

# 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 swathes of colour that establish a base for the subsequently overlaid image of a face or bust. 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.

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.

## **SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS**

2025 In Studio, Everard Read, Cape Town, SA  
2024 Encounter, Kube / Uitstalling Gallery, Ghent, Belgium



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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, Franschhoek, 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  
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, Everard Read, 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  
Strata 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

2025 10 Years | Summer Show, Everard Read, London, UK  
Matter Matters | Artists & Their Media, Everard Read, London, UK

2024 Inner Sanctum, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa  
Winter Collection, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa



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110 Year Anniversary Exhibition, Everard Read, London  
Winter 24/25, Everard Read, London, UK

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

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  
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

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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  
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



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