

EVERARD READ

GITHAN COOPOO

(b. 1994 Cape Town, South Africa)

'Clay is very human in its behaviour and I like to highlight that in my work. Each sculpture I create feels like a placeholder for my own body, or a facet of myself. This is met with a love for mythology, ancient civilisations and the gifts they have left us in the form of social and cultural iconography. There is something special about objects that are lost and then found again in their disruption of our linear understanding of time. In a similar vein, mythology often allows for an easier transmission of queer ideas.'

Githan Coopoo is a self-taught jewellery designer and sculptor from Cape Town who works exclusively with clay as a base medium. Originally focused on volume, opulence and fragility, Coopoo's clay jewellery has shown at Fashion Weeks internationally, including New York, Paris, Nigeria and Russia. He was AKO Foundation Assistant Curator of Costume at the Zeitz MOCAA in Cape Town. In 2022, Coopoo was recognised by the British Fashion Council in their New Wave: Creatives awards category. This category includes a list of the most innovative and inspiring young creative talents from around the world.

Expanding upon his practice, recent years have seen the production of larger-scale works, best described as false ceramics. 'I produce these iconic forms – vases, handbags and tiles – out of air drying clay and acrylic paint,' Coopoo explains. 'Insinuating my sculptures into the accepted ceramic canon while enacting a falsehood is an innately queer act.'

The sculptural forms use text to communicate simple but pointed messages that span from sarcastic to intimate in timbre. Using humour to disable elitism and intellectual inaccessibility, Coopoo's work is not afraid to wield popular notions of cultural exclusivity in the name of satire. He comments: 'I work with words and clauses carved into the faces of my pieces because written languages diminish the conversational chasm between myself and my audience. They deepen the sense of relatability and familiarity, with the opportunity to also imbue wholly new meaning and identity to the work.'

As part of the inaugural exhibition for the Norval Foundation x Boschendal Manor House in Franschoek, Coopoo presented his first solo, *Structural Integrity* (2021). Coopoo's solo with Everard Read Cape Town, *The Luxury of Wearing Fakes* (2022), explored luxury consumption in both art and fashion, while again being bolstered by base and colourful remarks teetering between the existential and tongue-and-cheek. Coopoo also presented work with the gallery at the FNB Art Joburg in 2022. He began 2023 with a sold-out solo booth at the Investec Cape Town Art Fair (*Unrealistic Expectations*), as well as two further sold-out presentations, in Berlin with Galerie Eigen + Art Lab (4 x 4), and Everard Read in Johannesburg (*Desi Casual Glamour*).

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2024 *Upcoming Prizes for Losers*, Everard Read, Franschoek, South Africa
- 2023 *Desi Casual Glamour*, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
Unrealistic Expectations, Investec Cape Town Art Fair, with Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2022 *The Luxury of Wearing Fakes*, Cubicle Series, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2021 *Structural Integrity*, Boschendal Norval Art Gallery, Franschoek, South Africa

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS & PROJECTS

EVERARD READ

- 2025 *Upcoming* Out: LGBTQ+ Artist Activists of Africa, Smithsonian, Washington DC, USA (May)
- 2024 Investec Cape Town Art Fair, with Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
Art Club first edition, Club Kloof, Cape Town, South Africa
Designed Athi-Patra Ruga's outfit for the Zeitz MOCAA Gala, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2023 What I Feel When I Think About The Cosmos, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa
4 x 4, Eigen + Art Lab, Berlin, Germany
The Clubhouse, Stevenson, Johannesburg, South Africa
FNB Art Joburg, with Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
The Other's Warmth, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2022 Spring Awakening, Southern Guild, Cape Town, South Africa
FNB Art Joburg, with Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
3D in 22, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
Investec Cape Town Art Fair, with Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2021 40 under 40, Krone X WHATIFTHEWORLD, Twee Jonge Gezellen, Tulbagh, South Africa
Bluet, KSSO Editions, Cape Town, South Africa
House Party, THEFOURTH, Cape Town, South Africa
Queer Art Chats: Queer Abstraction, Conversations with the Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA
Kutti Bazaar, collaboration with proto~, A4 Arts Foundation, Cape Town, South Africa
To Whom it May Concern, Salon 91, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2020 The Spectacle, THEFOURTH, Cape Town, South Africa
Home is where the art is, Zeitz MOCAA, Cape Town, South Africa
Pink's not Dead!, curated by Jana Terblanche, Apartment, Cape Town, South Africa
Kernel, curated by Nabeeha Mohamed and Grace Cross, Mason's Press, Cape Town, South Africa
Shaping Things, SMAC, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2018 LGBTQI+ ZANELE MUHOLI, co-curator, Zeitz MOCAA, Cape Town, South Africa