



SPEELMAN MAHLANGU

Forever Riding the Bull



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7–29 October 2022



FOREVER RIDING THE BULL

Born in Johannesburg, South Africa, Speelman Mahlangu (1958-2004), was known as one of the 'Big Five' in the Soweto School of Art group. He studied both sculpture and painting at the renowned Katlehong Art Centre, which was established in 1977 and a place of learning for many notable South African artists including Mmakgabo Helen Sebidi, Martin Tose and Simon Masilo. The centre grew out of a collection of individual artists such as Morningstar Motaung, Stanley Nkosi, Napo Mokoena and Lucas Sithole.

Mahlangu's imagery is distinctly African and his work often encompasses a dreamworld with its roots in Ndebele tribal myths. His iconography draws on traditional practices inspired by his grandfather, who introduced him to the legends and symbolism of animals and ancestor sacrifice. During his life, and following the end of apartheid, Mahlangu was profoundly interested in South Africa's 'homecoming' to the African continent, and his work draws one into the realm of southern African icons of traditional life, depicted almost as hieroglyphics.

'My paintings incorporate symbols and patterns from Ndebele murals and Egyptian hieroglyphics,' Mahlangu observed. 'They often describe things that one cannot see but can only feel. My themes include an exploration of spiritual, mythical ideas of the world to come. The role of music in African life and traditional rituals, African pots, human figures, calabashes and drums emerge from semi-abstract shapes. A dream dreaming us.'

In this exhibition, the bronze sculpture, *Riding the Bull*, is the artist's take on an age-old motif, the horse and rider. In Mahlangu's hands the rider gestures openly and exuberantly to the heavens as he sits aloft a powerful bull, the most precious and sacred beast in many tribal cultures. Mahlangu continues this exploration with *The Rider*. Here, his mythical beast and rider are synchronised in their gesture skywards, straining with vitality as if they might lift off.

Everard Read is honoured to represent the estate of Speelman Mahlangu. This is the artist's sixth solo exhibition with Everard Read galleries.



SPEELMAN MAHLANGU

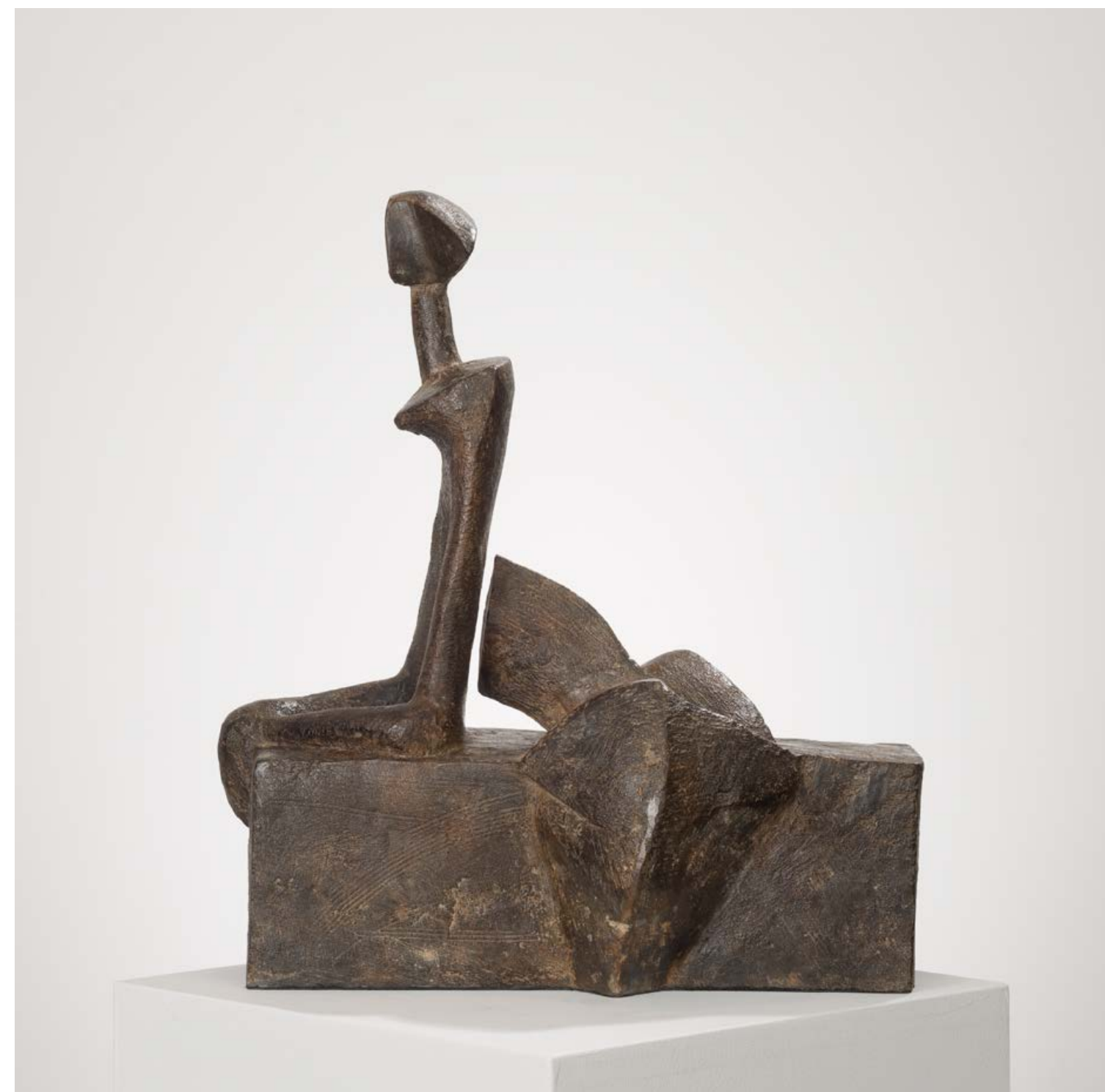
Circle of Friends

bronze

Edition of 15

55 x 30 x 30 cm





SPEELMAN MAHLANGU

Where we are at now

bronze

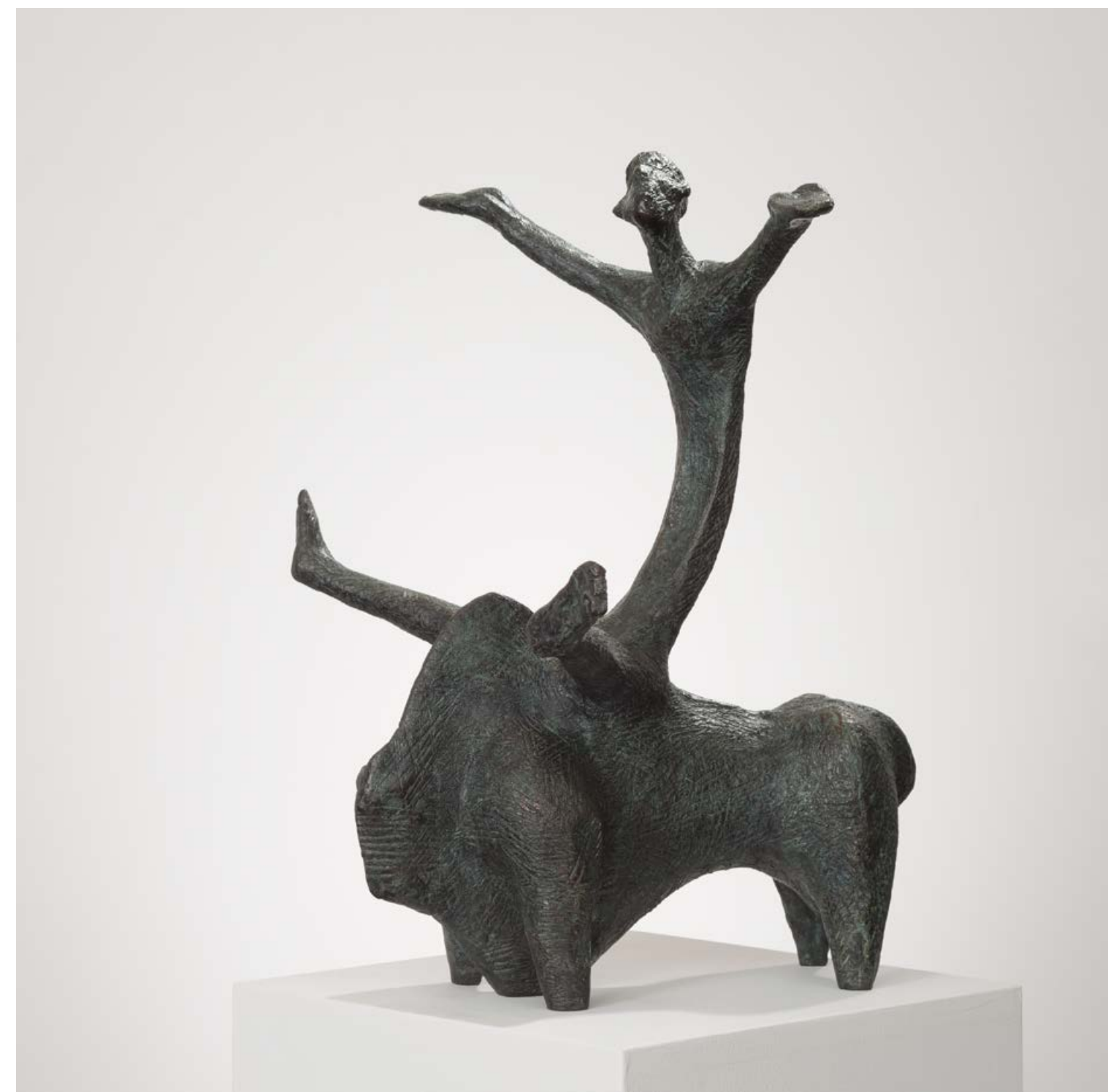
Edition of 6

40 x 32 x 13 cm



SPEELMAN MAHLANGU
Riding the Bull I (Maquette)
bronze
Edition of 8
44 x 32.5 x 20 cm





SPEELMAN MAHLANGU
Riding the Bull II (Maquette)
bronze
Edition of 8
43 x 32 x 36 cm



SPEELMAN MAHLANGU

The Rider

bronze

Edition of 5

121 x 63 x 85 cm







SPEELMAN MAHLANGU

Riding the Bull (Large)

bronze

Edition of 6

183 x 146 x 69 cm





SPEELMAN MAHLANGU

1958–2004

- 2022 Group exhibition, *BRONZE, STEEL AND STONE*, Everard Read Gallery London and Riverhill Himalayan Gardens
- 2019 *Legacy of a Gentle Man*, Everard Read, Cape Town
- 2018 *Opening exhibition of the Norval Foundation*, Cape Town
- 2006 *Retrospective*, Everard Read, Johannesburg
- 2003 Solo Exhibition, Everard Read, Cape Town
- 2000 Solo Exhibition, Everard Read, Cape Town
- 1997 Solo Exhibition, Everard Read, Cape Town
- 1995 Commissioned to paint a 3m x 1,5m mural for the Johannesburg International Airport
- 1991 Solo exhibition at the Botswana National Museum, Gaborone, Botswana
- 1990 Group exhibition at the Sanderling Gallery, *Afrika Now*
Three man exhibition at the Sanderling Gallery
Group exhibition at The Everard Read Gallery, *Town Country*
- 1982 Group exhibition in the Vaal Triangle, *Multiracial Art*
Solo exhibition, F.U.B.A. Gallery, Johannesburg
Group exhibition, Johannesburg, *Market Graphics*
Group exhibition, Southern Sun, *Operation Hunger*
Group exhibition, touring South Africa and West Germany, *BMW Tributaries*
Group exhibition, KwaZulu University, awarded first prize for sculpture
Solo exhibition at Design Animations, Johannesburg
Group exhibition, South African Association of Arts, Pretoria, 'Volkskas Atelier'
Two-man exhibition at the Amadlozi Art Centre
Group exhibition at the Sanderling Gallery, Johannesburg
- 1980 Group exhibition at the South African Association of Arts, Pretoria, *New Signatures*, awarded first prize.
- 1977 Solo exhibition, D H Williams Hall, Johannesburg

COLLECTIONS

Speelman Mahlangu’s work is represented in private and public collections in Europe, the UK, the US and South Africa, including the Frankfurt Museum of Ethnology and the Norval Foundation in Cape Town.

