

**PRESS RELEASE:** *For immediate release, January 2020*

**Everard Read London Presents**

***BRONZE, STEEL, STONE AND BONE***

28 February – 28 March 2020

DEBORAH BELL | NIC BLADEN | ARABELLA CACCIA | WILMA CRUISE | GUY DU TOIT | CHONAT GETZ |  
PERCY KONQOBE | BECKWITH KRAFT | JOP KUNNEKE | WILLIAM PEERS | LIONEL SMIT | ANGUS TAYLOR |  
FLORIAN WOZNIAK

Everard Read London presents the fourth of its “bronze steel and stone” exhibitions – a survey of contemporary sculpture from South Africa and, in this edition, shown alongside work by a marble sculptor from Britain. From the very small to the monumental, the sculptures are created in seductively smooth or textured bronze, polished granite, Portuguese marble, burnished steel and carved bone.

Showcasing the work of a dozen artists, the exhibition aims to represent a plurality of practices currently occurring in South Africa. While the exhibition encompasses abstraction, most notably William Peers’ and Arabella Caccia’s organic forms that echo the recurring patterns in nature, at the exhibition’s core is a survey of figurative work in all its forms - from the pathos of Wilma Cruise’s diminutive baboons adrift in a *mokoro*, to Deborah Bell’s still, silent and seemingly ancient figures; from Guy du Toit’s whimsical, spirited hares to Percy Konqobe’s mythical *Owl Princess*, her pale-patinaed face tilted skywards like a full moon. Inferential rather than declarative, their art owes more to the allusive, enigmatic and the metaphoric.

Also included in the exhibition are Beckwith Kraft’s meticulously carved buffalo and cow skulls - contemporary *memento mori* that honour these majestic beasts of Southern Africa. Lionel Smit’s timeless portraits of mixed heritage women and Florian Wozniak’s tender female nude exude a certain dignity and serenity while Jop Kunneke’s jaunty hound dogs are captured howling and scratching.

Chonat Getz' sculpture explores the age-old horse and rider tradition with lively renderings in bronze of *Lady Godiva*, *Don Quixote* and *Alice Meynell* (who is credited with being the first woman jockey in Britain.)

Nic Bladen's delicate botanical sculptures immortalise indigenous species from the rich and diverse floral kingdom on the southern tip of Africa, while Angus Taylor's meditative bronze bust carries its load of dolomite, hematite and black chert, echoing the layers of ancient rock found in the earth's crust.

The sculptures assembled in this exhibition represent a range of practices, philosophies and voices. Landmarks in space, they are eloquent transmitters of human experience. And these still, silent objects invite us to stop, contemplate and reflect – things we do increasingly less of in our hurried lives.

For more information, please contact: info@everardlondon.com, +44 (0)207 590 9991

## **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](http://www.everardlondon.com)

[@everard\\_read\\_london](https://www.instagram.com/everard_read_london)

## Artist Biographies

### Deborah Bell

#### (b. 1957, South Africa)

Deborah Bell is one of South Africa's most celebrated contemporary artists. She works in a range of media on canvas and paper, produces dry point etchings and large-scale bronzes. Bell has collaborated on various historically important projects with contemporaries such as William Kentridge and Robert Hodgins. Her earlier more political work has given way to a broader, deeper investigation into the border between mortality and immortality, matter and spirit, presence and absence, the quotidian and the mythic, the grounded and transcendent. In recent years she has developed an immediately recognisable visual language, her images simple, stark, symbolic – grounded, silent, still and poised.

### Nic Bladen

#### (b. 1974, 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 has pioneered a way of developing perfect castings of organic matter to preserve or fossilize plants and flowers. Using the ancient lost wax method, Bladen makes molds from 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. In 2018, he had his first solo exhibition at Everard Read in London.

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.

## **Arabella Caccia**

**(b. 1965, London, UK)**

Arabella was born in London and grew up in Tuscany before moving to Johannesburg where she spent her teenage years. She then went to Edinburgh University after which she lived and studied in Florence, London and New York. She returned to South Africa in 1990 and now lives and works in Cape Town.

Arabella draws inspiration from the people, places and objects she loves. From the light where she lives and the wilderness where she goes to find peace and silence. The feeling of quiet and perhaps stillness in the work reflects the ambience she creates around her, in order to find inspiration and access her creativity.

"I firmly believe that the energy and focus put into making a work, a deep meditative concentration, produces work of honesty and integrity, with a powerful energy. It is the process which is of utmost importance." – Arabella Caccia

## **Wilma Cruise**

**(b. 1945, Johannesburg, South Africa)**

Wilma Cruise is a South African sculptor and visual artist. She works mainly with fired clay in her renderings of life-sized human and animal figures. Several of her ceramic sculptures have been successfully translated into bronze editions. Her sculpture installations and exhibitions are often accompanied by works on paper – large format drawings. She has also completed several series of print editions.

Themes explored in Cruise's work include the interface between humans and animals and existential conditions of muteness – silent, internal battles in the search for meaning.

Cruise has had over twenty solo exhibitions, curated others and completed several public works including the National Monument to the Women of South Africa at the Union Buildings, Pretoria and The Memorial to the Slaves in Cape Town.

Her work is represented in public, corporate and private collections throughout South Africa. She has participated in the Havana Biennale, the Florence Biennale and the prestigious 7th Gyeonggi International Ceramic Biennale in Seoul, Korea.

Cruise recently completed her doctoral studies at the University of Stellenbosch in the field of art and animal ethics. She is a fellow of Ceramics South Africa and writes extensively in the field of ceramics.

## **Guy du Toit**

### **(b.1958 Rustenburg, South Africa)**

"My objects come from my immediate environment, selected for their non-heroic, open-ended meaning. Bells, for instance, may refer either to slavery or liberty. My overriding concern is that of reality and illusion; the fusing of Western and African realities is somehow reflected in this ambiguity."

- Guy Du Toit

Du Toit graduated from the University of Pretoria with a BA (Fine Art) Degree receiving a distinction in sculpture. He uses a wide range of media in his sculptures, including bronze, stone, wood and steel, and draws in pen, ink and charcoal. He has exhibited extensively, both locally and internationally, and has been consistently supported by private and public collectors, institutions, academics and fellow artists.

Honoured with several awards, he curates and adjudicates exhibitions and lectures at several institutions, including Pelmama Academy in Soweto, Pretoria University, Johannesburg and Pretoria Technikon, and the Johannesburg School of Art, Ballet, Drama and Music. He gives workshops throughout South Africa and has been involved in community projects, seminars and symposia.

Guy du Toit's apparent irreverence can obfuscate the fact that he is undoubtedly one of South Africa's most accomplished sculptors. "Liberated" (as he says) by the advent of democracy in South Africa from having to concern himself and his art with the notions of identity, he has happily turned his attention to "less provincial" pursuits like reveling in form, concept and media for their own sakes. Du Toit uses the unexpected juxtaposition of bronze casts of universal, everyday found (and made-to-look-found) objects to invite his audience to invent dialogue themselves. Du Toit's *hares* have also become a popular series exploring form through playful bronze renderings of hares who sit and ponder their thoughts, play, dance or box with each other- each holding a unique character and endearing quality.

## **Chonat Getz**

**(b. Born 1943, Bloemfontein, South Africa)**

Chonat Getz works mainly in the media of printmaking and sculpture. When making prints her preference is for hard ground etchings, drypoint or relief prints. Sculpturally, she combines both kiln-formed glass and various metals. Conceptually, the same themes are carried through both media.

Getz was formerly a Mathematics lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand for thirty years. Drawing on Her expertise in mathematics, she helped to create a popular interest and involvement in mathematics by elucidating the nexus between mathematics and traditional African craft objects, and has been involved in the production of numerous articles, books, TV documentaries, videos and DVDs relating to that topic.

After leaving Wits University, Chonat studied art at UNISA from 2004 to 2007 and extended her studies into working with glass in South Africa and the UK.

## **Beckwith Kraft**

**(b. 1978 Johannesburg, South Africa)**

After emigrating to Zimbabwe in 2008, the vastness of the country and its raw beauty resonated with Beckwith's love for nature and living wild. Being bound to this volatile, fragile and sometimes savage country, the process of regeneration and degeneration are always starkly noticeable.

The guiding thread of Kraft's work is the process of decay and renewal in nature. Her work alludes to the small microcosms that are unseen or unnoticed by us, and which are, a perfect reflection of greater cosmic order. This transcends the purely physical process of birth and death and speaks to the Great Mystery of spirit and alchemy – from star dust, to form, to thought, to energy, to magic.

Kraft spent a large part of her childhood living in rural Ireland, exploring ancient oak forests filled with fay legend, and then later in life in remote parts of Botswana and Mozambique. Her retreat into nature as her sacred sanctuary has deeply influenced her work.

Each piece speaks to an appreciation of the exquisite craftsmanship of nature and an honoring of the natural world, from the pattern on a daisy flower to the sculpture of bone beneath flesh. Fear of impermanence, and the transient

quality of life echoes in the artist's work, thus beginning conversations of that unseen world beyond the veil of mortality that reach far beyond our ephemeral lives.

Sustainable living is paramount to looking after our future's heritage. The ethics of working on animal products are important to Kraft. None of the animals used in carving were killed for their skulls. The domestic cows were slaughtered for their meat while all game skulls are procured solely from Zimbabwe National Park's authorised dealers.

## **Jop Kunneke**

**(b. 1974, Johannesburg, South Africa)**

Through an anthology that is both playful and thought provoking, Kunneke seeks to make bold statements about the interconnectedness of man and his surroundings. His tongue-in-cheek humour, full of comment and contradiction, satirizes the human condition by exposing the socio-economic and political powers that shape it. This discussion is typically centered around images of the natural world, contemporary popular culture and works in multiple media.

Kunneke studied fine art and majored in sculpture. Living and working in Cape Town, his work has received critical acclaim and has been exhibited in various group and solo shows. His work forms part of private collections within South Africa and internationally.

## **William Peers**

**(b. 1965, UK)**

William Peers studied at Falmouth Art College after which he was apprenticed to a stone-carver, Michael Black, who urged him to work slowly and entirely by hand. Peers worked in the marble quarries of Carrara, Italy, and later spent time in Corsica where he found a tranquil retreat to work and develop his ideas. His earliest carvings were figurative and followed the long history of English stone carving brought to prominence by Henry Moore and Eric Gill.

In the 1990s Peers moved to Cornwall and there followed a period of fifteen years where he exclusively carved relief sculptures in Hornton Stone. Over time his work has become increasingly abstract. In 2007 he created a large series of work in Portuguese marble. The change of material had a dramatic effect on the style of his work. In 2010 he embarked on a series: 100 Days: Sketched in Marble in which he carved a marble sculpture each day for one hundred days. Working repeatedly within a time limit led him to a bolder approach to carving. Recently the

relationship between positive and negative shapes has become an interest, and several larger works for the landscape have seen a dramatic change in scale in his work. Two of his monumental sculptures are permanently displayed at Linthwaite House in Britain's Lake District as part of the Leeu Hotel Group's collection.

In his recent exhibitions, 'The Space Between' and 'A Line in Space', Peers has been exploring the relationship between positive and negative shapes. Removing more marble allows the negative shapes to play a greater part, and the focus is not only on the marble contours, but on the air that surrounds them- a conversation between matter and space.

Past exhibitions include seven solo exhibitions with John Martin Gallery, as well as exhibitions in New York and San Francisco. Public exhibitions include 'On Form' at Asthall Manor, Woburn Abbey and Glyndebourne.

## **Lionel Smit**

### **(b.1982 South Africa)**

Lionel Smit is best known for his contemporary portraiture executed through monumental canvases and sculptures. Perhaps more than anything else, Smit's work is defined by a profound and ongoing dialogue between sculpture and painting.

A multidisciplinary artist, each of Smit's works offer us an entry point into the variety and richness that lies beneath every face we encounter in life, whether applied in bronze or in paint. While retaining their austerity and meditative aesthetic, Smit's figures remain highly charged with the emotive and gestural energy of his creative process.

Smit's paintings begin with abstract lines and swathes of colour that establish a foundation for the subsequently overlaid image of a face or bust – in most cases of anonymous models from the Cape Malay community. For Smit, the Cape Malay woman epitomises hybrid identity within a South African context and reflects the fragmentation of identity within our increasingly globalised world.

Smit's bronzes are created using the lost wax casting method. Patinas commonly available to artists working in bronze include natural browns, blacks and greens. However, given the importance of colour to Smit, he uses alternative methods that result in a unique fusion of intensely saturated patinas. Brilliant streaks of blues and greens enrich the grooves of an ear, while the natural shadow of an eyelid is intensified by the deepening of rich black



patinas. Smit's ability to manipulate the patination process, coupled with his focused enthusiasm for surface gradations, has allowed him to consistently push boundaries.

Based in Strand, Cape Town, Smit's process as an artist today remains adaptive, inventive, and physically engaging and he has achieved success internationally, from Hong Kong to London and New York.

Smit's painting has been exhibited at the National Portrait Gallery in London where it received the Viewer's Choice Award, as well as selected as the 'face' of the BP Portrait Award 2013. In 2016, Smit, in collaboration with Cynthia-Reeves Gallery, installed a public art installation, 'Morphous', in New York's Union Square. He received a Ministerial Award from the South African Department of Culture for Visual Art.

Over the past 10 years Smit has established a substantial international following with collectors ranging from the Standard Chartered Bank to Laurence Graff Art Collection at Delaire Graff Wine Estate.

## **Angus Taylor**

**(b.1970, South Africa)**

Angus Taylor is known for his powerful, often monumental, sculptural works made from materials from his immediate environment - Belfast granite, red Jasper and the orange earth found near Johannesburg. Although he references traditional South African crafting techniques, his works are unmistakably contemporary. Taylor's craftsmanship, bold and visionary approach and his original use of materials has resulted in many ambitious public and private commissions around the world.

Two decades ago, Taylor founded Dionysus Sculpture Works (DSW) where he honed his molding and casting proficiencies to become a master craftsman. DSW's skills in modelling, mold-making and casting has made it a much sought-after foundry and, in addition to Taylor's own projects, the foundry casts for many other leading artists, including Norman Catherine, Sam Nhlengethwa and Deborah Bell. Through his foundry, he employs, trains and nurtures a staff of almost 40 people and enjoys mentoring young artists.

In 2017 Taylor was awarded the prestigious Helgaard Steyn Award for his notable contribution to South African sculpture. His work can be found in many private and public collections in Africa, Europe, North America and Australia.

## **Florian Wozniak**

**(b. 1962, Germany)**

Florian Wozniak was born in Hanover, Germany in 1962. He spent his childhood in Germany and India before moving to South Africa. In 1986 he graduated with a BA in Fine Art, majoring in sculpture from the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. Wozniak continued his studies in Europe studying lithography at the Internationale Sommerakademie in Salzburg, Austria, and carving marble at the Studio Carlo Nicoli in Carrera, Italy.

In 1989 he was employed as a sculptor and stonemason in Winterthur, Switzerland. In the early 1990's, he earned practical experience while he furthered his studies in stone carving and other sculpture techniques such as bronze casting at the Bildhauerschule Mullheim, Switzerland. During this time, he was employed as a technical assistant and tutor at the Bildhauerschule Mullheim, supervising and mentoring their student's artistic development.

From 1992 he has worked independently as a contemporary artist in South Africa. Working in bronze, both in small and large scale - his smooth figurative forms render a tender, endearing and powerful quality. He creates characters often inciting humour or pathos.

He has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions at Everard Read locally and abroad. His sculptures form part of many local and international public and private collections.

## **Percy Konqobe**

**(b.1939, South Africa)**

Percy Ndithembile Konqobe was born in 1939 in Nigel, Gauteng in South Africa. Konqobe is largely self-taught as an artist. He started his artistic practice in the 1970s, and was encouraged by the sculptor Sydney Khumalo, who Konqobe has credited as his mentor and a continued source of inspiration for the style and subject matter of his work. Konqobe works predominantly in clay, as well as bronze rendering abstracted human and animal forms. Konqobe's figurative interpretations channel religious and cultural themes, which often derive from his dreams. He had his first solo exhibition at the Goodman Gallery in Johannesburg in 1988. He has subsequently exhibited with Everard Read and has been included in local and international public and private collections.