

PRESS RELEASE: *For immediate release, December 2019*

**Everard Read London presents
Sasha Hartslielief: *Nocturne***

29 January – 22 February 2020

Everard Read London presents *Nocturne*, a solo exhibition of new oil paintings by South African artist, Sasha Hartslielief.

Hartslielief's art is primarily of "emotional and physical observation that embraces shadowy evanescence and revels in the evocative sensuality of the female form", wrote journalist and arts writer Hazel Friedman, in Sasha Hartslielief's catalogue for her 2009 exhibition at Everard Read Cape Town. "The women ... in Hartslielief's canvases exude an aura of ineffability. They are delicate and dark," she continues.

Friedman's essay was subtitled "line, light and paint" and indeed, in Hartslielief's latest collection of works, light itself is the protagonist. Whether the soft, milky light of dawn filtering through a window, or flickering candlelight on a table set for dinner, the light illuminates a fleeting moment - a woman dressing, bathing or gazing out a window - infusing an everyday moment or ritual with poignancy. Hartslielief uses brushstrokes to evoke the transience of light, colour and movement and each painting is as much a formal study in light, contours and line as it is an evocation of nuance. And she uses light to draw our attention to these ephemeral moments in our own lives, and to help us find beauty in them.

"I am drawn to paint the light at lost and forgotten parts of the day, to capture the contrast between a cool, white wall in the evening and the elusive warmth spilling out from a window, to depict the almost tactile sense of edges that are lost in the shadows and emerge crisply into the light," says Hartslielief.

Many of Hartslielief's scenes capture the intimacy of the home – a place where we can retreat from the world and our various roles and responsibilities. "Home tends to reflect our inner preoccupations and dominant moods" says Hartslielief. "We perceive this in the quiet, contemplative poses of her figures, who seem absorbed in their daily tasks and their own subjectivity. The resonant scenes in this exhibition may be an

externalisation of the interior, but they open a window for personal interpretation, coloured by our own thoughts, backgrounds and feelings.

“There is a kind of grace,” Hartslielief muses, “in those rare moments when one is entirely alone, lost in the moment and innocent of any inner dialogue. Ironically these are often moments of the greatest sense of connectedness with others.”

This isolation of the artist, working alone in her studio, gives Hartslielief perspective to reflect deeply on lived experience, granting a sense of shared preoccupations with others. This appreciation comes from the rich inner world of the artist who, privately in her work and away from social demands, reflects on her experiences of engaging with the outside world. She suffuses her paintings with light, it seems, to enhance the sense of underlying connection with others which comes from these periods of contemplation.

Everard Read has represented Sasha Hartslielief for twenty years. This is her second solo exhibition with Everard Read London.

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About Everard Read London

Everard Read galleries are specialists in contemporary art from South Africa and the diaspora.

Established in 1913 in Johannesburg, we are Africa’s oldest and one of its largest commercial art galleries with gallery spaces in London, Johannesburg, Cape Town and Franschhoek.

The galleries each present a year-round programme of solo and group exhibitions, advise both public and private collectors around the world and have an ongoing commitment to nurturing South African talent.

South African artists are part of the global conversation. We seek to make their voices heard.

Everard Read London is located at 80 Fulham Road, London SW3 6HR and is open weekdays, 10am – 6pm and Saturdays, 12pm – 4pm. www.everardlondon.com

About Sasha Hartsliet

(b. 1974 Gauteng, South Africa)

Passionate about drawing from an early age, Sasha Hartsliet is largely self-taught. Hartsliet's subjects are often viewed from a philosophical, deeply personal perspective, resulting in paintings that are emotionally charged, pensive in mood and considered in composition. Her subtle investigations into the human condition somehow strike a chord with us.

Hartsliet uses brushstrokes to evoke the transience of light, colour and movement. And like her Renaissance and Impressionist forebears, she employs everyday visual devices to explore the way in which atmospheric light and tonal modulations inform a surface, and to evoke atmospheres fraught with symbolic subtexts. But the transience of the captured moment is counterbalanced by the disciplined rigour of Hartsliet's technique and painterly process. She admits to being "obsessively skills-driven and consumed" by her work. Each image becomes a formal study in light, contour and line.

"In choosing my subject matter, I can become fascinated by something as inchoate as a mood, or specific as a visual concept," says Hartsliet. "In general, my ideas are more emotive and pictorial than intellectual. I never start out with an abstract idea and then try to attach an image to it, but sometimes I am haunted by a certain mood or visual concept, and I will explore it from many angles before it releases me. Just as often, though, I have many disparate ideas for which the only common thread is that they all arise from a striking visual moment, which arrests my attention and demands to be painted."

Hartsliet explains further, "I try not to label myself as an impressionist, a realist or any such thing, although I believe a person's style of painting is as peculiarly their own as their manner of speech or the cast of their features. Similarly, I find myself deeply drawn to the works of many artists as demonstrations of uninhibited mastery, but I believe that no artist should focus exclusively on one particular medium or style of painting when looking for inspiration. When the painting is done, it is, in a sense, just as mysterious to me as anyone else, for it often contains allusions and cadences which I had never intended. People often ask me the meaning of my paintings, they want to know what a particular painting is "about", but I would never want to limit the viewer's experience with anything as closed and final as an artist's intention or a

particular narrative. Even though each painting depicts something objective, I feel that there is a mutable dimension buried in the light and mood which will strike each person differently, and that open element of interpretation is part of the joy of painting for me.”

Since 1999, Hartsliel has exhibited regularly at the Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, including several solo exhibitions. She continues to attract a broad collector base from around the world and is one of South Africa’s most accomplished young talents.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2019 New Works, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa

- 2018 Interiors, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
Aura, Everard Read, London, UK

- 2016 Sasha Hartsliel: New Works, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa

- 2013 Hartsliel - New Works, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa

- 2012 Sasha Hartsliel, New Works, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa

Solo Exhibition, Rosendahl, Thöne & Westphal, Berlin, Germany

- 2011 Recent Works, Everard Read, Cape Town

- 2009 Sasha Hartsliel : New Works, Everard Read, Cape Town

- 2007 Solo Exhibition, Everard Read, Cape Town

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2017 People & Portraiture, Everard Read CIRCA Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

2016 Nocturne, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

2015 Summer in the City, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

Homage, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

WINTER, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

EMPIRE, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

2014 Summer Season Part I, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

Winter, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

2013 100, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa