

THOMPSON'S
LONDON — EST. 1982



CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICA

LEON MÜLLER



Wandering Herd Charcoal on paper 21 x 30 inches

Be it in carved wooden chandeliers or drawings on hand-made coconut fibre paper, the majestic South African fauna sits at the heart of Leon Müller's work. The "romantic, solitary places" in the countryside stoke his aesthetic quest, which has carried him from Pretoria University to the Cité internationale des arts in Paris (residency, 2001) and a sojourn in Finestrat, Spain. Swift, certain lines — spontaneous yet deliberate — characterise his drawings on paper. He was inducted into the South African Association of Arts in 1994 and is represented in the University of Pretoria, Cité internationale des arts, and Wong Collections.

CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICA

26 January - 12 February 2022

Private View - Wednesday 26th January 6-8pm

RSVP enquiries@thompsonsgallery.co.uk

For over a decade Thompson's Gallery has formed personal bonds with South Africa. Whilst there, Thompson's have been captivated by the breadth of artistic talent which we are now thrilled to present to the UK in our first exhibition of carefully selected South African artists.

'Contemporary South Africa' will explore a variety of media, techniques, and subject matter by some of the most inspiring contemporary artists living and working in South Africa today: Gail Catlin, Ruan Huisamen, Arend Louw, Thembaletu Manqunyana, Leon Müller, Hennie Niemann Jr., Jaco Roux, Anton Smit, René Snyman, and Louis Jansen van Vuuren.

Some are celebrated internationally, others are emerging figures, yet all artists are united by their creativity and shared nationhood. From bushland renderings to stylised portraits; challenging narrative scenes to large-scale bronzes, each artist's work is a world unto its own. Explore viewpoints and stories anew in the extraordinary selection of painting and sculpture presented in 'Contemporary South Africa' at Thompson's Gallery London.



5% of the gallery profits of the exhibition will be donated to Ubuntu Pathways.

"Ubuntu Pathways is an extraordinary and deserving non-profit organization that provides an integrated support system of health, education, and social support in the township of Gqeberha, South Africa (previously known as Port Elizabeth). I was first introduced to the work of the organisation through a great friend, and I could not think of a better time to bring awareness to the organisation." Megan Thompson

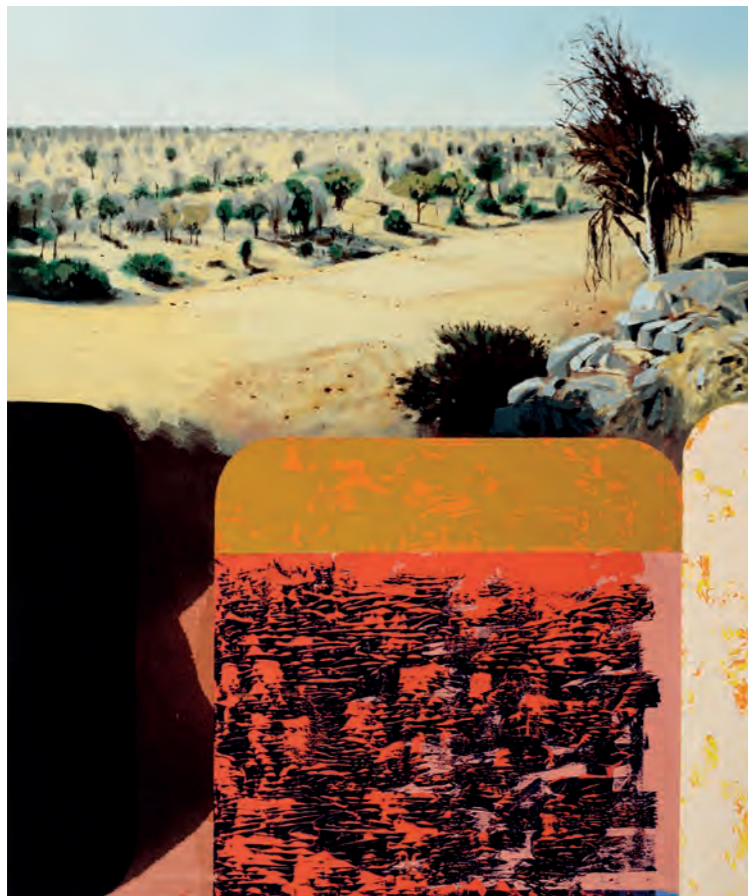
For more information on the great work of Ubuntu Pathways visit: www.ubuntu-pathways.org

All artworks are for sale on receipt of this catalogue.
The entire exhibition can be viewed on our website.

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Monday to Friday: 10:00 - 18:00
Saturday: 10:30 - 17:30
Sunday: Closed



Dry River Bed - KNP III Oil on canvas 48 x 40 inches

Dry River Bed - KNP II Oil on canvas 48 x 40 inches (right)

JACO ROUX

Jaco Roux brings innovation and splashes of colour to landscape painting. Predominately recording South African bushland — in particular, the Limpopo Province where the artist farms, which is known for its bush veld and wildlife reserves. Roux breaks foreground with thick passages of paint, communicating the terrain's true texture with a unique flair. His use of bold colours and brushstrokes convey his passion and respect for the landscapes depicted.

The abstract layering also adds an experiential dimension, drawing the viewer closer to the landscape and the artist's personal connection to the places he paints. Roux has appeared in one-man exhibitions in South Africa, Switzerland, Ireland, Croatia, and the UK.





THEMBALETHU MANQUNYANA

Hailing from Kwazakhele in Gqeberha (previously Port Elizabeth), Thembaletu Manqunyana came to painting after an extensive educational journey that spanned design, sculpture, art history, and psychology, among other disciplines. In pursuit of his own voice in art, Manqunyana "found solace in the energy of West African masks through Cubist elements and visual impact." The result is a powerful aesthetic that appropriates elements of Neo-Expressionism and Cubism but remains true to his African identity. Currently, he uses "multiplications of colours" to compose forms inspired by West African masks.



Cool Cat Mixed media on paper 41 x 31 inches

The Singer Mixed media on paper 41 x 31 inches (left)

RUAN HUISAMEN

The largely self-taught Ruan Huisamen wields his astonishing talent to create politically charged, lifelike narrative works. Often using charcoal, Huisamen constructs a tableaux in which large characters and large issues from South African culture collide. As meticulously constructed and beautifully rendered as they are thematically complex, Huisamen's works command attention by virtue of sheer skill, then ask questions of equal magnitude — demanding conversation, provoking thought. In the artist's own words, "I aim to always create art that is not merely sensational, does not present an obvious message, and is not falsely iconic."

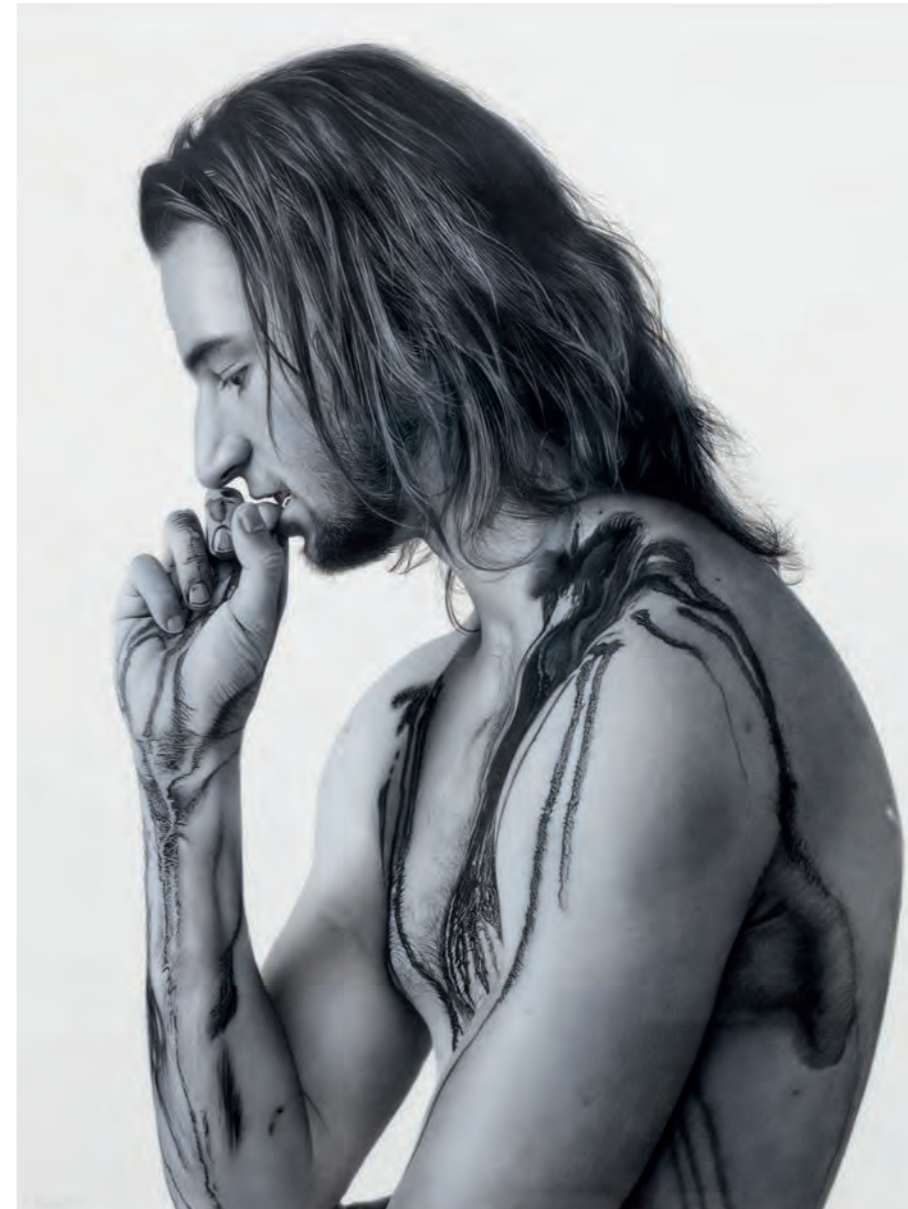
Desolate Dinner, 2021 Charcoal on paper 41 x 49 inches





Idem III Charcoal on paper 26 x 33 inches

Ruminant Charcoal on paper 33 x 26 inches (right)



RENÉ SNYMAN

Based in the Western Cape in South Africa, René Snyman was raised on a Kalahari farm, where her close interactions with nature shaped her powers of intimate observation. She displayed a talent for drawing as a young child and developed great proficiency in oils over the course of her studies. Snyman's paintings explore the effects of light on various surfaces, such as soil, skin, and water, as well as the interplay between different colour gradients. Her subject matter — rooted in nature, her childhood, and daily experiences — often dictates the physical dimensions of each painting, be it a small, intimate portrait or a vast, imposing nature scene.



Sheltered for the Evening Oil on canvas 49 x 73 inches



Through Waters
Oil on canvas
40 x 71 inches

KENE SYMMARD ©

GAIL CATLIN



The Still Life on a Gold Background
Liquid crystal, resin, and gold & silver leaf on board 41 x 47 inches

A champion of liquid crystal, which reacts to different temperatures and degrees of exposure with pronounced changes in colour and brilliance, Gail Catlin has leveraged the notoriously unwieldy medium to forge paintings and sculptures that challenge the assumed fixity of visual art. Catlin, who regularly collaborates with scientists and technologists in the field of liquid crystals, derived this novel technique in order to better capture the varied hues and light gradations found in the South African landscape. Her work — regularly displayed in major South African museums and civic buildings, and held in public and private collections across the UK, USA, and Saudi Arabia — seems to vibrate with colour, as if in continuous rebellion against the two-dimensional surface.



White Tree Oil on board with resin 50 x 42 inches

ANTON SMIT

Acclaimed sculptor Anton Smit is renowned for his breathtaking heads and faces, which simultaneously express movement and serenity. His patination is particularly striking, often rendered in vivid blue hues or a captivating dark rust. Smit utilises scale to hold audiences in thrall, transfixed on the face before them, and pairs his sculptures with poems that evoke deeper meaning. He has exhibited widely and consistently since the early 1980s, and his sculptures can now be found in public and private collections the world over.



Agapé Effervescent Bronze 18 x 10 x 7 inches (each)



Of Fire and Ice
Fibreglass 54 x 24 x 10 inches



Faces II Fibreglass
54 x 32 x 14 inches

LOUIS JANSEN VAN VUUREN



Little White Mixed media on canvas 31 x 31 inches

The son of Dutch and French immigrants, Louis Jansen van Vuuren was born in Mpumalanga (old Transvaal) and quickly gravitated toward the fine arts, unveiling his first solo exhibition at the age of 17. In van Vuuren's paintings, a superficial air of whimsy belies unsettling realities. Each carefully selected element relates to South Africa on a symbolic level: The resting rhinoceros bows his head to reveal his shaved horn, a conservation measure introduced to stave off poaching, while a burning palm in the middleground articulates the impact of climate change on this beautiful, fragile expanse. For over 55 years, audiences have taken in van Vuuren's contemplative spectacles in exhibitions mounted in South Africa and around the world.



Float Mixed media on canvas 31 x 31 inches

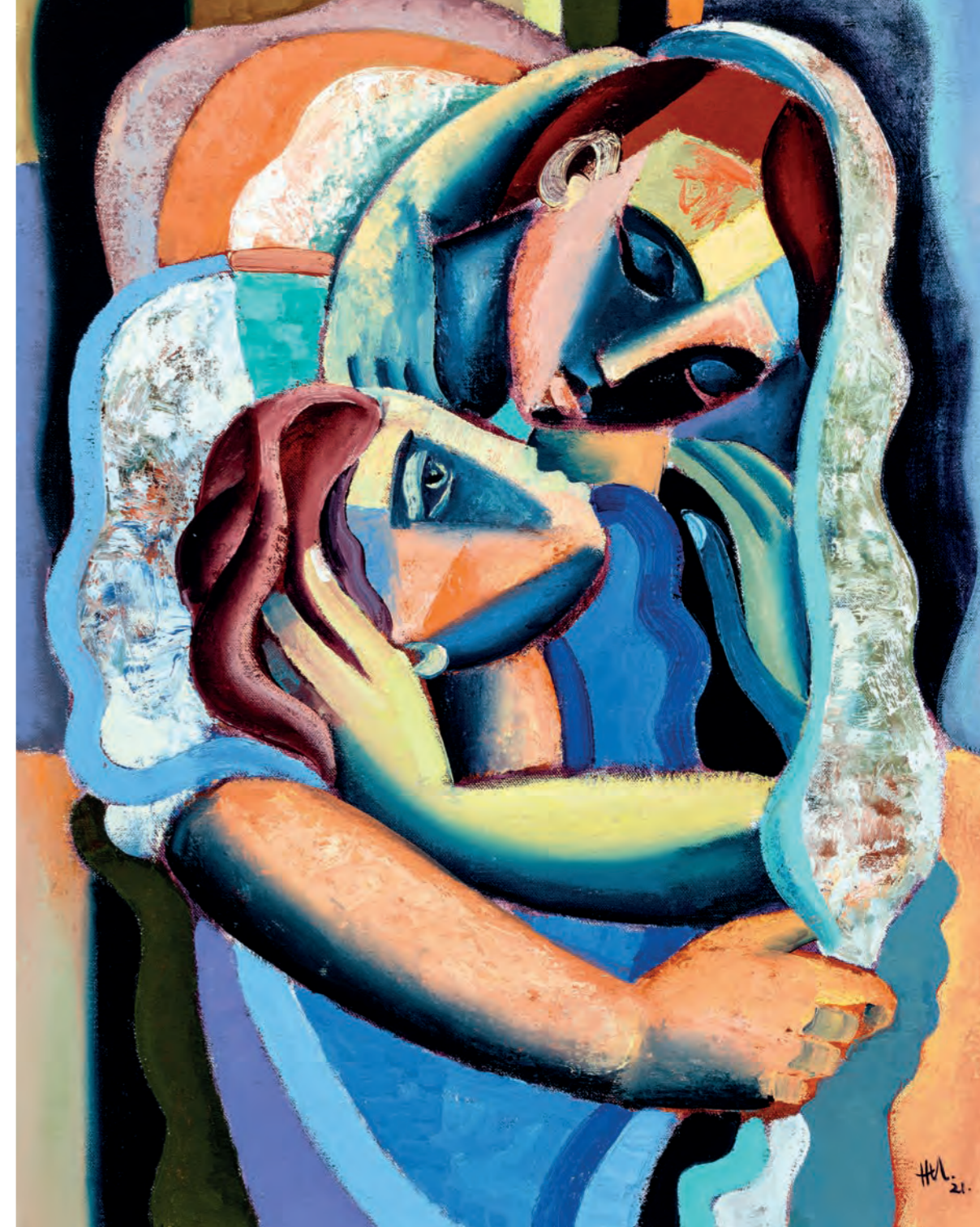
HENNIE NIEMANN JR.

Hennie Niemann Jr. is celebrated for devising a contemporary answer to Cubism, painting stunning figures in his home settings of South Africa. His unique personal style — oil paintings characterised by strong lines and colours — is grounded in the rigorous tutelage of celebrated South African painter Gregoire Boonzaier and his own artist father, Hennie Niemann Sr. While his early paintings tended toward Fauvism, Niemann Jr. has progressively evolved toward a more fragmented style; angular, hard-edged forms are restructured to capture the essence of complex compositions. His work has been exhibited in South Africa and the UK.



Elegy Oil on linen 40 x 24 inches

To Have and to Hold Oil on linen 36 x 28 inches (right)



AREND LOUW



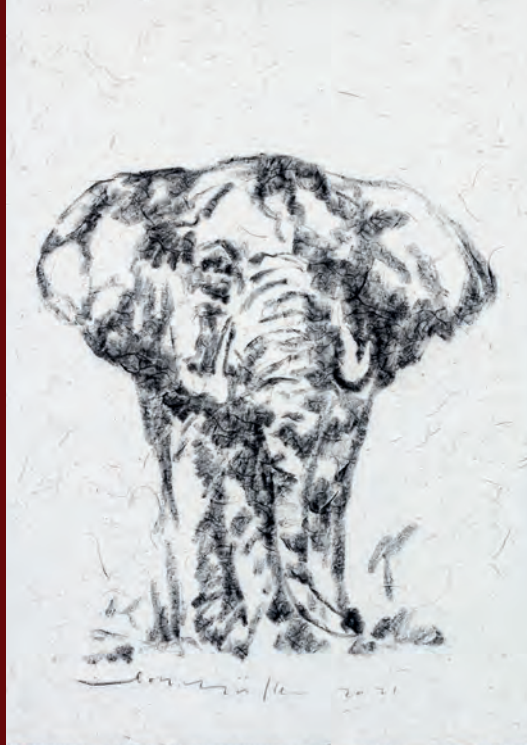
Sandveld Volmaan Oil on canvas 13 x 17 inches



Kersefontein Oil on canvas 12 x 15 inches

Arend Louw's colourful paintings, each drawn from a personal photograph, convey the solitude and serenity of the West Coast of South Africa. The artist, a Cape Town native, settled on his family's farm in the Sandveld region. There, he became interested in the impact of natural light on a scene, how "a landscape or object can be transformed by the highlights and shadows that fall upon it." Louw paints vistas that are at once deeply personal and universally accessible, the locales familiar in spirit if not in name. His oils, "slow to dry and quick to forgive," have been featured in group and solo shows in South Africa.

JACO ROUX *Soutpansberg III*
Oil on canvas 49 x 49 inches (front cover)



LEON MÜLLER *Bull Elephant* Charcoal on paper 30 x 21 inches

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