

CYNTHIA-REEVES

LIONEL SMIT

ECHO



July 30 - September 25

1315 MASS MoCA Way, North Adams, MA

LIONEL SMIT

July, 2016

NORTH ADAMS, MA.....CYNTHIA-REEVES presents new paintings, work on paper, and sculpture by South African artist Lionel Smit at 1315 MASS MoCA Way, the gallery's venue on the MASS MoCA Museum campus. The featured work continues Smit's ongoing exploration into figural work and double imagery. His monumental sculpture, MORPHOUS, currently on view in Union Square in New York City through April of next year, is a seminal expression of this inquiry.

Smit's interest in the themes of duality arose organically. He writes: "I wanted to merge the idea of the abstract and the naturalistic form. I love Rorschach images, and so I started doing drawings that incorporated two faces, identical but with different attitudes. It seemed to capture the whole idea of peering into the psyche, of seeing in a different way who we are. My work is very involved with identity and, in the past few years, I predominantly started working with the faces of the Cape Malayan woman, a culture of people that evolved through Colonialism. The image of the double head also has a relationship to Janus, the Roman god of beginnings and transitions, that of looking into the future while simultaneously looking into the past."



In MORPHOUS, Smit conflates the dream of Morphous and double head of Janus into a divining of the future and, simultaneously, assessing where we have been – a Rorschach that balances the past and future with equal weight. The gaze is stoic, accepting: a portal both to what has occurred and what is yet to come, as captured in their quiet witness. As the artist notes, it suggests, "where have we come from as people and how are we developing as people."



The exhibition at the gallery's MASSMoCA venue showcases Smit's large-scale canvases. These are vibrant, bold works, which demonstrate his free hand in laying down paint, often in broad swaths of clear color. The drips and splatters communicate a certain dynamism and urgency – there is an intensity behind these graceful, calm faces. Smit notes: "The combination of the representation of human form, and the mercurial quality of emotions, translated by color, line and form, is what inspires the imaginative and abstract essence of the work."

The exhibition also includes a maquette of MORPHOUS, complemented by a series of masks entitled *Origins Broken Fragment*. These incorporate his strengths as a figurative painter, transposing those skills into impactful, dimensional work. The textural surfaces and free use of color belie the artist's predilection toward paint, and his conviction in what the painted surface can communicate, regardless of media. "Smit relies on his hand to transcribe form, frequently reworking images multiple times, such that color and line merge, breaking down both...His bronzes, made in the traditional lost wax process, are treated as fragmented surfaces subject to polychromatic surface experimentation inside and out." Jason Rosenfeld, Ph.D., Distinguished Chair and Professor of Art History, Marymount Manhattan College, New York.

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Lionel Smit was born in Pretoria, South Africa in 1982, and now lives and works in Cape Town. He began exhibiting his work straight after art school at Pro Arte Alphen Park. Best known for his contemporary portraiture executed through monumental canvases and sculpture, Lionel is highly regarded artist in South Africa, now showing internationally in London, Europe and the United States. Over the past ten years, he has established a substantial international following: his work is included in the collections of the Standard Chartered Bank, the Laurence Graff Art Collection at Graff Delaire wine estate, among other corporate collections, and top private collections in Europe, Asia, South Africa, and the US. His paintings have been exhibited at the National Portrait Gallery in London, where it received the Viewer's Choice Award; his next museum exhibition will be in Helsinki in September, 2016. He was recently honored with a Ministerial Award from the Department of Culture for Visual Art.

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Lionel Smit, *Echo Series 1*, 2016, oil on belgian linen, 59.1 x 66.93 in (150.1 x 170 cm)

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Lionel Smit, *Reverb 2*, 2016, oil on belgian linen, 59.1 x 66.93 in (150.1 x 170 cm)

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Lionel Smit, *Echo Series 2*, 2016, oil on belgian linen, 59.1 x 66.93 in (150.1 x 170 cm)



Lionel Smit, *Origins Broken Fragment D*, 2015, bronze, edition 3/6, 15.75 x 10.24 x 9.45 in (40 x 26 x 24 cm)

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Lionel Smit, *Origins Broken Fragment V*, 2015, bronze , edition 2/6,
21.26 x 12.2 in x 12.2 (54 x 31 x 31cm)



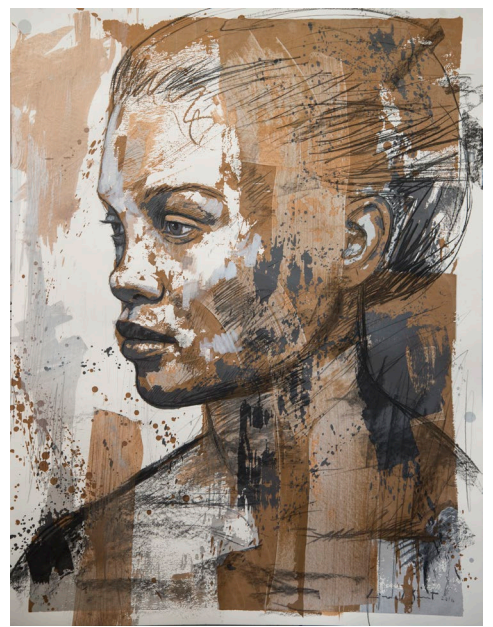
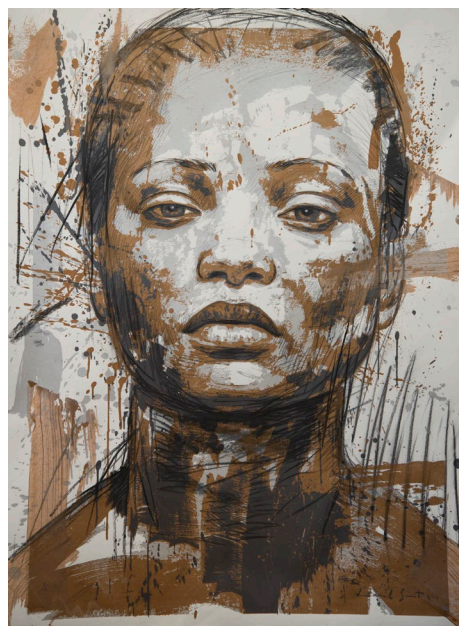
Lionel Smit, *Origins Broken Fragment S*, 2015, bronze, edition 1/6,
21.26 x 11.81 x 12.2 in (54 x 30 x 31 cm)

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Lionel Smit, *Obscura Revision Series 3*, 2016, silkscreen on archival paper with hand additions, edition 4/6, 57 ½ x 44 in (146 x 112 cm)

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Lionel Smit, *Obscura Revision Series 1-3*, 2016, silkscreen on archival paper with hand additions, edition 5/6, each 57 ½ x 44 in (146 x 112 cm)

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Lionel Smit, *Rorschach Fold Series 1*, 2016, silkscreen on linen, edition 1/3, each 43.31 x 55.12 in (110 x 140 cm)

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Lionel Smit, *ECHO*, CYNTHIA-REEVES, MASS MoCA Campus, North Adams, MA

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Lionel Smit, *Morphous*, 2014, bronze with blue patina, 78.74 x 133.07 x 48.82 in (200 x 338 x 124 cm), on view in Union Square, NYC

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Lionel Smit, *Morphous*, 2014, bronze with blue patina, 78.74 x 133.07 x 48.82 in (200 x 338 x 124 cm), on view in Union Square, NYC

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Lionel Smit, *Broken Divert*, 2014, bronze, 26.7 x 20.8 x 12.5 in (68 x 53 x 32 cm)

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Lionel Smit, *Close / Perspectives*, exhibition, *Origins Broken Fragments A-W*, 2015, Johannesburg, South Africa

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Lionel Smit, *Colossal Fragment*, edition of 6, 2016, bronze, 122 x 70.9 x 43.3 in (310 x 180 x 110 cm), Johannesburg, South Africa

LIONEL SMIT

BORN

1982 Pretoria, South Africa

EDUCATION

1999-00 Pro Arte Alphen Park, Alphen Park, South Africa

SELECT EXHIBITIONS

- 2016 *New Release*, solo exhibition, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
Morphous, public installation, Union Square, New York City, USA
Cape Town Art Fair, featured artist, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
Trace, solo exhibition, Rook & Raven, New York City, USA
Obscura 2, solo exhibition, Rook & Raven, London
- 2015 *Recurrence*, solo exhibition, .M Contemporary, Sydney, Australia
JHB Art Fair, featured artist, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
Close / Perspective, solo exhibition, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
Origins, solo exhibition, Rook & Raven, London
Obscura, solo exhibition, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
Art Central Art Fair, featured artist, Rook & Raven Gallery, Hong Kong
Accumulation of Disorder, installation, CYNTHIA-REEVES, MASS MoCA Campus, MA, USA
- 2014 Art Taipei, The Cat Street Gallery, Taiwan
Conronym, solo exhibition, The Cat Street Gallery, Hong Kong
Morphous, solo exhibition and installation, Circa, Johannesburg, South Africa
Cumulus, solo exhibition, Rook & Raven, London
Fugitive Identity, group exhibition, CYNTHIA-REEVES, Brattleboro, VT, USA
- 2013 Art Miami Fair, featured artist, CYNTHIA-REEVES, Miami, FL, USA
IS Sculpture, solo exhibition, IsArt, Tokara, Stellenbosch, South Africa
Strarta Art Fair, Saatchi Gallery, Rook & Raven, London
Fragmented, solo exhibition, Rook & Raven, London
Accumulation, solo exhibition, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
BP Portrait Award Exhibition, Viewer's Choice Award, National Portrait Gallery, London
Wonder Works Exhibition, The Cat Street Gallery, Hong Kong
Metal Work Public sculpture, Stellenbosch, South Africa
- 2012 *Compendium*, solo exhibition, 34FineArt, Cape Town, South Africa
Accumulation of Disorder, installation, University of Stellenbosch Gallery, Stellenbosch
Strata, solo exhibition, Rook and Raven, London
Robert Bowman Gallery, India Art Fair, India
Jhb Art Fair, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2011 *Surface*, solo exhibition, Artspace, Johannesburg
34FineArt, ArtMonaco '11, Monaco
- 2010 *Out of the Office*, group exhibition, Kunstmuseum Bochum, Germany
Art Miami Fair, featured artist, CYNTHIA-REEVES, Miami, FL, USA
We are not Witches, Saatchi Gallery, London
Submerge, solo exhibition, 34FineArt, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2009 *F.A.C.E.T.*, Charity Auction, Christie's, London
Relate, solo exhibition, Grande Provence, Franschoek, South Africa

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AWARDS

- 2013 Visitor's Choice Award, BP Portrait Award, National Portrait Gallery, London
Ministerial Award from Department of Culture for Visual Art, Western Cape Government
- 2009 Merit Award, Vuleka, Sanlam Art Competition, Cape Town
- 2008 Achievement Award, Pro Arte School of Arts
- 2000 First prize in the MTN Art Colours Awards of Gauteng
- 1999-00 Best painting student Pro Arte School of Arts

SELECT ARTICLES

- ART OF AFRICA, *The Graff Magazine*, Summer 2010
- Grand Scale, *Garden and Home Magazine*, April 2010 Time Out Magazine, 2007
- Ou idees met moderne aanslag, *RAPPORT*, 2 July 2006
- A look away, *Art Magazine*, 2006
- Individuality of faces, *Pretoria News*, 15 June 2006
- Soos in 'n tweepas, *Beeld plus*, 26 November 2004
- Radically different works from striking ensemble, *Interval*, May 2002

CATALOGUES:

- Cumulus LIONEL SMIT, Rook & Raven, London 2014
- Formulation LIONEL SMIT, Tokara, Stellenbosch 2013
- Accumulation LIONEL SMIT, Everard Read, Johannesburg 2013
- Strata LIONEL SMIT, Rook & Raven, London, 2012
- Surface LIONEL SMIT, Artspace, Johannesburg 2011
- We are not Witches, Saatchi Gallery, London 2011
- Submerge LIONEL SMIT, 34FineArt, October 2010
- Christie's, F.A.C.E.T (catalogue cover), October 2009
- Residue, Grande Provence Gallery, October 2009
- Group therapy, Sandton Civic Gallery, 2005
- Pretoria, Everard Read Gallery, November 2004

COLLECTIONS

- Ellerman Contemporary
- Standard Chartered Bank
- Laurence Graff
- Rand Merchant Bank
- European Investment Bank
- Johannesburg City Council
- Saronsberg Wine Estate
- Grainvest Futures
- Delaire Graff Wine Estate
- South African Embassy, Nigeria
- Parkdev
- Johann Jacobs Museum

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For more information
please call 212.714.0044 or email info@cynthia-reeves.com
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