NEIL RODGER
(b. 1941 Cape Town, South Africa – d. 2013 Port Elizabeth, South Africa)

'I believe that pictures rarely benefit from commentary by the artist. In general I would say that whilst most good art has been extremely difficult and taxing in the making, it is a prerequisite of great art that this is not evident – that it appears effortless or even inevitable.'

Neil Rodger was born in 1941 in Mowbray, Cape Town. The artist lived and worked in the Eastern Cape, where he thrived on the austerity and solitude of the region until he died in 2013. It seemed that this environment was conducive to the enigmatic silence so characteristic of his finest work. None of the currently favored classifications apply to his work – rather, he belongs with those individual realists who have, throughout the modern era, defied categorisation.

What he pursued is a universality, timelessness and harmony that can be found in all great art from whatever period or place. It is a measure of his conviction of the continuity of great art that he remained unmoved by revolutions, fashions or attitudes. Regular trips to Europe reinforced his cultural connections, which are to the Mediterranean by inclination and to the Netherlands by training.

His work covers an unusually wide range of content and he worked in a variety of media in both painting and sculpture. The vehicle for this content was also in a perpetual state of flux, so that ever-new perceptions were evinced, be it of the portrait, of the nude, of the landscape, of the animal painting. For this artist, the quest for refinement and distillation never ceased.

HISTORY

1968 -1974	Member of the Grahamstown Group
1966 -1967	Part-time lecturer in drawing and painting at the Cape Technical College
1967	Art Teacher, Wynberg Boys High School, Cape Town
1968 -1974	Lecturer in Fine Art, Rhodes University
1974 -1981	Lecturer, then a senior lecturer in fine art, Port Elizabeth Technical College
1981	Full-time artist
1980	Member of the selection board of the King George VI Art Gallery, Port Elizabeth
1963-6	Travelled throughout Europe
1971	Worked and traveled in United Kingdom, Netherlands and Spain
1986	Worked and traveled in United States of America and England
1987	Texas, United States of America where he did some portraits
1988	United Kingdom and Switzerland painting portraits

EDUCATION

1961-63 & 1966	Michaelis School of Fine Art, Cape Town
1963-66	Rijks Academie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam
1981-82	Rhodes University, Master's Degree in Fine Art (*cum laude*)

AWARDS

1963	Max Michaelis (prize for painting)
1965	Merit Award (painting) Rijksakademie
1982	Five Roses Young Artist of the Year, National Arts Festival, Grahamstown

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2021 A Retrospective, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
2000 Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
1989 Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
1982 Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
1982 Grahamstown Settlers Monument Arts Festival, South Africa
1976 Atlantic Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
1975 Gallery 82, Bloemfontein, South Africa
1973 Johan Carinus Art Centre, Grahamstown, South Africa
1968 Rhodes University (first of six solo exhibitions), Grahamstown, South Africa

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2018 People and Portraiture, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
2017 Reality Check, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
2012 Winter, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
2011 15, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
2009 The Great South African Nude, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
1968-74 Regular group shows with the Grahamstown Group throughout South Africa

COLLECTIONS

George Municipal Collection
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Gallery, Port Elizabeth
SA National Gallery, Cape Town
University of Pretoria
University of Cape Town
Opera House, Port Elizabeth
William Humphreys Art Gallery, Kimberley