

EVERARD READ

BETH DIANE ARMSTRONG

(b. 1985 Nelspruit, South Africa)

"Sculpture, for me, is a space to explore the feeling of one's body in relation to an object. Functional objects quite obviously explore this relationship. What is functional or non-functional is debatable especially in this strange-expanding-spacescape of life. I believe there should always be room for the obvious and non-obvious in all things.

I am always looking. I read mathematical, philosophical, scientific and medical books that go over my head. Seeking the big, grand, rushing feeling of grasping-and-not-grasping. Pushing always into the unknown. Whatever I am looking for, a fascination with density and looseness is the lens through which I see the world. It's about how I physically and mentally feel on this earth: things are intense and then blunt, real and then unreal, meaningful and then meaningless. I am in this dynamic tension with my materials too. There is a give and take, a push and pull, an expansion and contraction – a density and looseness to working with steel. It takes a lot as it is a very demanding material: it's heavy; it's hot; it's hard; it behaves unpredictably; it exhausts me. But it gives me so much back, in its permanence and reliability."

Beth Diane Armstrong 2017

One of the leading contemporary South African sculptors of her generation, Beth Diane Armstrong captures a mastery of the steel medium. Centered on contrasting variations of density and looseness Armstrong's use of sculpture explores the different expressions of these two terms in relation to scale, structure, materiality, space, representation and process.

Armstrong negotiates an unremitting pull between the desire to be entirely overwhelmed and subsumed by a sculpture and the drive to resolve and contain the idiosyncratic challenges posed by it. A central ambition which continues to inform Armstrong's process is the translation of fleeting, abstract experiences into the permanence of a physically demanding material such as steel.

Beginning as thought experiments, the works evolve according to a set of parameters which the artist prescribes. Armstrong develops these parameters on the level of underlying structures (calculations, measurements) and through the higher level realizations of the works as sculptural structures, maintaining a synchronous relationship to both aspects. These meticulous processes, her attention to detail and her astounding ability to effortlessly switch between intricate smaller works and imposing large-scale masses of steel reaffirms Armstrong ambitions to grapple with and understand the ways in which bodies experience space and translate this experience into structures, both perceptual and physical

Tim Leibbrandt 2017

Currently living and working in Johannesburg, Armstrong was born in South Africa in 1985. In 2010 she completed, with distinction, her Masters of Fine Arts at Rhodes University. Rhodes bought her BFA exhibition, *Hibernation*, for their permanent collection. Armstrong has exhibited several solo shows, participated in a number of group shows and projects locally and internationally, as well as being included in various private and public collections. Some highlighted commissions include the completion of a large permanent public artwork, *Flag*, in Oostvoorne, in the Netherlands

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(commissioned by the Kern Kunst Westvoorne Foundation), a large commissioned sculpture at the Design Miami/Basel Fair in Basel, Switzerland and Design Miami, Florida, and her *Page* for the National English Literary Museum, a 10-ton outdoor sculpture in Makhanda, South Africa. 2016 saw her launch the NELM *Page* outdoor commission in Makhanda and also partake in the Yorkshire Sculpture exhibition *A Place in Time*, hosted at the NIROX Sculpture Park at the Cradle of Human Kind. Armstrong was awarded the prestigious Standard Bank Young Artist Award for Visual Arts in South Africa for 2017.

EDUCATION

- 2010** Master of Fine Arts with distinction, Rhodes University, Makhanda, South Africa
2007 Bachelor of Fine Arts, *cum laude*, Rhodes University, Makhanda, South Africa

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2018** *in perpetuum*, Everard Read, Cape Town; NWU Gallery, Potchefstroom; Oliewenhuis Museum; NMM Art Museum, Port Elizabeth, South Africa
2017 *in perpetuum*, Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg; National Arts Festival, Makhanda, South Africa
2011 *Towards an architecture of loss*, iArt, Cape Town, South Africa
To skip the last step, iArt Gallery Wembley Project Space, Cape Town, South Africa
2010 *Hippocampus*, iArt Gallery, Cape Town; Monument, Makhanda, South Africa
2007 *Hibernation*, Gallery in the Round, Makhanda, South Africa

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2021** Spring Show, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
2020 Gallery Opening Exhibition, Everard Read, Leeu Estates, Franschhoek South Africa
TINY2020, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
Odyssey, online exhibition, Everard Read, South Africa & UK
Summer, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
PINK: Art Joburg, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
Still, online exhibition, Everard Read, South Africa & UK
Straight Straight to the Future, online exhibition, Everard Read, South Africa & UK
2019 *Southern Aspect*, Everard Read, London, UK
2018 *Summer*, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
FNB Joburg Art Fair, with Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
Not a single story, co-curated by Elizabeth Millqvist & Mattias Givel, in association with the Wanås Foundation – Wanås Kons at NIROX Sculpture Park, Johannesburg, South Africa
Investec Cape Town Art Fair, with Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
2017 FNB Joburg Art Fair, with Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
Investec Cape Town Art Fair, with Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
Bronze, Steel & Stone II, Everard Read, London, UK
2016 *Pastoral Abstraction*, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
Opening Exhibition, Everard Read, London, UK
Cape Town Art Fair, with Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
A PLACE IN TIME (in association with the Yorkshire Sculpture Park UK), curated by Helen Pheby, NIROX
Bronze, Steel & Stone, Everard Read, London, UK

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2014	Sculpture Park, Johannesburg, South Africa <i>Design Miami</i> , SouthernGuild, Miami, Florida, USA <i>The Benediction of Shade II</i> , David Krut Projects, Johannesburg, South Africa FNB Joburg Art Fair, with David Krut Projects, Johannesburg, South Africa <i>Design Miami/Basel</i> , Southern Guild, Basel, Switzerland <i>NIROX Winter Show</i> , NIROX Sculpture Park, Johannesburg, South Africa <i>Turbine Art Fair</i> , David Krut Projects, Turbine Hall, Johannesburg, South Africa <i>Joburg Joburg</i> , Rooftop in Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, South Africa <i>Guild</i> , Southern Guild, Cape Town, South Africa
2013	<i>Southern Guild 2013 Collection</i> , MOAD, Johannesburg, South Africa <i>The Benediction of Shade</i> , David Krut Projects, Cape Town, South Africa <i>After the Rainbow Nation</i> , NIROX Sculpture Park, Johannesburg, South Africa
2012	<i>Material/Representation</i> , BRUNDYN + GONSALVES, Cape Town, South Africa FNB Joburg Art Fair, with BRUNDYN + GONSALVES, Johannesburg, South Africa
2010	<i>Summer in the City</i> , iArt Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa <i>NOVUS</i> , iArt Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa Make A Difference Foundation Exhibition, iArt Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa <i>The Mechanics and Mysteries of Perception</i> , iArt Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa Johannesburg Art Fair, iArt Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
2008	Absa l'Atelier Competition, Absa Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
2007	Absa l'Atelier Competition, Absa Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa <i>Fourth Year Student Show</i> , Fine Art Building, Makhanda, South Africa <i>Untitled</i> , Salem House, Salem, South Africa
2006	National Arts Festival, Makhanda, South Africa
2005	National Arts Festival, Makhanda, South Africa
2004	National Arts Festival, Makhanda, South Africa

RESIDENCIES

2013	NIROX Sculpture Park, NIROX Foundation, Cradle of Humankind, South Africa
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SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

National English Literary Museum Makhanda, South Africa
Rhodes University, Makhanda, South Africa
Standard Bank of Southern Africa

COMMISSIONS/AWARDS

2017	Standard Bank Young Artist Award – Visual Arts
2016	<i>Page</i> , outdoor sculpture, NELM, Makhanda, South Africa
2015	NELM <i>Page</i> outdoor sculpture, Makhanda, South Africa
2014	Flagpole Sculpture Commission for Kern Kunst Westvoorne Foundation, the Netherlands
2011	3 Sculptures for Prescient Investment Management Group's first major advertising campaign, Cape Town, South Africa
2010	Not all is Black and White, All for World Foundation, FIFA World Cup Initiative Academic Honours
2008	Purvis Fine Art Prize

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CONFERENCES

- 2009** 'Locating Space: An Investigation into Two and Three Dimensions in Art Practice',
Rhodes University Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Conference

PUBLICATIONS

- 2010** 'Hippocampus: Seahorse; brain-structure; spatial map, concept'. Masters Thesis,
Rhodes University

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND TEACHING

- 2014** Teaching wire tree making to children, French School, Johannesburg, South Africa
2013 Teaching wire tree making to children, French School, Johannesburg, South Africa
2010 Teaching wire tree making for the NOVUS initiative in Cape Town, South Africa
Short lecture course for 1st year Architecture students, UCT, South Africa
Lecture on my work at Somerset College, The German School, and IEB teachers of
Gauteng, South Africa
2009 Art classes for the patients of the Tower Hospital in Fort Beauford, South Africa
2008-2009 Teaching wire tree making to children at Makhanda National Arts Festival, South Africa
2007-2009 Teaching assistant for 1st-4th year students, Rhodes University, South Africa
2007-2008 Involved with running the Rhodes University Fine Art Department Community
Outreach Project. This project offers an art training programme for the learners of the
Archie Mbolekwa School. The classes are held at Johan Carinus Art Centre