

# EVERARD READ

## **PHILLEMON HLUNGWANI**

(b. 1975 Giyani, Limpopo, South Africa)

Phillemon Hlungwani is recognised as one of the most accomplished contemporary artists now working in South Africa. Known predominantly for his large-scale charcoal drawings depicting scenes from rural life as well as formal and informal settlements, his work is rooted deeply in a sense of community and the traditional values that endure there. Many of his recent drawings include proverbs in his first language – xiTsonga – as titles. These proverbs are often difficult to translate into English but they communicate an essential moral idea – showing how members of a particular community are either sustaining or betraying the values of the people living there. The people are inseparable from their environment, although his more recent images have introduced colour into the clothing of his protagonists to help them stand out in all their vibrancy and humanity. The scenes he depicts are usually full of motion and life – the characters bursting with thoughts, opinions and yearnings, which are communicated further through the arcs and lines that weave the different parts of each drawing together. Everything is connected. There is no distinction between the internal or the external, the animate or inanimate, the material or the spiritual. As a boy, Hlungwani used to herd goats and cattle and look after chickens – and this relationship with the animal world is often present in his work. Trees were also a source of shade and food – both for animals and people – as well as providing places for community debates, ceremonies and prayer. Sometimes, as in the work titled *Vutlhari bya lava kulu ka hina* (The Wisdom of the Old People), trees embody and stand for the human – carrying in their roots and leaves and fruit all that has passed beneath them. Hlungwani is suggesting throughout his work that people who live in the simplest places with few possessions can still lead good, dignified lives and remain happy. They may have places to go and things to do, but they know who they are – where they have come from and where they are going.

Phillemon Hlungwani was born in Thomo Village, Giyani, in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. He attended Thomo Primary School and Hanyani Thomo High School, where he developed his skills under the guidance of his art teacher, motivator and friend Muxe Moses Mthombeni – and Queen Mtileni. Having attained an A for Art in Matric, Hlungwani studied at the Johannesburg Art Foundation before studying printmaking under the mentorship of Kim Berman, the late Nhlahla Xaba and Osiah Masukameng at the Artist Proof Studio. Hlungwani later completed a teacher's training course in Art at the WITS School of Art. He has since been based at the Artist Proof Studio, where he has facilitated classes, been a unit manager for papermaking and was the coordinator for community outreach and special projects at the studio. He has also worked in a range of advisory and mentoring projects. Sponsored by the prestigious Ampersand Foundation Fellowship, Hlungwani went on an extensive study tour of printmaking studios in the United States. In addition to his drawing and graphic work, Hlungwani has completed and facilitated many wall murals including the mural at the Standard Bank Art Gallery (for the Picasso in Africa exhibition) and the mural for Bell Dewar and Hall. He has also been commissioned by the JDA (Johannesburg Development Agencies), MTN and the South African Governmental offices. Awards include winning the King Korn competition (2000 and 2001) and the SABC Radio Station Munghana Lonene FM Log Design Award (2003). He was also one of the finalists for the Absa Gallery competition in 2001, 2002 and 2009.

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## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2023 Ku tirha hi matimba swa vuyerisa / Hard work pays off, Everard Read, London, UK
- 2021 A Wu Xi Tivi Lexi Nga Mbilwini Ya Mani, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa
- 2019 Ntsako Wa Xibelani, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2018 Nwansati wa matimba a nga heli mongo, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2017 Rirhandzu Ra Manana / The Love of Women, Everard Read, London, UK
- 2016 From Giyani to Alexandra, Everard Read, Johannesburg & Gallery at Grande Provence, Franschhoek, South Africa  
Online Christmas Collection, Everard Read Gallery, London, UK
- 2014 Mi Kondzo Ya Tinghawi/In the Footsteps of Heroes, Klein Karoo National Arts Festival, Oudtshoorn, South Africa  
Qunu Drawings, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2013 Cullinan Drawings, sponsored by Petra Diamonds plc, John Martin Gallery, London, UK
- 2011 Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa  
Knysna Fine Art, South Africa
- 2009 The Irma Stern Museum in Cape Town, South Africa  
Tshungulo wuyisiwa e mahlweni/ The Healing Process, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2008 Xitsonga l ndzuti wa Xigaza/The Tsonga is the Shadow of Xigaza, ABSA Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2006 The Gallery Premises, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2000 First solo, Soweto, South Africa

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2023 What I Feel When I Think About The Cosmos, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa
- 2023 Natural Habitat, 16 on Lerotholi, Langa, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2021 Spring Show, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa  
Offering, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa  
Oasis, 25th anniversary exhibition, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2020 The Portrait Show, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa  
Imago, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa  
Staring Straight to the Future, online exhibition, Everard Read, South Africa & UK  
TINY, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa  
Odyssey, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2019 Southern Aspect: A Group Exhibition, Everard Read, London, UK
- 2017 Reality Check, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa  
Winter Collection: Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2016 Opening exhibition, Everard Read, London, UK
- 2015 1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair, London, UK
- 2014 FNB Johannesburg Art Fair, South Africa
- 2013 Art 13 London, UK
- 2012 the 4th Edition of India Modern and Contemporary Art Fair, India  
The 21st anniversary celebration of Artist Proof Studio exhibition, Johannesburg Art Gallery, South Africa  
FNB Johannesburg Art Fair, South Africa
- 2011 FNB Johannesburg Art Fair, South Africa  
Horse, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2010 A View from the South, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa

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- 2009 ABSA L'Atelier Competition (finalist), South Africa  
Printmaking Council of New Jersey 'Studio Arrabbiata', USA  
Boston Art Academy, USA  
RENDEZVOUS, original lithography, an exhibition of more than 100 South African and French artists' artworks touring and exhibited in South Africa.  
Gallery on the Square, Nelson Mandela Square (Titled: 'The 50s: An Interpretation')
- 2009 Johannesburg Art Fair, with Everard Read & Artist Proof Studio, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2008 Knysna Fine Art, South Africa  
David Brown Fine Art, Johannesburg, South Africa  
Aspire Contemporary Art Gallery, Pretoria, South Africa  
Gallery on the Square, Nelson Mandela Square, South Africa
- 2007 Thomson Art Gallery in Melville, South Africa  
SASOL, Rosebank, South Africa
- 2006 Gallery on the Square, Nelson Mandela Square, South Africa  
Spark Gallery, South Africa  
Art on Paper, South Africa  
UJ former RAU Gallery, South Africa
- 2005 Touring exhibition to the Gulf of Oman, UAE
- 2003 Johannesburg Art Gallery, South Africa
- 2000 Polokwane Art Museum, South Africa  
Heritage Day for Arts and Culture Exhibition in Belgium
- 1997 Polokwane Art Museum, South Africa

## SELECTED COLLECTIONS

Ascot Diamonds  
Bell, Dewar and Hall, Johannesburg  
Bidvest  
BLP Merchandising Solutions  
Brait,  
Centurion Hotel, Pretoria  
Ellerman House, Cape Town  
Irma Stern Museum (UCT) , Cape Town  
Johannesburg Development Agency  
Karoo Hotel outside Cape Town  
Medscheme Holdings  
MTN print exchange  
Nando's  
Nedbank, Johannesburg  
Norman Borlaug Institute for International Culture, Texas  
Raphael Suites and Michelangelo Towers, Sandton  
Rand Merchant Bank Corporate Collection  
Sasol Collection  
South African Reserve Bank  
Standard Bank Art Gallery, Johannesburg  
UNISA Art Collection  
Vodacom