

EVERARD READ

BEEZY BAILEY

(b. 1962 Johannesburg, South Africa)

“I am often asked what does that ship, or car, or high heel shoe mean. I am not an illustrator; I release the images that appear before me. Like Picasso, I say that it is not for me to explain the contents of my work; this is for the viewer to do. Each of my works is a frozen dream. Images & legends enter from my subconscious, the world of my imagination. I am a conduit of visual messages greater than me, at best a messenger from God, at worst a Fallen Angel.”

Beezy Bailey

Beezy Bailey is a South African artist who works in various media, including painting, sculpture, drawing, printmaking and ceramics. He has been a full-time artist for 30 years, with over 20 one-man shows in London, Johannesburg and Cape Town as well as numerous group shows around the world. He received a fine art degree from Byam Shaw School of Art in London in 1986, after studying two years of life drawing and then a third in printmaking, painting and sculpture. Bailey says he creates art “as a balm for a mad world – a corrective for our most lamentable human qualities, including a planet brutalized by extremes of wealth and poverty, environmental ignorance and negligence.” Many of his works emanate from his abiding concern with the Anthropocene, the present epoch characterized as the time in which the collective activities of Homo sapiens began to substantially alter the earth’s surface, atmosphere, oceans, and systems of ecological recycling.

Bailey has a history of close collaboration with other artists, including David Bowie, Brian Eno and Dave Matthews. In Brian Eno’s words: “Beezy makes his art out of joy and laughter (and sometimes out of terror). He is somebody to whom art comes easily and who doesn’t feel guilty about it, who revels in his gift and has confidence in it – like a chef gleefully throwing ingredients in by the handful without ever measuring them. He cooks up new worlds, tiny and huge, peopled by bird-women, snake-men, lizard children, and animated vegetables, bursting with bright new music. He makes African jazz in paint, garish as the midday sun, dark as the deepest night.”

Often Bailey’s works are accompanied by poems, such as the 2016 ‘1000 Year Dance Cure’, in which he exhorts the world to dance a new dance, to abandon that which does not serve us, and to embrace each other in our humanity, and the earth in her service to us. The sources of his imagery are elusive. In his own words: “Frozen dreams, images and legends enter from my subconscious, the realm of my imagination. I act as a conduit for visual messages greater than I am.”

Richard Cork, art historian, editor, critic and exhibition curator, says of Bailey, “Looking back over Beezy Bailey’s restlessly inventive career, we soon become fascinated by its defiant unpredictability. At every turn his work is filled with surprises and united above all by a fundamental urge to challenge the status quo.”

Bailey has been the driving force behind several art auctions benefitting various charitable institutions. In 2004, he organized ART 4 AIDS, an auction which raised over R1 million. In 2009, Bailey, along with Tara and Jessica Getty, organised the Art For Africa auction, held Sotheby’s in London. The auction presented for the first time a major offering of works by some of South Africa’s leading artists, alongside pieces by some of the foremost contemporary artists from the UK. The auction was held in support of two charities which fund and facilitate the care and support of orphaned and vulnerable children, the Africa Foundation and Ikamva Labantu. Beezy has exhibited in Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic and England, and has collaborated with a variety of artists from Brian Eno to David Bowie. His work is represented in several art collections, including the David Bowie Art Collection, the Getty Family Collection as well as the Oppenheimer Art Collection.

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SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

- 2021 The Love Revolution, solo, Everard Read, Cape Town South Africa
Double Vision, with Stuart Dodds, Gallery at Glen Carlou, Stellenbosch, South Africa
- 2020 Landing Stars solo Hermanus FynArts Festival Artist, South Africa
Investec Cape Town Art Fair, with Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
Masterpiece online, with Everard Read, UK
Staring Straight to the Future, online group exhibition in support of the Solidarity Fund, Everard Read, South Africa
- 2019 Solo accompanying the launch of his monograph at Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
Performance accompanying the launch of his monograph at Zeitz MOCAA, Cape Town, South Africa
Context Art Miami, with Everard Read, Miami, USA
- 2018 Light Beyond the Dark, solo, Everard Read, London, UK
Investec Cape Town Art Fair with Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
FNB Joburg Art Fair with Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2017 People & Portraiture, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
Summer exhibition, Everard Read, London, UK
- 2016 Opening Gallery Exhibition, Everard Read, London, UK
1000 Year Dance Cure, solo, inaugural exhibition of CIRCA Cape Town, South Africa
- 2015 The Sound of Creation: Sound Paintings by Beezy Bailey and Brian Eno, 56th International Art Exhibition, Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy
- 2014 Landscapes with a Twist, solo, Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
Itica Pritica, Beezy Bailey and Dave Mathews, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2013 As it is in Heaven, solo, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
Itica Pritica, two man show with Dave Matthews, Robert Miller Gallery, New York, USA
- 2012 As it is in Heaven, solo, Circa on Jellicoe, Johannesburg, South Africa
10,000 Trees Landscape, greening project for the Cape Flats, South Africa
- 2011 Icon-Iconoclast, solo, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
15th Anniversary, group exhibition, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2009 Dancing Christ, solo, Spring Art Tour, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
Sex Power Money, group exhibition, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2008 Being blown backward into the future, solo, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2007 Fallen Angels & Other Dreams, solo, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2006 A collection of 45 retrospective paintings were acquired by the Ojai Valley Museum, California, USA
- 2005 Solo, Everard Read Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2004 Solo, Everard Read Johannesburg, South Africa
Solo, Knysna Fine Art, South Africa
- 2002 Brian Eno project
Curated the "Art for Aids orphans" auction for November
Vanessa Branson commission - statues and mural in the UK
Ongoing exhibition of graphic works and water colours at the Art Factory and Shop
- 2000 Back to the Drawing Board, Pa Kua Gallery, Cape Town. One-person exhibition of ink-on-paper life drawings with live drawing performance on opening night
- 1999 Abakwetha - Farmer, Warrior, Statesman, Intervention, Parliament, Cape Town Part of a public sculpture festival to commemorate Heritage Day. The bronze statue of Boer War General Louis Botha outside Parliament was converted into a Xhosa initiate - wearing a traditional blanket and hat, face



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- painted with white clay. The statue's transformation received extensive international press and TV coverage
- Learning to Fly Again, Beezy Bailey Art Factory, Cape Town, South Africa
- 1998 Solo exhibition, Beezy Bailey Art Factory, Cape Town
Fabric of the People, street fashion show, Beezy Bailey Art Factory, Cape Town, South Africa
Beezy Bailey Art Factory and Shop, Opening in Cape Town, South Africa
Group exhibition, Augsburg, Germany
Driftscapes, Hänel Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- 1997 District Six Sculpture Festival, District Six, Cape Town, South Africa
- 1996 Through the Looking Glass, Jibby Beane Gallery, London, UK
- 1995 Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
Collaboration with David Bowie, London and New York
Exquisite Corpses, Chelsea Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- 1994 Vote for South Africa, South African Association of Arts Performance work to mark the first democratic elections in South Africa
A solo show of etchings produced in collaboration with various South African artists including Barend de Wet, Billy Mandindi and Norman Catherine
Touring print exhibition: Florida State University, USA
- 1993 Two Collaborations: South African Association of Arts, Cape Town. Beezy exhibited concrete sculptures made in collaboration with Koos Malgas (assistant to Helen Martins at the world-renowned Owl House sculpture garden in the Karoo) and painted photographs in collaboration with Adam Letch
The Incisive Eye, Group show, Arts Association of Bellville, Cape Town, South Africa
The Cape of Great Hope, Group show, Visual Arts Foundation, Johannesburg, South Africa
Made in Wood, Group show, South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- 1992 Landscapes, Exhibition with two artists at The Art Scene, Cape Town, South Africa
Market Galleries, Johannesburg, South Africa
South African Association of Arts, Cape Town, South Africa
- 1991 New Directions, group exhibition of sculpture, Center for African Studies and Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town, South Africa
- 1989 Artist in residence, South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- 1988 Harbour Paintings, One-person show, The Art Scene, Cape Town, South Africa
Introducing Beezy Bailey, solo show, Vanessa Devereux Gallery, London, UK
- 1987 Landscapes from France and Namibia, Exhibition with two other artists, Karen McKerron Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
Standard Bank Drawing Exhibition, group show, South Africa
- 1986 First solo exhibition, Art Show Gallery, London, UK
International Contemporary Art Fair Olympia, London, UK

COLLECTIONS

Beezy's work is represented in the South African National Gallery and numerous private collections in South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States including:

Absa, South Africa

Bidvest, South Africa

Bzw Bank London, London, England

David Bowie Art Collection, London, England

Durban Art Gallery, South Africa

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Getty Family Collection, USA

Investec, South Africa

Iziko South African National Gallery

Oppenheimer Art Collection, California, USA

Sasol, South Africa

Standard Bank Collection, South Africa