



NIC BLADEN

*Botanical Studies in Bronze and Silver*



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27 April – 30 May 2018

EVERARD READ  
LONDON





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The Cape Floral Kingdom is the ecological jewel of South Africa. Over 10 000 species of plants eking out a living on minerally depauperate gravel crammed together in a minute area on the southern tip of Africa.

Delicate ephemerals, heavily spinaceous shrubs and hard-leaved members of the ericeae and proteaceae exhibit a bewildering array of adaptations to accommodate the desiccating winds of a long dry summer.

Seeds of many contain a sweet gift for ants that carry them to subterranean nests where they remain dormant until the chemistry from a cleansing fire permeates the soil, triggering a profusion of growth that has delighted plant lovers and botanists for centuries.

Nic Bladen is the world's finest botanical sculptor working today. With this collection of bronzes, all unique casts, Nic has celebrated the subtle and diverse beauty of the plants that grace his native Western Cape.

We are all the more sensitized to their extraordinary beauty given the indications that their home will be one of the globe's regions most affected by climate change.

Mark Read





*Orphium frutescens*  
bronze and silver on crystal base  
25 x 16 x 9 cm



*Crassula tetragona*  
bronze on crystal base  
31 x 15 x 12 cm



*Lachenalia* Hybrid  
bronze on crystal base  
27 x 13 x 9 cm



*Leucadendron galpinii*  
bronze on crystal base  
33 x 15 x 15 cm





*Leucospermum muiirii*  
bronze on crystal base  
34 x 16 x 12 cm



*Leucospermum bolusii*  
bronze on crystal base  
42 x 22 x 17 cm



ABOVE AND LEFT (DETAIL)  
*Euphorbia mauritanica*  
bronze on crystal base  
53 x 20 x 18 cm





*Aloe tenuior*  
bronze and silver on crystal base  
48 x 24 x 13 cm



*Scabiosa incisa*  
bronze and silver on crystal base  
41 x 26 x 24 cm





*Cotyledon orbiculata*  
bronze on crystal base  
72 x 36 x 29 cm



*Zantedeschia aethiopica (arum)*  
bronze on crystal base  
55 x 37 x 27 cm



*Leucospermum erubescens*  
bronze on crystal base  
42 x 26 x 24 cm



ABOVE AND PAGE 16-17 (DETAIL)  
*Agapanthus africanus*  
bronze and silver on crystal base  
60 x 44 x 42 cm









*Leucadendron thymifolium*  
bronze on crystal base  
112 x 49 x 45 cm



*Euphorbia tirucalli*  
bronze on crystal base  
61 x 43 x 40 cm





*Sideroxylon inerme*  
bronze on stainless steel base  
178 x 46 x 44 cm



*Veltheimia capensis*  
bronze on crystal base  
58 x 27 x 26 cm



ABOVE AND RIGHT (DETAIL)  
*Crassula dejecta*  
bronze and silver on crystal base  
43 x 32 x 21 cm





*Leucospermum conocarpodendron*  
bronze on stainless steel base  
175 x 123 x 85 cm



*Aloe distans*  
bronze on crystal base  
35 x 20 x 17 cm



*Protea cynaroides*  
bronze on stainless steel base  
67 x 55 x 145 cm





## NIC BLADEN

b. 1974, Pretoria, South Africa

Nic Bladen has become known for his extraordinary botanical sculptures which celebrate the subtle and diverse beauty of the plants that grace his native Western Cape, South Africa.

Bladen trained in the field of dental technology, a discipline that requires precision and attention to detail. As his interest in sculpture developed, he spent time working in a foundry, learning large-scale bronze casting and other related aspects of metalwork.

Knowledge of these diverse fields of dental technology and bronze casting precipitated Bladen's experimentations in 2001: casting flowers and leaves. In marrying the micro and macro disciplines, he pioneered a way of developing perfect castings of organic matter. His method of preserving or fossilizing plants and flowers draws on the ancient lost wax method. He makes moulds from actual organic material, and then transforms these into unique sculptures of entire plants.

Bladen's first solo exhibition, *Peninsula*, at Everard Read Gallery Cape Town in 2013, focused on the richness of botanical diversity that surrounds the artist's Simons Town studio, which is situated within the heart of the Cape Floral Kingdom, the smallest yet richest of the world's six floral kingdoms. For this show, concessions from landowners on the peninsula enabled Bladen to harvest several rare species.

In 2015, Bladen worked as Artist in Residence at Tswalu Kalahari, a private nature reserve in South Africa's Northern Cape Province. The sculptures that he created during this time – a depiction of iconic, beautiful and strange Kalahari desert plants and trees – formed his second solo exhibition: *Kalahari: a season at Tswalu*, at Everard Read Johannesburg in October 2015. A 2017 collection of work was shown at Everard Read Johannesburg depicting the tenacity of Cape plants to flower, despite the harsh conditions endured during the current drought.

Bladen's unique works can be found in the Standard Bank, Ellerman House and Oppenheimer collections in South Africa, as well as in many other private collections around the world.

### SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

- 2017 '*... even at this unfavourable (dry) season ...*', CIRCA Gallery, Johannesburg  
*Summer Exhibition*, group show at Everard Read, London  
*Bronze Steel and Stone II*, group sculpture exhibition, Everard Read, London
- 2016 *Bronze Steel and Stone*, group sculpture exhibition, Everard Read, London  
*New Works*, Everard Read, Johannesburg  
*Opening Exhibition*, Everard Read, London
- 2015 *Kalahari: A Season at Tswalu*, solo exhibition, Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg
- 2014 *Exact Imagination: 300 years of botanically inspired art in South Africa*, curated by Cyril Coetzee, The Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg  
*Design Miami/Basel 2014*, Southern Guild Collection, Basel  
Guild Africa's First International Design Fair, V&A Waterfront, Cape Town  
Design Indaba (jewellery) CTICC, Cape Town
- 2013 *PENINSULA*, solo exhibition, Everard Read Gallery Cape Town
- 2012 *AMARIDIAN* Gallery, New York, Conversation Series, with Astrid Dahl, Jane Eppel and Katherine Glenday.  
SOFA (International Exposition of Sculpture Objects and Functional Art), New York  
Design Indaba (Jewellery), CTICC, Cape Town
- 2011 *Joburg Art Fair*, Southern Guild Collection  
Rare joint exhibition with Lisa Strachan at Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town  
Sculpture and Ceramics group show at Kalk Bay Modern Gallery, Cape Town  
*Natural Selection* joint show with Jane Eppel at Rust en Vrede Gallery, Durbanville
- 2010 Design Indaba (jewellery), CTICC, Cape Town  
*In Bloom*, group show at Casa Labia Gallery, Muizenberg  
SOFA (International Exposition of Sculpture Objects and Functional Art), Chicago  
SOFA, New York  
*Heems*, group show curated by Hanneke Benade at Kruisrivier Farm, Calitzdorp  
*Tretchikoff and Me*, group show curated by Andrew Lampbrecht at Salon 91 Gallery, Cape Town
- 2009 *Realisme*, Art Fair, Amsterdam  
*Cast in Africa*, 3 person show at Focus Contemporary, Cape Town (with Ian Cattanach and Strijdom van der Merwe)  
*Angels IV*, annual summer group exhibition at Grande Provence Gallery, Franschhoek
- 2008 Design Indaba (jewellery) CTICC, Cape Town  
*3-person show* at Grande Provence Gallery, Franschhoek (with Marieke Prinsloo and Mary Visser)  
*Group Exhibition* at KZNSA Gallery, Durban  
*Movement to Light*, group show at Amaridian Gallery, New York
- 2007 Design Indaba (jewellery), CTICC, Cape Town  
Cape Orchid Society's 50th Anniversary Show, CTICC, Cape Town  
*Greenhouse*, group exhibition at Bell-Roberts Gallery, Lourensford
- 2006 *Group exhibition* at Chelsea Gallery, Wynberg



FRONT COVER (DETAIL)

*Leucospermum conocarpodendron*

bronze on stainless steel base  
175 x 123 x 85 cm

INSIDE FRONT COVER (DETAIL)

*Agapanthus africanus*

bronze and silver on crystal base  
60 x 44 x 42 cm

INSIDE BACK COVER (DETAIL)

*Leucospermum erubescens*

bronze on crystal base  
42 x 26 x 24 cm

BACK COVER

*Crassula dejecta*

bronze and silver on crystal base  
43 x 32 x 21 cm

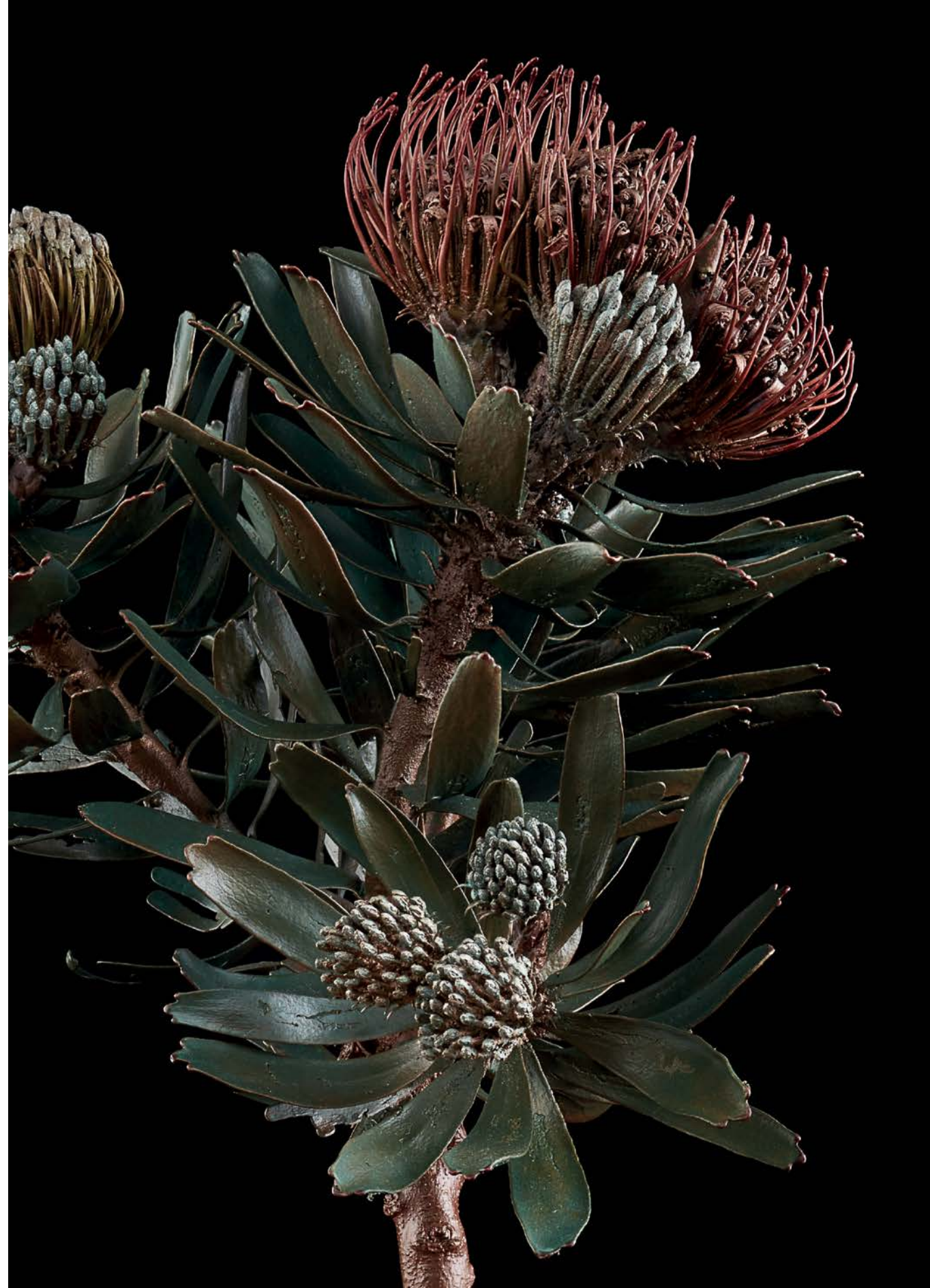
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