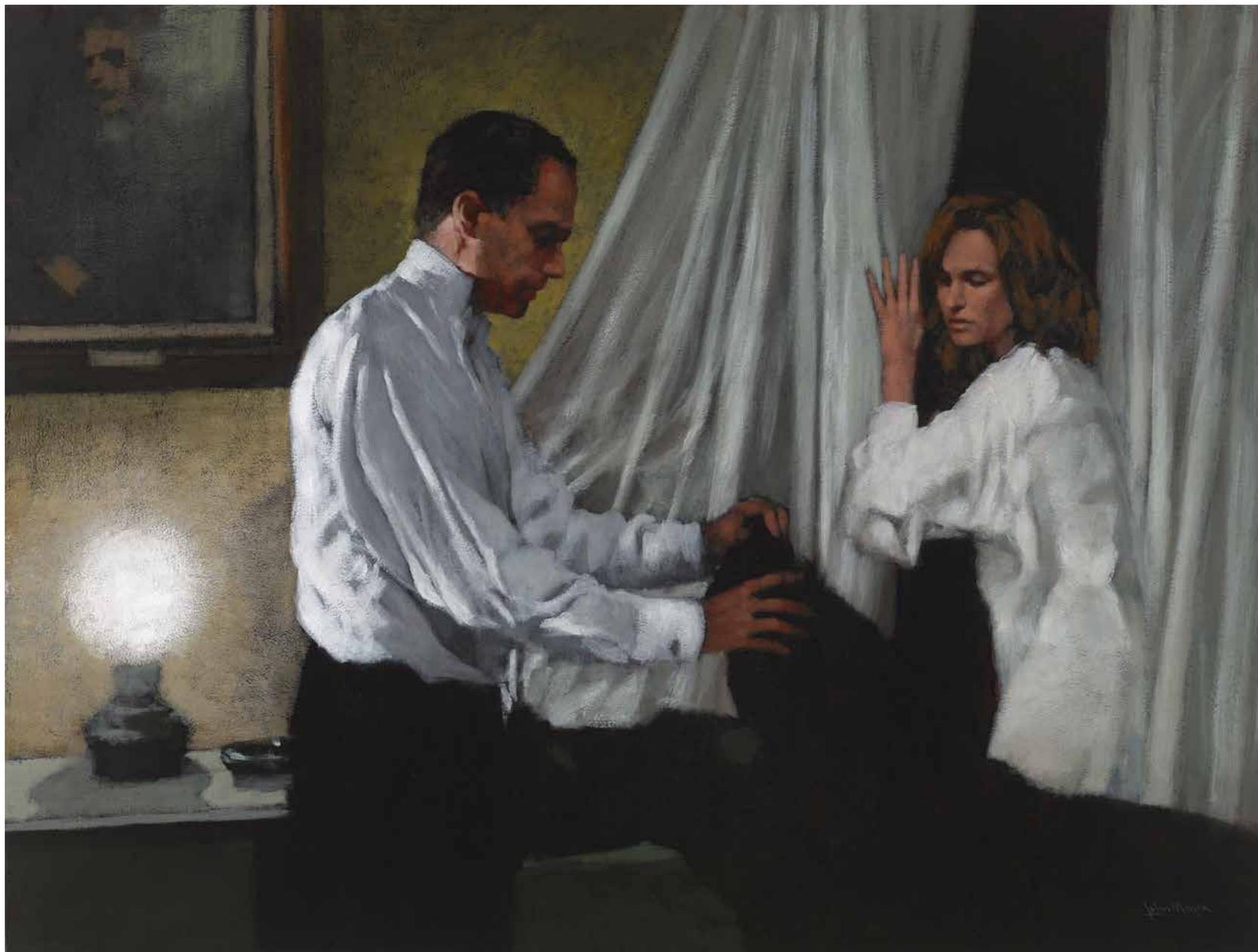
*ALL THAT IT MEANT I, II & III*  
2008  
mixed media on canvas  
76 x 92 x 3 cm each



ALL THAT IT MEANT III (DETAIL)  
2008  
mixed media on canvas  
76 x 92 x 3 cm each



THE SITUATION  
2017  
mixed media on canvas  
137 x 183 cm



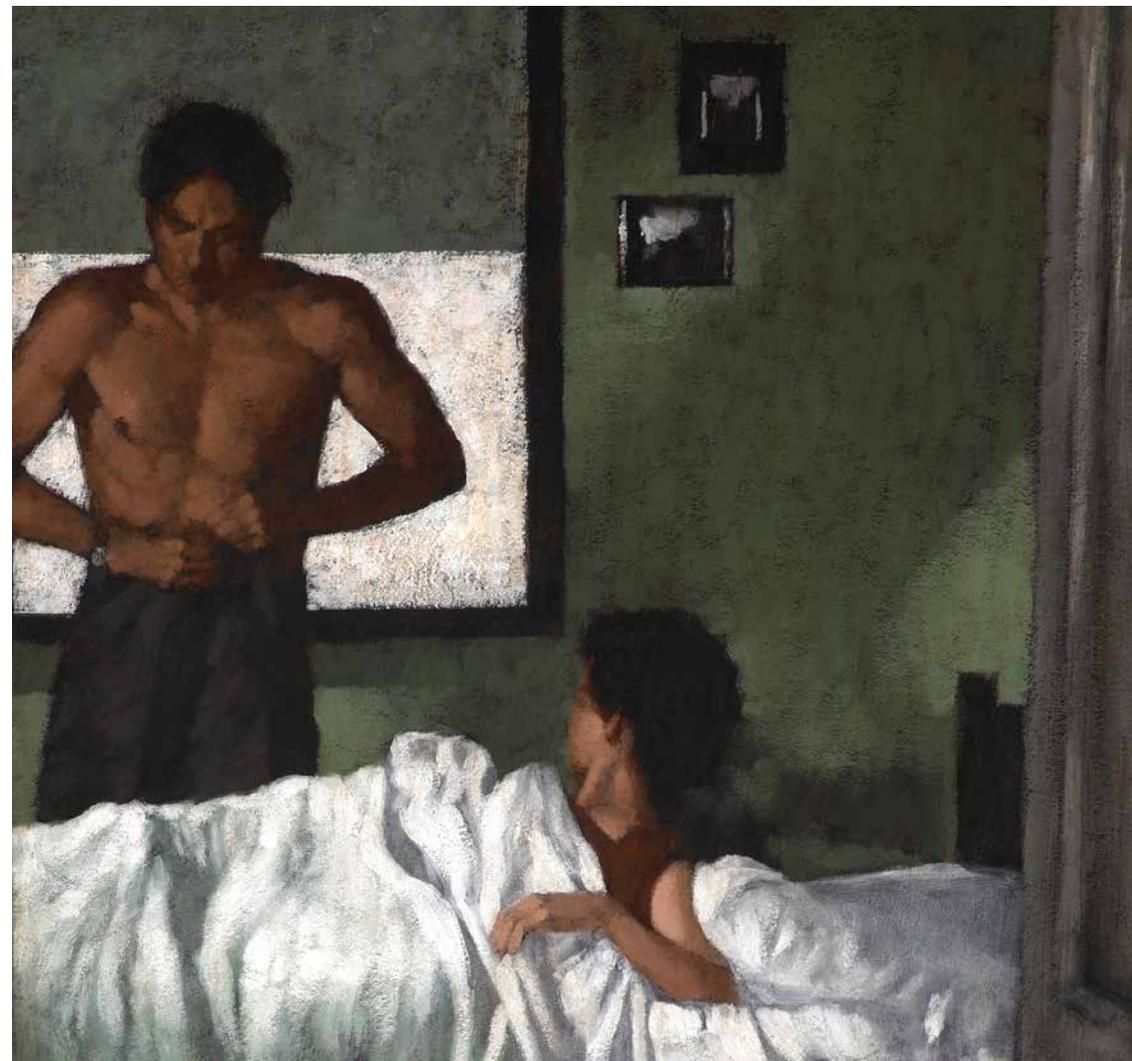
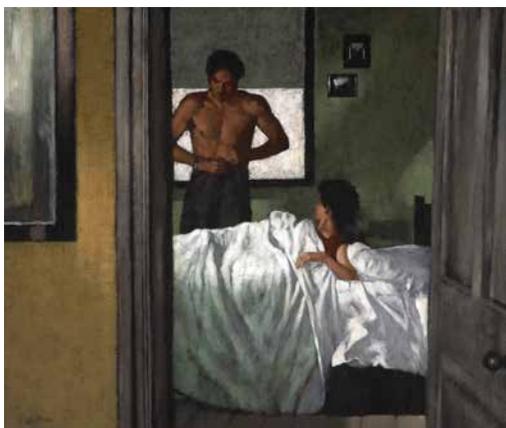
*ALL I DIDN'T KNOW*  
2007  
mixed media on canvas  
92 x 122 cm



*THE OTHER SIDE*  
2007  
mixed media on canvas  
92 x 76 cm



*THE SAME OLD REASON*  
2007  
mixed media on canvas  
76 x 92 cm



*NIGHT MEMORIES I, II and III*  
2007  
mixed media on canvas  
76 x 92 cm each



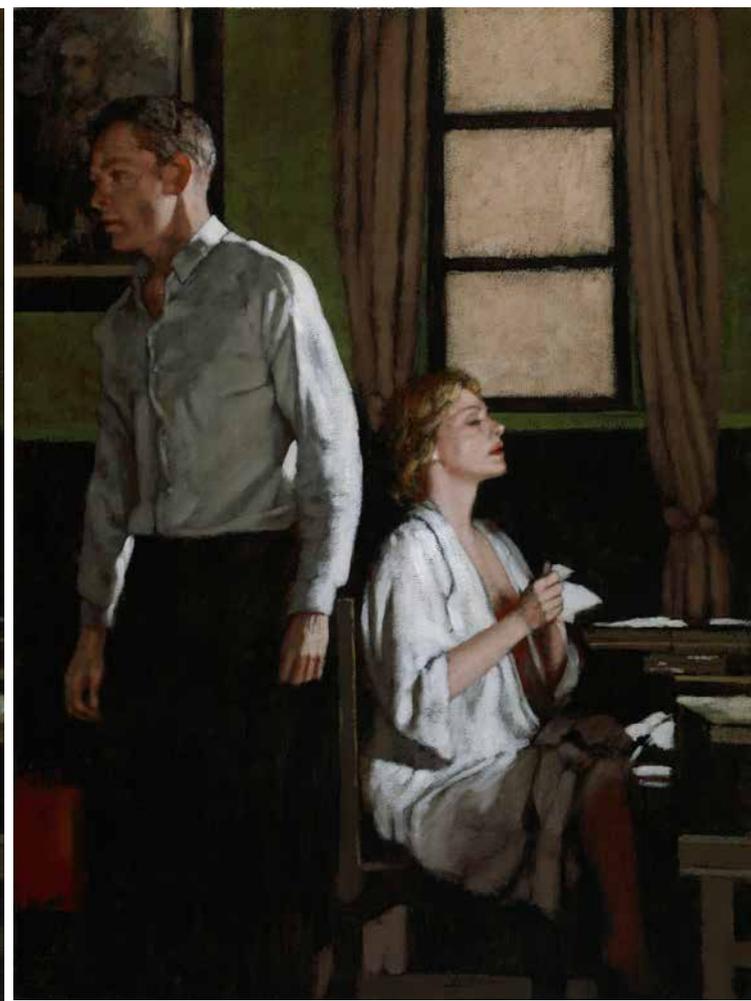
*IF ONLY I HAD KNOWN*  
2008  
mixed media on canvas  
114 x 152 cm



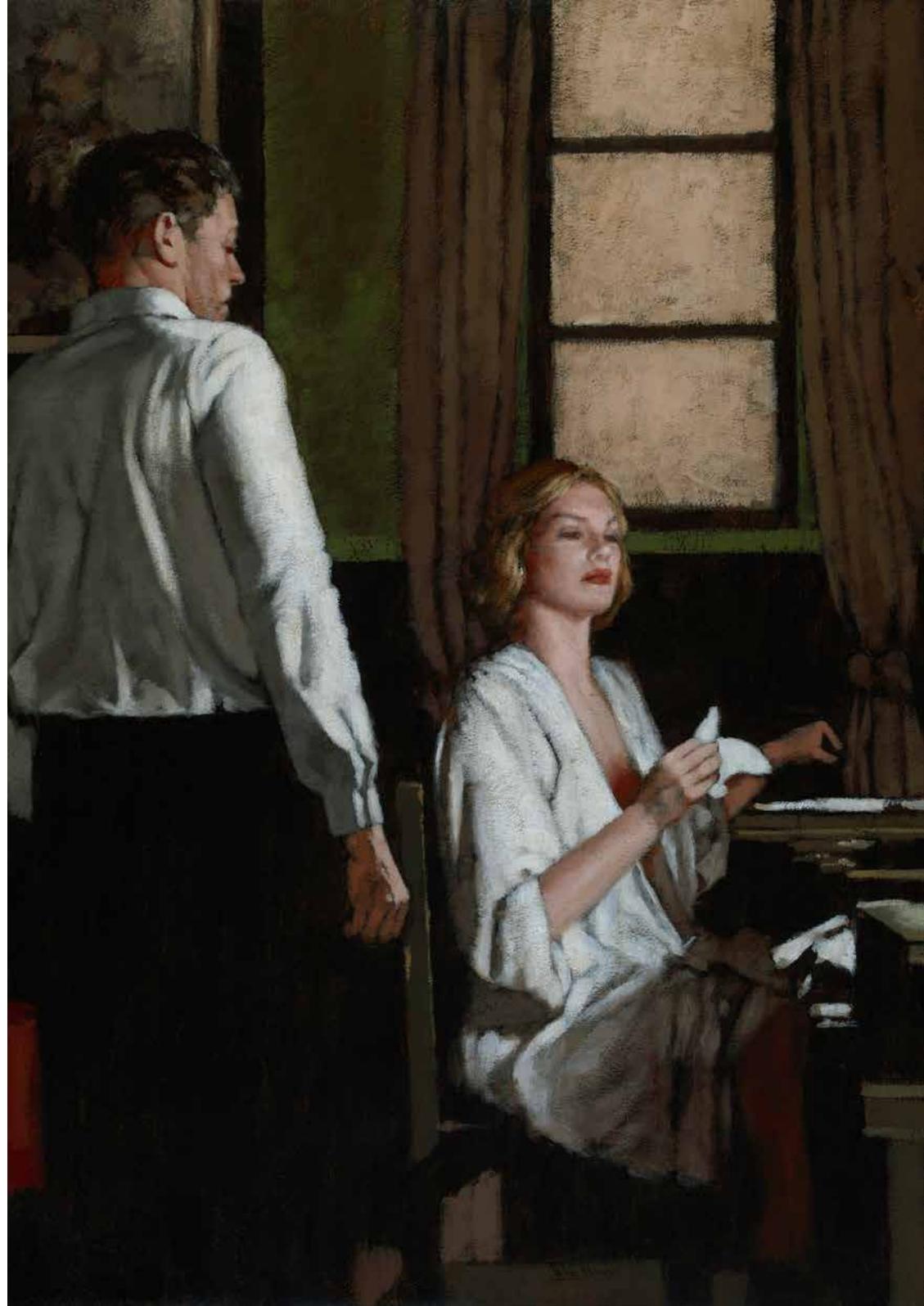
COME THE DAY  
2008  
mixed media on canvas  
76 x 92 cm



BEYOND DOUBT  
2007  
mixed media on canvas  
114 x 153 cm



SLIPPING AWAY I II & III  
2006  
mixed media on canvas  
102 x 76 cm each



SLIPPING AWAY I  
2006  
mixed media on canvas  
102 x 76 cm each



THE TEST  
2006  
mixed media on canvas  
60 x 50 cm

## JOHN MEYER

(b. 1942, Bloemfontein, South Africa)

John Meyer was born in Bloemfontein in 1942. He studied at the Johannesburg Technical College School of Art, before joining an advertising agency.

In 1967, Meyer settled in London where he carried on his studies in art while working as a freelance illustrator. He subsequently pursued an international career as an artist, best known for his portraits of distinguished personages in Africa, Europe and the United States.

Meyer is regarded as the leading figure in the Hyper-Realist movement in Southern Africa. Decidedly contemporary in his vision and a proponent of modernism in all its guises, Meyer has a considered commitment to representational painting. He is concerned with the complexities of visual perception and their solutions. His paintings are not mere representations of existing places and things, but exist as indelible retrospection, like total recall.

Meyer describes his paintings as being 'made.' Each layer of tension or emotion is built up over a mental and physical process creating a credible, charged and tangible event in each of his paintings. He presents us with strikingly real illusions, all distinctly familiar, yet ultimately invented. They are imagined archetypes rather than specific events. His most recent narrative genre, exploring the complex currents of human relationships, captivates his viewers. Few other artists inspire such commentary. Rarely are interpretations the same. Everyone has their own judgement and somehow the relationships continue to change with every inspection or even passing glance. There is fluidity, an evolving drama, a very real atmosphere.

He later developed 'Sequential Narratives', which reflect his interest in compositional interaction rather than conventional realism and display his traditional visual hallmark - a tight theatrical control of the painted surface. Meyer is a master of staging, plot and lighting and there is a quality to the paintwork that reinforces the themes of emotional ambiguity between the protagonists in the paintings.

In later years, John has been commissioned to do larger bodies of works for private collections and museums. These have focused primarily on significant times in history, as well as portraying notable historical figures. His *Lost In The Dust*, an exhibition about the Boer War - offered an intimate and compelling look at how war affects the lives of those swept up in it. The paintings weave history, imagination and narrative into a multi-layered realm that deals with the tragedy of war. They are at once compelling, delicate, emotional and foreboding. Most recently, he completed a series of paintings titled *Mandela: A Life's Journey* - which pays tribute to the life and times of the iconic South African leader.

John Meyer continues to paint full time at his studio in Cape Town, South Africa.

**ARTIST CV****SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS:**

- 2017 *Mandela – A Life's Journey*, Everard Read/CIRCA Cape Town & Johannesburg
- 2016 *Commissioned portrait of Queen Elizabeth II for her majesty's 90th birthday*, London
- 2015 *Lost in the dust*, Bonhams, London
- 2014 *Lost in the dust*, Everard Read, Cape Town & Johannesburg
- 2013 *My Country*, Everard Read Cape Town & Johannesburg
- 2011 *Solo exhibition*, O.K. Harris, New York
- 2009 Museum Schloss Gottorf, Germany  
*Involuntary Consequences*, Albemarle Gallery, London  
*Karoo Revisited*, The Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg
- 2008 *Conduct and Expectations*, Galerie Brusberg, Berlin
- 2007 *Truths Revealed*, The Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town & Johannesburg  
*Distant Lives*, Albemarle Gallery, London
- 2005 *Selected works*, The Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town
- 2003 *Selected works*, The Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg

**SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

- 2017 Everard Read/CIRCA, Cape Town at Cape Town Art Fair
- 2016 Everard Read/CIRCA, Cape Town at Cape Town Art Fair
- 2015 Everard Read, Cape Town at Cape Town Art Fair  
*Empire*, Everard Read, Cape Town
- 2014 *Summer*, Everard Read, Cape Town
- 2013 – 2014 *100*, Everard Read, Cape Town
- 2012 *Winter Show*, Everard Read, Cape Town
- 2011 *Everard Read*, Cape Town 15th Anniversary Exhibition  
*Horse*, Everard Read, Johannesburg
- 2010 *View from the South*, Everard Read, Cape Town  
*Summer 10*, Everard Read, Cape Town
- 2009 *The City*, Everard Read, Cape Town  
*Summer 09*, Everard Read, Cape Town
- 2008 *Summer 08*, Everard Read, Cape Town  
Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg

**BOOKS**

- Lost in the Dust / Verlore in Stof*, Everard Read Gallery
- John Meyer, A Retrospective 1972 - 2012*, Everard Read Gallery
- Art & Artists of South Africa*, Esme Berman (AA Balkema)
- Painting in South Africa*, Esme Berman (Southern Books)
- Artspeak*, Robert Atkins (Abbeyville Press, New York)
- John Meyer*, Brett Hilton-Barber (Prime Origins)
- John Meyer Sequential Narratives*, Brett Hilton-Barber (Prime Origins)

**CATALOGUES**

- John Meyer in Retrospect* (Everard Read Gallery 1983)
- Drawn From Nature* (Stremmel Gallery 1990)
- Eiteljorg Invitational 2* (Exhibition 1991)
- John Meyer Recent Paintings* (Everard Read Gallery 1991)
- John Meyer* (Everard Read Gallery 1996)
- John Meyer Sequential Narratives* (Everard Read Cape Town 2005)
- Distant Lives*, John Meyer (Albemarle Gallery 2007)
- Truths Revealed*, John Meyer (Everard Read 2007)
- Karoo Revisited*, John Meyer (Everard Read 2009)

John Meyer is featured in various collections nationally and internally and has been involved in multiple publications.



EVERARD READ

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