

KNYSNA FINE ART

DYLAN LEWIS

(b. 1964, South Africa)

Dylan Lewis is a South African artist who has emerged as one of the foremost figures in contemporary sculpture. Lewis's work features in private collections throughout the UK, Continental Europe, United States and Australia, and he is one of only a handful of living artists to have had more than one solo auction with Christie's in London.

Lewis's primary inspiration is wilderness. At one level his bronze sculptures celebrate the power and movement of Africa's life forms; at another the textures he creates speak of the continent's primaevial, rugged landscapes and their ancient rhythms. He works intensively from life, filling books with sketches, notes and drawings. By referring to these in the solitude of his studio, he is able to reproduce the subject's physical form while exploring their more abstract, deeper meaning.

Dylan Lewis was born in Johannesburg in 1964. He is the son of the late well-known sculptor Robin Lewis and comes from an artistic family. His great-grandfather, Thomas Rayfon Lewis, and grandmother, Renee Hughes, were accomplished artists and his mother Valerie and brother Tim are practising artists today. He completed his schooling at S.A.C.S. in Cape Town after which he studied art at the Cape Technikon in 1982. Dylan has always had a deep and abiding interest in the natural world. He worked at the Rondevlei Nature Reserve, Cape Town, for four years (1985-89). There, amongst other things, he painted the backdrop of the diorama in the Field Museum, illustrated a field guide and worked as a taxidermist. His skill in taxidermy has greatly benefited his painting and sculpting.

In 1989 he studied painting at the Ruth Prowse School of Art under Ryno Swart and began exploring sculpture. In 1990 he spent a year painting and sculpting in the Timbavati Nature Reserve in Mpumalanga. In July 1991 he presented to the AGM of Timbavati two sculptures of Rhino, casting a series of thirty editions available to the landowners of the reserve. He was also commissioned by the reserve to paint their famous white lioness.

Later that year Dylan travelled to Europe studying art in its museums. In 1994 he moved to a farm outside Stellenbosch, where he has built his studio and bronze foundry. He casts his own sculptures in bronze. In 1995 he visited Codova in Alaska to represent South Africa at the "Artists for Nature Foundation Expedition".

Working within a strict self-imposed discipline of direct observation of nature, he immerses himself in his subject, sketching and sculpting ceaselessly. It is this combination of love, truth and hard work that give shape to his powerful evocations of animal form and animal force. Seeking out the presence of the live animal Dylan says, "I sketch continuously, sometimes for weeks, until an understanding of form and movement emerges, then I sculpt small compositional studies followed by the final sculpture. Under the surface often lie fully sculpted skeleton and muscle studies. The discipline gives me the freedom to concentrate on the abstract sculptural aspects of the work while retaining the animal form."

Of his work Nicholas Hammond, the British author of 'Twentieth Century Wildlife Artists' writes, "Dylan Lewis is a young artist who is showing other artists of wildlife that it is not the detail of the animal that is paramount, but the excitement of being there and sharing the environment with the animal; what he has achieved is impressive."

Dylan has ventured into exploring figurative works in the last few years, achieving the same success as with his much-loved cats. Where does animal-kind end and humankind begin? What of the wild and primitive within? In exploring these tantalising enigmas, Lewis searches wilderness, myth and ancient belief systems for inspiration, meaning and answers.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2015

Dylan Lewis: A Solo Presentation at Masterpiece 2015, John Martin Gallery, London, UK

Cape Town Art Fair, featured artist, Everard Read Cape Town, South Africa

2014

A Small Collection of Cats, Everard Read Cape Town and Johannesburg, South Africa

Recent Cat Bronzes, John Martin Gallery, London, UK

2013

ARTLONDON13, Everard Read, Johannesburg Booth, London, UK

WWF, Everard Read Johannesburg, South Africa

2012

Delhi Art Fair, Delhi, India

Untamed, Berkley Square, London in association with Christies South Kensington, UK

2010

Untamed, Everard Read, Cape Town (at Oude Bank in Stellenbosch) and Kirstenbosch Gardens, South Africa

2009

Solo Auction, Christie's, London, UK

Shape Shifting, Everard Read, Cape Town & Johannesburg, South Africa

2007

Everard Read, Cape Town (at L'Ormarins in Franschoek), South Africa

Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa

2006

ART LONDON6, Everard Read, Johannesburg Booth, London, UK

2004

ART LONDON4 Everard Read, Johannesburg Booth, London, UK

2003

One man exhibition, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa

ART LONDON3, Everard Read, Johannesburg Booth, London, UK

2001

One man exhibition, Everard Read , Cape Town, The Clocktower Precinct, South Africa

ARTLONDON2, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa

One man exhibition, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa

2000

ARTLONDON1, Everard Read, Johannesburg Booth, London, UK

Toronto International Art & Antiques Fair in association with Miriam Shiell, Canada

Fine Art, Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Toronto, Canada

Dallas International Pavilion , USA

Dallas International Art & Antiques Fair in association with Miriam Shiell , USA

Fine Art, Dallas International Pavilion, USA

1999

ARTLONDON 2000, Everard Read, Johannesburg Booth, London, UK

The Port Captain's Exhibition, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS**2016**

Pastoral Abstraction, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa

Bronze, Steel and Stone, Mount Nelson Hotel & Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa

2015

WINTER, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa

2014

Summer of Sculpture II, Mount Nelson Hotel & Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa

2013

100, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa

Summer of Sculpture, Mount Nelson Hotel & Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa

2012

Winter Show, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa

Summer of Sculpture, Everard Read and Mount Nelson Hotel, Cape Town, South Africa

2011

15th Anniversary, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa

2010

Summer, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

Afrox

Anglovaal

Deutsche Morgan Grenfell

Eskom

Fedlife

First National Bank

HRH The Duke of York

Harvard Capital Management Worldwide

Nissan South Africa

Mr A. Oppenheimer, Mr N. Oppenheimer

Mr C.D. Palmer-Tomkinson

Mr J. Rupert

Mr B. Sangster

Old Mutual Plc

President Nelson Mandela

President George Bush USA

Sir Dennis Thatcher

Sir Richard Brooks

Sir Richard Storey

The Earl of Derby