

BRETT MURRAY

(b. 1961, Pretoria, South Africa)

“Transgressive ideas and imagery push and shift boundaries and, if effectively used and charged, can result in cathartic understandings and fresh reflections. Works and ideas that divide and challenge are interesting to me. I am drawn to this thin edge of the wedge, but not exclusively. In reflecting on what is unfolding, I hope to articulate a very personal understanding and an idiosyncratic psychological sense of place, and begin to describe who I am with this anomalous vision. Paradoxically, through this critique and comic exposure, I actually begin to define a preferred ideal in which I would like to live.”

I think we live in interesting times, where conversations are becoming more and more polarised and the rights and the wrongs of your political positions are becoming more difficult to define, and there’s a big grey area in the middle. Often what an artist can do is prick holes in that divide and I think some of my work does sometimes do that – and it’s potentially uncomfortable. I continue to feel the urge to expose the absurdities of the powerful through satire. Through my work I hope to explore my jaundiced love/hate relationship with South Africa’s unfolding democracy. Inevitably, it seems, current works are darker in tone and often register closer to tragedy than comedy.”

Brett Murray

Brett Murray studied at the University of Cape Town, where he was awarded his Master’s of Fine Arts degree in 1988 with distinction. The title of his dissertation was ‘A Group of Satirical Sculptures Examining Social and Political Paradoxes in the South African Context’. As an undergraduate, he won Irma Stern Scholarships in both 1981 and 1982. He won the Simon Garson Prize for the most Promising student in 1982 and was awarded the Michaelis Prize in 1983. As a postgraduate student he received a Human Sciences Research Council bursary, a University of Cape Town Research Scholarship, the Jules Kramer Grant and an Irma Stern Scholarship.

He has exhibited extensively in South Africa and abroad. From 1991 to 1994 he established the sculpture department at the University of Stellenbosch, where he curated the show ‘Thirty Sculptors from the Western Cape’ in 1992. In 1995 he curated, with Kevin Brand, ‘Scurvy’, at the Castle of Good Hope in Cape Town. That year he co-curated ‘Junge Kunst Aus Zud Afrika’ for the Hänel Gallery in Frankfurt, Germany.

In 1999, Brett co-founded, with artists and cultural practitioners Lisa Brice, Kevin Brand, Bruce Gordon, Andrew Putter, Sue Williamson, Robert Weinek and Lizza Littlewort, ‘Public Eye’, a Section 27 company that manage and initiate art projects in the public arena with the aims to develop a greater profile for public art in Cape Town. They have initiated projects on Robben Island, worked with the cities health officials on aids awareness campaigns and initiated outdoor sculpture projects including ‘The Spier Sculpture Biennale’. He curated ‘Homeport’ in 2001 which saw 15 artists create site specific text based works in Cape Town’s waterfront precinct. Public Eye have interfaced with cultural funding bodies as consultants and hosted multi-media events across the city.

Murray was included on the Cuban Biennial of 1994, and subsequently his works were exhibited at the Ludwig Museum of Contemporary Art in Germany. He was included on the group show, 'Springtime in Chile' at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Santiago, Chile. He was also part of the travelling show 'Liberated Voices, Contemporary Art From South Africa' which opened at the Museum for African Art in New York in 1998. His work formed part of the shows 'Min(d)fields' at the Kunsthhaus in Baselland, Switzerland in 2004 and 'The Geopolitics of Animation' at the Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporaneo in Seville in Spain in 2007. He won the Cape Town Urban Art competition in 1998 that resulted in the public work 'Africa', a 3.5 metre bronze sculpture, being erected in Cape Town's city centre.

He was nominated as the Standard Bank Young Artist of the year in 2002. He won, with Stefaans Samcuia, the commission to produce an 8 x 30 meter wall sculpture for the foyer of the Cape Town International Convention Centre in 2003. In 2007 he completed 'Specimens', a large wall sculpture for the University Of Cape Town's medical school campus. In 2011 he produced the public artwork 'Seeds' for The University of Bloemfontein and in 2013 he was commissioned to produce the 7 meter bronze 'Citizen' for the Auto & General Park in Johannesburg.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2019** CIRCA Cape Town, South Africa
- 2017** *Again Again*, Everard Read & CIRCA, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2015** *Again Again*, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2012** *Hail to The Thief II*, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2010** *Hail to The Thief*, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2009** *Crocodile Tears II*, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2007** *Crocodile Tears*, The Goodman Gallery Cape, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2006** *Sleep Sleep*, The Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, SA and João Ferreira Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2003** *Us and Them*, Axis Gallery, New York, USA
- 2002** Standard Bank Young Artist of the Year Award exhibition, *White Like Me:*
National Arts Festival, Grahamstown, South Africa
King George VI Art Gallery, Port Elizabeth, South Africa
Tatham Art Gallery, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa
Durban Art Gallery, Durban, South Africa
Johannes Stegman Art Gallery, Bloemfontein, South Africa
South African National Gallery, Cape Town, SA Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2001** *Hero*, Bell-Roberts Contemporary, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2000** *I love Africa*, Bell-Roberts Contemporary, Cape Town & Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 1997** *Own*, Hänel Gallery, Cape Town, SA and The Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 1996** *Brett Murray: New Sculptures*, Gallery Frank Hänel, Frankfurt, Germany
White Boy Sings the Blues, Rembrandt van Rijn Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 1989** *Satirical Sculptures*, Market Theatre Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2019** *IncarNations*, Bo Zar, Brussels, Belgium
- 2018** Investec Cape Town Art Fair, Everard Read, Cape Town, SA
- 2017** Cape Town Art Fair, Everard Read, Cape Town, SA
FNB Johannesburg Art Fair, Everard Read, Johannesburg, SA
- 2016** FNB Johannesburg Art Fair, Everard Read, Johannesburg, SA
New Revolutions, Goodman Gallery Cape Town & Johannesburg, SA
Graphica, Southern Guild, Cape Town, SA
The Armory Show, Goodman Gallery, New York, USA
- 2015 56th International Art Exhibition -la Biennale di Venezia, South African Pavilion, Italy
Slow Violence, Stellenbosch University Art Gallery, SA
- 2014 Cape Town Art Fair, Goodman Gallery, SA
Design Days Dubai, Southern Guild, UAE
My Joburg, Kunsthalle Lipsiusbau, Dresden, Germany
- 2013 *C-16: A Group Exhibition*, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, SA
My Joburg, La Maison Rouge, Paris, France
Art Basel- Hong Kong, Goodman Gallery, China
Collectable South African Design', Collective.1 Design Fair, New York, USA
Cloud 9, Dean Projects, Kuwait City, Kuwait
Design Days Dubai, Southern Guild, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Editions, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, SA
et.al, Nirox Projects, Johannesburg, SA
Heavy Metal, Southern Guild, Cape Town, SA
The Armory Show, Goodman Gallery, New York, USA
Art Palm Beach, Dean Projects, Florida, USA
The Loom of the Land, Michael Stevenson Gallery, Johannesburg, SA
Summer Show, Casa Labia Gallery, Cape Town, SA
- 2012 Art Miami, Dean Projects, USA
Art Basel Miami, Goodman Gallery, USA
Spring Show, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, SA
Sensing the Subject, A selection of Piet Viljoen's art collection, The New Church. Curated by Penny Siopis, Cape Town, SA
The Art of Banking: celebrating through collections', Standard Bank, Johannesburg, SA
FIAC, Paris, France
Johannesburg Art Fair, Goodman Gallery, SA
Our Fathers, AVA Gallery, Cape Town, SA
Recollect, Southern Guild, The Woodstock Foundry, Cape Town, SA
- 2011 *Impressions From South Africa, 1965 to Now*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA
Thinking Around, Tokara, Stellenbosch, SA
Art Basel Miami, Goodman Gallery, USA
A Natural Selection: 1991-2011, The AVA Gallery, Cape Town, SA
Southern Guild 2011, Johannesburg Art Fair, SA

- Persona*, Johans Borman Fine Art, Cape Town, SA
 The Johannesburg Art Fair, Goodman Gallery, SA
Editions, Goodman Gallery Projects, Arts On Main, Johannesburg, SA
 The Armory Show, Goodman Gallery, New York, USA
- 2010 Art Basel Miami, Goodman Gallery, USA
 The Lie of the Land: Representations of the South African Landscape' Iziko Michaelis Collection, Cape Town, SA
Divisions: Aspects of South African Art 1948 -2010, SMAC Gallery, Stellenbosch, SA
In Other Words, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, SA
Halakasha, Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg, SA
Winter Show, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, SA
Twenty - South African Sculpture of the Last Two Decades, Nirox Sculpture Park, Gauteng, SA
1910 to 2010: From Pierneef to Gugulective, South African National Gallery, Cape Town, SA
 Spier Contemporary, Cape Town City Hall, SA
- 2009 *The Marks We Make*, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, SA
Strengths and Convictions: The life and times of the South African Peace Prize Laureates, South African National Gallery, Cape Town, SA
Dada South? Exploring Dada legacies in South African art 1960 to the present, The South African National Gallery, Curated by Roger van Wyk and Kathryn Smith, Cape Town, SA
Registration, Joao Ferreira Gallery, Cape Town, SA
Forward March, Spier, Stellenbosch, SA
Words!, AVA, Cape Town, SA
Life Less Ordinary, Djanogly Art Gallery, Lakeside Arts Centre, University Park, Nottingham, UK
The Other Mainstream II, Selections from the Collection of Mikki and Stanley Weithorn
 Arizona State University Art Museum
 Johannesburg Art Fair, The Goodman Gallery, SA
 Nirox Foundation Outdoor Sculpture, Gauteng, SA
- 2008 Johannesburg Art Fair, The Goodman Gallery, SA
- 2007 *Lift Off II*, Goodman Gallery Cape, Cape Town, SA
Cape 07, Biennale, Cape Town, SA
Turbulence, HANGAR-7, Salzburg, Austria
The Geopolitics of Animation, Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporaneo, Seville, Spain
- 2006 Art Basel Miami, USA: The Goodman Gallery
- 2005 Art Basel, Basel, Switzerland: The Goodman Gallery booth, SA
 Dorp Street Gallery, Stellenbosch, SA
Imprints, Axis Gallery, New York, USA
- 2004 *Post Pop*, Moja Modern, Johannesburg, SA
Min(e)dfields, Kunsthau Basseland, Switzerland
Identity, Fortis Circus Theatre, Scheveningen, Holland
A Decade of Democracy, Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town, SA
- 2003 *Literally and Figuratively: Text and Image in South African Contemporary Art*, Stevenson, Cape Town, SA
Absolutely/Perhaps, Simon Mee Fine Arts, London, UK
Mettle and Paint, Mettle Headquarters, Johannesburg, SA

- Retreks*, Video projections, Fotografins Haus, Stockholm, Sweden
Space Repurposed, Red Bull Music Academy, Cape Town, SA
Art City, Cell-C, Johannesburg, SA 'Picnic', Bell-Roberts Contemporary, Cape Town, SA
- 2002 *Liberated Voices: Contemporary Art from South Africa*, The University of Arizona Museum of Art, curated by Frank Herreman. Tucson, Arizona, USA
I.D./Ology, Axis Gallery, New York, USA
Con/Text, Axis Gallery, New York, USA
Broadcast Quality: The Art of Big Brother, SABC TV, SA
- 2001 *Liberated Voices: Contemporary Art from South Africa*, The Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Centre for Visual Arts at Stanford University, California, USA. Curated by Frank Herrema
World Wide Video Festival, Amsterdam, Holland
Body: Rest and Motion, Oudtshoorn Festival, SA
- 2000 *Liberated Voices: Contemporary Art from South Africa*, The Austin Museum of Art, curated by Frank Herreman, Austin, Texas, USA
Cast, Bronze Age Gallery, Cape Town, SA
Retreks: How the other half..., Animated Video Projection, Johannesburg, SA
Collaboration, Bell-Roberts Contemporary, Cape Town, SA
Returning The Gaze, Cape Town One City Festival, SA
- 1999 *Visit*, Natal Society of the Arts, Durban, SA
Liberated Voices: Contemporary Art from South Africa, Museum for African Art, New York, USA
New Worlds: Contemporary Art from Australia, Canada and South Africa, Canada House, London, UK (Toured: Edmonton Art Gallery, Edmonton, Canada; Johannesburg Art Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa; Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne.)
- 1997 Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, re-launch, SA
Fin de Siecle, Lyons, France
Cologne Art Fair, Germany: Gallery Frank Hänel booth
30 Minutes, Robben Island Museum, Cape Town, SA
District Six Public Sculpture Project, Cape Town, SA
Smokkel, 2nd Johannesburg Biennale Fringe, SA
- 1996 *Vita Art Now*, Johannesburg Art Gallery, SA
New Sculptures, Gallery Frank Hänel, Frankfurt, Germany
Anima-L: Der Mensch im Tier - Das tier im Mensch, Eislingen Kunstverein, Germany
Cologne Art Fair, Germany: Gallery Frank Hänel
Groundswell, Mermaid Theatre, London, UK
- 1995 *The Laager*, Johannesburg Biennale, SA
Scurvy, The Castle, Cape Town, SA
The Scurvy Show, Newtown Galleries, Johannesburg, SA
Venice Biennale, Malcome Payne's installation, Italy
Spring time in Chile, Museum of Contemporary Art, Santiago, Chile
Junge Kunst Aus Zud Afrika, Gallerie Frank Haenel, Frankfurt, Germany
Panoramas of Passage: Changing Landscapes - South Africa, Albany Museum, Grahamstown, SA
Frankfurt Art Fair, Gallery Haenel, Germany
Art Cologne, Gallery Haenel, Germany

- 1994 *Banquet*, Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg, SA
5th Cuban Biennale, Wilfredo Lam Museum, Havana, Cuba
Ludwig Museum of Contemporary Art, Aachen, Germany
Contemporary Art from South Africa, Deutsche Aerospace Gallery, Otobrun, Germany
Exit, Metlife Association Of Art, Cape Town, SA
Staff Exhibition, University of Stellenbosch, SA
- 1993 Vita Art Now, Johannesburg Art Gallery, SA
Volkskas Competition, Metlife Association Of Arts, Cape Town, Durban, Pretoria and Johannesburg, SA
Aids, Metlife Association of Arts, Cape Town, SA
Limits Of Liberty, Wits Theatre, Weekly Mail Anti-Censorship Exhibition, Johannesburg, SA
- 1992 Volkskas Competition, Metlife Association Of Arts, Cape Town, Durban, Pretoria and Johannesburg, SA
Staff Exhibition, University of Stellenbosch, SA
Other Visibilities, Newtown Gallery, Johannesburg, SA
Curator of '40 Sculptors From The Western Cape', Stellenbosch University, SA
- 1991 *Passages and Transitions*, Newtown Gallery, Johannesburg, SA
B and B with Barend De Wet, Association of Art, Cape Town, SA
- 1990 Vita Art Now, Johannesburg Art Gallery, SA
- 1988 *Art and Militarism*, Michaelis Gallery, University of Cape Town, SA
- 1986 *About Time*, Towards a Peoples Culture Cultural Festival, University of Cape Town. Banned by the Apartheid State. SA
Art For Peace, Baxter Theatre, Cape Town, SA
- 1985 Group Show for the opening of 'Gallant House' club and art centre, Johannesburg, SA
- 1984 *Aches and Pains*, Market Theatre Gallery, Johannesburg, SA

Public collections:

Iziko, South African National Gallery, Cape Town, SA
Johannesburg Art Gallery, SA
Durban Art Gallery, SA
Tatham Art Gallery, Pietermaritzburg, SA
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, SA
University of Cape Town, SA
University of South Africa, Pretoria, SA
University of Bloemfontein, SA
Sandton Municipality, Johannesburg, SA
DirectAxis Collection, Cape Town, SA
BHP Billiton Collection, Johannesburg, SA
MTN Collection, Johannesburg, SA
Sasol Collection, Johannesburg, SA
South African Breweries, Johannesburg, SA
South African Broadcasting Corporation, Johannesburg, SA
The South African Reserve Bank, Johannesburg, SA
Vodacom Collection, Cape Town, SA
Nando's Art Collection, Johannesburg, SA
Sindika Dokolo African Collection of Contemporary Art, Luanda, Angola
Red Bull, Salzburg, Austria
Collection of Mikki and Stanley Weithorn, USA
The Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, USA
The New Church Museum, Cape Town, SA