

EVERARD READ

SHANY VAN DEN BERG

(b. 1958 Riversdale, South Africa)

Specialising in contemporary portraiture and figurative work with a strong central theme of womanhood, Van den Berg works in oil paint on board and linen, mixed media on paper and perspex as well as sculpture.

After studying for a diploma in nursing for three years, Van Den Berg did a part-time ceramic course under Ralph Johnson at Paarl College in the 1980s, after which she worked as a ceramist for ten years. Van den Berg then studied life drawing and painting part-time at the Ruth Prowse School of Art in Cape Town in 1990.

Since then, van den Berg has been working as a full-time artist. In 2005 she was a finalist in 2005 in Sasol New Signatures and in 2009 and 2010 she was chosen as one of 50 finalist artists, out of more than 2000 applicants, for BP Portrait Awards show at the National Portrait Gallery in London. Shany has had a number of solo exhibitions from 1999 to 2019, the most recent at the Everard Read Gallery in London. She also participates in many groups shows, both locally and internationally.

Van den Berg's ethereal, sensitive oil paintings and artwork capture a mood reminiscent of contemporary mannerism and romanticism with a strong focus on womanhood. She succeeds in communicating the multi-layered emotions, ideas and modern concepts with a classical approach to portraiture and captures these ideas with a meticulous attention to detail, simplicity and subtle symbolism.

Shany van den Berg's body of works includes monumental oil paintings inspired by the Old Masters and many other art forms, such as music and poems. They are often portraits, primarily of women, whose features morph into a composite of the artist and her loved ones, serving as portals to an internal narrative of sacrifice, struggle and ultimately transcendence.

The references are delicate and ambiguous: a nude atop a gallery plinth is transposed from stone into flesh and blood, or vice versa; a sheet draped shroud-like across an ethereal form emerging from or entering an abyss; hands depicted in gestures of supplication, prayer, self-protection or release; a red scarf or fragile scarlet thread seeming almost to flutter across and beyond the canvas. In fact, the colour red serves as a recurring literal and symbolic refrain throughout this body of works. Alongside black and white, red is an archetypal hue, suggesting rites of passage, states of mind and in-between spaces.

A sense of layering pervades her works, both in terms of the imagery itself and van den Berg's painterly process. Despite their air-brushed appearance, the surfaces are built up of swathes, painted not onto the board but rather, absorbed into it. Shadows are imbued with texture and skins exude an almost viscous sheen. Although unmistakably feminine, some of her forms evoke a sense of animalism through their attenuated bone structure, and an underlying sexuality pervades many of the forms. They suggest recognition, confirmation and the bitter-sweet knowledge of love, loss and letting go.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2022** *Her Garden*, Everard Read, London, UK
- 2021** *nōs / ons*, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2019** *Dreampond*, Everard Read Gallery, London, UK
- 2018** *Fluisteringe vanaf n Leliepoel/ Whispers from a Lily Pond*, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa
- 2017** *(in)filtrationoftime*, CIRCA gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2015** *New works*, Gallery at La Grande Provence, Franschhoek, South Africa

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- 2012** *Hinterland*, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2011** *Siel van my Vel*, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2010** Solo, IS Art at Le Quartier Francais, Franschhoek, South Africa
- 2008** *in gesprek met*, Smelik & Stokking, Den Haag, Netherlands
- 2007** *..(h)erken...ken...en...*, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
gedagtes wat reis, My Own Choice Gallery, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- 2006** *dwaaltuin*, Grande Provence Gallery, Franschhoek, South Africa
- 2003** *construction site*, Limeline Design, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2001** *vlug in tyd*, Dorp Street Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa
- 1999** *my shadow, my echo, me*, Bang the Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2021** *Offering*, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa
- 2020** *On Being*, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa
Journeys of the Mind, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa
Toe ek 21 was, Toyota US Woordfees, Stellenbosch, South Africa
STILL, Everard Read, UK & South Africa
- 2019** *Selected Artists* curated by Trent Read, Knysna Fine Art Gallery, Knysna, South Africa
The Ampersand Foundation / 21 Year Celebration Exhibition/ A Vision of Jack Ginsberg, UJ Art Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
Southern Aspect, Everard Read, London, UK
Winter, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
Synchronous, Knysna Fine Art, Knysna, South Africa
- 2018** *Winter*, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2017** Investec Cape Town Art Fair, with Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
Winter, CIRCA, Cape Town, South Africa
People and Portraiture, CIRCA, Cape Town, South Africa
Summer, Everard Read, London, UK
Winter, Everard Read, London, UK
- 2016** *Opening Exhibition*, Everard Read, London, UK
Winter Collection, Group Show, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2015** *Fear & Loss* – Industrial Karoo Group installation, Pretoria Art Museum, South Africa
100 Years, Die Burger Artscape Group Exhibition Cape Town, South Africa
Summer Sculpture Garden Group Exhibition Mount Nelson Hotel Gardens, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
Homage, Group Exhibition, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
Winter, Group Exhibition, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2014** *Summer Season*, group exhibition, D-Street Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa
Fear & Loss - Industrial Karoo Group Exhibition, Oliewenhuis Art Museum, Bloemfontein, SA
Summer of Sculpture III, group exhibition, Mount Nelson Hotel, Cape Town, South Africa
Magicus, group exhibition, D-Street Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa
- 2013** *Cape Town Re-Imagined*, group exhibition, Suidoosterfees, Cape Town, South Africa
100, group exhibition, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
Universal Suffering, group exhibition, War Museum, Bloemfontein, South Africa
Femininity, group exhibition curated by Eva Roer, Germany
SAADA Antique Fair, Pier Rabe Antiques, Franschhoek, South Africa
Hiernamaals/Hereafter, group show, Slee Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa
Binnehemels, group show, Red, Black & White, Stellenbosch, South Africa

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- 2012** *Small Works*, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
A Summer of Sculpture, group show, Mount Nelson, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2010** Collaboration with Mogalakwena Art and Craft in Limpopo for Waterkloof Biodynamic Wine estate
- 2009** *The Great South African Nude*, Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
Sex, Power, Money, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2008** *Confluence*, a two-woman exhibition between China & South Africa, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
Art Fair Utrecht, Netherlands
- 2006** *Small works*, group show, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
Shany van den Berg / Strijdom van der Merwe, Grande Provence Gallery, Franschhoek, South Africa
- 2005** *Three*, trio, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2000-2** Shany van den Berg/Alex Hamilton, Bang the Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2000** *A Celebration of Art & Technology*, group show in aid of the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund, sponsored by Hewlett Packard

COMPETITIONS & PROJECTS

- 2019** Sanlam Portrait Top 40 Finalist 'Leah se Water' Rust-en-Vrede Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2016** BP Portrait Finalist, 'SELF' Portrait Gallery, London
BP Travel Award Shortlisted Finalist, Portrait Gallery, London
- 2013** Fellowship granted by the Ampersand Foundation, New York
- 2011** Bright Ideas Ceramic art / Light from Africa Foundation, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2010** BP Award Portrait Finalist, 'Bloedlyn/Bloodline Sannie en Leah', Portrait Gallery, London
- 2009** BP Award Portrait Finalist, 'Dit is ek Gladys' Portrait Gallery London
- 2008** Art exchange / Hubei Institute of Art, China
Artfair Utrecht / My Own Choice
- 2007** AAF Amsterdam / My Own Choice
- 2005** Sasol New Signatures / finalist
- 1990** Corobrick Ceramic Competition Cape Town / finalist

ART RESIDENCIES

- 2013** Fellowship to The Ampersand Foundation in New York USA
- 2007** Art Exchange Hubei Institute of Art in Wuhan Central China and Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2004** Community Arts Workshop where 10 artists from diverse walks of life exploring the first 10 years of democracy through individual and collaborative artworks
Everard Read, Castle of Good Hope in Cape Town, South Africa
- 1998** One of 12 artists, 6 from South Africa and 6 from Germany working together in Lauenberg, Germany.

COLLECTIONS

Works included in private collections in South Africa, London, France, Germany, Luxemburg, Caymen Islands and U.S.A