

# EVERARD READ

## **MMAKGABO MMAPULA MMANKGATO HELEN SEBIDI**

(b. 1943 Marapyane, South Africa)

Mmakgabo Mmapula Mmankgato Helen Sebidi is undoubtedly one of the pre-eminent artists currently working in Africa. Sebidi was born in 1943 in Marapyane, in what was then the Northern Transvaal (now Mpumalanga). As her mother was working in the city for much of her childhood, she grew up with her grandmother, who taught her the values that would guide and sustain her life. This includes the channelling of spirit back into the world through hard work, the commitment of the self to the community, but most of all through acts of creativity – whether this be cooking, making mud walls, creating murals, making pots and calabashes, weaving, beading, dress-making, drawing or painting.

For Sebidi, the artist starts from a root of pain and conflict, and works her way towards the redemption of both herself and those around her through the act of making. The creator becomes invisible during this process and is the channel through which the spirit world flows. The artwork can be seen as the trace of this redemptive journey. Sebidi's art also demonstrates an attempt to go back to a pre-Christian, pre-colonial Africa – to range of symbols, a value system and a way of making meaning of the world.

In her work, Mmakgabo Sebidi traverses mental and physical landscapes with an eye trained on the dangerous, the discomfiting, the traumatic and the ecstatic in human experience. She is deeply grounded in her rural upbringing and traditions but also finely attuned to the rhythms of the city in which she has spent much of her adult life. Sebidi brings together these two worlds in works of great visionary and prophetic power. Her themes are wide-ranging: her cultural roots, the wisdom of the ancestors, the ravages of the modern world on the human psyche, the loss of tradition, the potential of human creativity to build relationships and restore the past.

Sebidi trained in a number of informal art institutions in Johannesburg and for many years exhibited her work – mostly ceramics, landscapes and figurative scenes drawn from her home in Marapyane – at venues such as Artists Under the Sun in Johannesburg and Pietermaritzburg. But, while working at the Johannesburg Art Foundation under the tutelage of David Koloane and Bill Ainslie, Sebidi made her first semi-abstract work, a frenzied, visionary work produced in a marathon of painting that terrified the artist and prompted Ainslie to describe it as her 'miracle'. This marked a dramatic shift for Sebidi, away from her figurative works and landscapes and into a new idiom that is part figuration and part abstraction but that always seeks to escape the boundaries of both.

Sebidi's works pulsate with energy. They are dense and exuberant, both formally and thematically. Layers and layers of rich impasto are applied in painstaking detail, often on top of drip paintings. Strange figures, some fantastical and mythological, and some drawn from her own richly storied history, jostle for space on the crowded canvases. At times they evoke a sense of celebration and at other times of terror and loss.

Sebidi has participated in many group and solo shows. She won the Standard Bank Young Artist of the Year Award in 1989, the year after she won a Fulbright Scholarship. She was awarded the Vita Art Award in 1990, and the Silver Award of the Order of Ikhamanga in 2004. Her work is in many private and public collections in South Africa and abroad, including Iziko South African National Gallery; the Johannesburg Art Gallery, and the Smithsonian Institute.

# EVERARD READ

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2024 Women in Conversation, FNB Art Joburg, with Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa  
Ntlo e etsamayang (The Walking House), with Everard Read & the Swedish Embassy, University of Johannesburg Gallery, Johannesburg; Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2018 Batlhaping Ba Re!, Norval Foundation, Cape Town, South Africa  
Tears of Africa, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2017 They Are Greeting, Standard Bank Gallery, Albany Museum, Makhanda, South Africa
- 2016 Mmakgabo Helen Sebidi: An exhibition of paintings and prints, Michaelis Galleries, Cape Town, South Africa  
They Are Greeting, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2005 Solo, Oman
- 2003 The Artificial Shelter Foundation, Tilburg, Netherlands
- 1990 Helen Sebidi, Tatham Art Gallery, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa  
Irma Stern Museum, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa  
Association of Arts, Namibia
- 1989 Standard Bank Young Artist Award Winner exhibition, toured South Africa, Namibia & Zimbabwe until 1992  
Solo, London, UK  
Solo, Hamburg, Germany  
Solo, Museo Contemporaneo, Santiago, Chile
- 1986 Federated Union of Black Artists, Johannesburg, South Africa

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2026 Does it end in a miracle?, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2024 The Armory Show, with Everard Read, New York, USA  
Investec Cape Town Art Fair, with Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa  
EXPO CHICAGO, with Everard Read, Chicago, USA  
When we see us: A century of Black figuration in painting, Kunstmuseum, Basel, Switzerland
- 2023 When we see us: A century of Black figuration in painting, Zeitz MOCAA, Cape Town, South Africa  
Investec Cape Town Art Fair, with Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa  
When Rain Clouds Gather: Black South African Women Artists 1940-2000, Norval Foundation, Cape Town, South Africa  
Mapping Another Route, Goodman, London, UK  
Rembrandt in the Karoo, Jan Rupert Art Centre, Graaff-Reinet, South Africa
- 2022 Ancestors & Dreams in African Art, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa & Jacaranda, New York, USA  
Her..., Sanlam Art Gallery, Bellville, South Africa  
Yakhal' Inkomo, the Bongi Dhlomo Collection, Javett-UP, Pretoria, South Africa
- 2021 My whole body changed into something else, Stevenson, Cape Town & Johannesburg, South Africa  
Oasis: 25th anniversary exhibition, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa  
Bag Factory 30 Years: So Far, The Future, FADA Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2020 Staring Straight to the Future, online exhibition, Everard Read, UK & South Africa  
The Portrait Show, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa  
We've Come to Take You Home #1, Michaelis Galleries, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2019 Mellon Foundation Residency exhibition, Javett-UP, Pretoria, South Africa
- 2018 Crossing the Night, Idris Naim Foundation and the National Institute of Fine Arts, Oaxaca, Mexico  
Investec Cape Town Art Fair, with Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa  
32nd Biennial of São Paulo  
The People's Art, collaboration between Iziko South African National Gallery and Orms, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2017 FNB Art Joburg, with Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa

# EVERARD READ

- A Painting Today, Stevenson, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2016 The Quiet Violence of Dreams, group exhibition, Stevenson, Cape Town & Johannesburg, South Africa  
Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil
- 2013 Centenary Exhibition, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2009 Great South African Nude, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2008 Joburg Art Fair, with Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2006 Mapping the Route from the 60s, Goodman, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2005 Telkom exhibition, South Africa  
Artists in Conversation, Pretoria Art Museum, Pretoria, South Africa
- 2004 Visible Visions, Hagen, Essen, Berlin, Osnabrück (Germany); Tilburg (Netherlands)  
Resistance, Reconciliation and Reconstruction, MTN Collection, Pretoria Art Museum, Pretoria, South Africa
- 2002 Visible Visions, Electric Workshop, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2001 The Markers, Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy  
Land, group exhibition, Unisa Gallery, Pretoria, South Africa
- 2000 Axis Gallery, New York, USA  
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Krannert Art Museum & Kinkead Pavilion, USA
- 1999 Human Rights Institute Exhibition, National Art Gallery, Durban, South Africa  
Changing Screens Exhibition, The Firs, Rosebank, South Africa  
Judging of competition at Wits University, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 1998 Lisbon Expo, Lisbon, South Africa  
World Wide Workshop & Exhibition, Sydney, Australia
- 1996 Thupelo Art workshop and exhibition, Cape Town, South Africa  
Biennale in Museum Africa, Johannesburg, South Africa  
Finders Keepers, Sunday Times, Iziko SA National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa  
The Laager included in a group exhibition, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Santiago, Chile  
Centre of the Arts, Yerba Buena Gardens, San Francisco, USA  
South Africa's Finest Painters, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa  
Common and Uncommon Ground, South African Art to Atlanta, City Gallery East, Atlanta, Georgia, USA  
Origin, Hamburg, Germany
- 1995 Objects of Defiance, Spaces of Contemplation, Africus: Johannesburg Biennale, Museum Africa, Johannesburg, South Africa  
Women's Day exhibition, Paarl Museum, Paarl, South Africa  
Siyawela: Love, Loss & Liberation in Art from South Africa, Birmingham Gas Street Museum, Birmingham, UK  
Africa95, Royal Academy, London, UK
- 1994 Six Women from Southern Africa, Lisbon, Portugal  
Civic Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 1993 Il Croce del Sud, Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy  
Graphics Exhibition, Jyväskylä, Finland; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands; Il Croce Del Sud, Rome, Italy  
African Hei-ti-@e, Uranienborgveien, Oslo, Norway  
Women From Africa, Savannah Gallery of Modern Art, Bethnal Green, London, UK  
Three person show with Noria Mabasa & Lucky Sibiyi, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 1992 Future Realms, The Africa Futuristic Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa  
Art from South Africa, South Africa National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- 1991 A Grain of Wheat, Art Gallery of the Commonwealth Institute, London, UK  
The Challenge of Colonisation, 4<sup>th</sup> Havana Biennial, Havana, Cuba
- 1990 Art from South Africa, Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, UK  
National Art Museum, Maputo, Mozambique  
Zabalaza Festival, South African Festival, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, UK
- 1989 Ten Years of Collecting, Wits University, Johannesburg, South Africa  
Pachipamwe II: the avant garde in Africa, Cyrene Mission, Zimbabwe

# EVERARD READ

- Johannesburg Biennale, Museum Africa, Johannesburg, South Africa  
Finders Keepers, South African National Gallery, Cape Town; Pretoria Art Museum, Pretoria, South Africa  
South Africa's Finest Painters, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa  
Art Images in Southern Africa, Kulturhuset, Stockholm, Sweden  
Common and Uncommon Ground, City Gallery East, Atlanta, USA
- 1988 The Neglected Tradition, Johannesburg Art Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa  
SA Potters Association  
DPSC exhibition, artists protesting against detention without trial, Market Galleries, Johannesburg, South Africa  
Cape Town Triennial, toured South Africa
- 1987 Vita Art Now, Johannesburg Art Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa  
Delfiri/FUBA Creative Quest Exhibition, FUBA  
FUBA (Seven Woman Artists)  
Thupelo Workshop exhibition, Johannesburg Art Foundation, Johannesburg & NSA Gallery, Durban, South Africa  
Economic Contemporary Artists Fund exhibition, USA
- 1986 Art for Alexandra, Johannesburg Art Foundation (Sotheby's South Africa Limited), Johannesburg, South Africa  
Thupelo Workshop Exhibition, Johannesburg Art Foundation, Wits University, Johannesburg, South Africa  
Rembrandt Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 1985 South African Potter's Association, Johannesburg, South Africa  
1980-8 Brush and Chisel Club, Johannesburg, South Africa  
1980-1 Washington, USA (organised by a private collector)  
1977-88 Artists under the Sun, Johannesburg, South Africa

## SELECTED COLLECTIONS

Africana Museum, South Africa  
Art Workshop, UK  
Sasol, South Africa  
Unisa, South Africa  
North-West University, South Africa  
University of Cape Town, South Africa  
Tatham Art Gallery, South Africa  
Johannesburg Art Gallery, South Africa  
Centre for Africa Studies, University of Cape Town, South Africa  
Iziko South African National Gallery, South Africa  
1820 Settlers Foundation, South Africa  
Standard Bank Collection, South Africa  
Pretoria Art Museum, South Africa  
The National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, USA  
University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa  
Price Forbes, South Africa  
Federated Insurance Co., South Africa  
Department of Education and Training, South Africa  
Galerie Adriana Schmidt, Germany  
University of Wolverhampton, UK  
H. Roque Investments, South Africa  
ABSA Bank, South Africa  
World Bank, South Africa  
South African Broadcasting Corporation, South Africa  
Gencor, South Africa

# EVERARD READ

First National Bank, South Africa  
SA Permanent Bank, South Africa  
Government of Australia  
Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, USA  
Aboriginal Art Museum, Australia  
Art Bank, South Africa  
Spier Art Collection, South Africa  
Bongi Dhlomo Collection, South Africa

## AWARDS

2016 Goethe-Institut Vila Sul residency, Brazil  
2015 Mbokodo Award, South Africa  
2011 Arts and Culture Trust Lifetime Achievement Award for Visual Art, South Africa  
2005 Nomination for ILKSSA: National Heritage Council, National Living Treasure Award, South Africa  
Oman Association of the Arts Award, Oman  
2004 Order of Ikhamanga Silver Award given by the Presidency, South Africa  
2002 Nomination for the Human Sciences Research Council Living Treasure Award, South Africa  
1990 Vita Fine Art Award, South Africa  
1989 Fulbright Scholarship, USA  
Standard Bank Young Artist Award, South Africa  
1988 Star Woman of the Year finalist, South Africa