

LOUIS OLIVIER
100 GENERATIONS OF SOIL

"A bird doesn't sing because it has an answer it sings because it has a song"

Joan Walsh Anglund

Everard Read / CIRCA Cape Town is pleased to present the solo presentation **100 Generations of Soil** by Louis Olivier. This is the artist's first solo exhibition with the Cape Town gallery. Opening the 3rd May, it will run until the end of the month at CIRCA Cape Town. A portfolio is available upon request.

Working on the premise that humankind has a commonality of origin, Louis Olivier's inspiration for *100 Generations of Soil* is rooted in notion of genetic memory. In an exploration of being 'skinless'; *100 Generations of Soil* questions that which is beyond nudity and that which goes deeper into the recesses of pre-memory. This is all in order to find that place of honesty *'where the commonality of all humankind is shamelessly acknowledged'*.

Olivier excavates below the 'surface' of the object and artefact to *'uncover the fundamental elements of that which links us to the past and which has potential to tie us to the future'*. Inspired by African art, Olivier follows what he terms "the African way" – an inspiration which profoundly influences him as a person, craftsman and artist. Stimulated by the idea of a village craftsman he embarked on an artistic journey that led him to a "dualistic practise" of using modern tools to connect with those generations who came before him - to find what he calls a "primitive resonance". He draws from various African sculptural forms including functional objects such as the doorposts of East Africa and West African masks that once de-contextualised from their ritual ceremonies, are now often reduced to mere artefact.

At the heart of Olivier's praxis is the human figure In his work he aims to re-interpret the figure. He strips the form of unnecessary detailing. By searching for symbols that relate to memory and experience, his figures depict not so much outward resemblance or the known, but rather for the artist *'a mystic memory and embodiment'*. Like the art forms that inspired him, his sculptures and drawings the artworks may resemble warriors, sentinels with purpose, the mad man, or the desolate tribe that in turn allude to emotional states invoking emotive qualities like strength, vulnerability, honesty and humility.

Not only is a sculptor, Olivier also a bronze foundry man. In the preparation and creation of the *100 Generations of Soil* exhibition he remained with his artworks from inception all the way through to their completion. This process he feels links him to the artisans who came before him and to a certain degree has him *'walking in their shoes'*.

Wilma Cruise and Louis Olivier

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