

Artist Statement

“I like to imbue my work with an illusion of movement or gesture, bodies curling up or limbs reaching out to the onlooker, a call to movement. Some observers have noted that this is why so many of my pieces, even the most abstract ones, manage to communicate powerfully and emotionally. My sculptures and art are possessed with a raw, earthy power that feels innately African.”

Biography

Anton Smit, born August 1954, is a widely revered self-taught sculptor from South Africa. Smit's body of work comprises towering human figures, nudes, heads, masks, hands, floating and stretching figures, and abstract works, Smit mostly works with bronze, steel, metal, stones, and a unique iron and polymer cast mixture. With consistent hard work and continuous international and local exhibitions, an ever increasing search for new and deeper artistic expression, Anton Smit is arguably one of the major South African sculptors alive today.

Exhibition History

Smit has exhibited across South Africa, with exhibitions in Witrivier, Nelspruit, Pietersburg, Johannesburg, Potchefstroom, Durban and Cape Town, in leading galleries such as the Crake, Kraft, Olivetti, Michaelatos, Beuster Skolimowski, Everard Read and many others. Smit gained international recognition after exhibiting in Rome and Milan, receiving an invitation to exhibit in New York and Hong Kong and a return exhibition that took place in Italy in 1993. More exhibitions followed in Bonn, Washington, Singapore and Koln. In 1994 he put 35 sculptures on exhibition in New York at the Grand Central Station as part of the Strengthening

the Link initiative to boost trade between South Africa and The United States, organised by SATOUR in conjunction with the Department of Trade and Industry, represented by former president Nelson Mandela

1971: First prize, National Bible Year Competition

1975: Published in the international magazine "Schaufenster

1976: Exhibition, Ethno-Africa Gallery, Pretoria

1977: Highly acclaimed at New Signatures

1979: Exhibitions in Witrivier, Nelspruit and Cape Town

1979: First prize, New Signatures Competition, SAAA

1980: Beuster-Skolimowski Gallery, Pretoria

1980: A.P.S.A National Exhibition, Olivetti Gallery

1981: SAAA, Crake Gallery, Pretoria

1982: Artist of the month, Pretoria Art Museum

1986: Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg

1987: Beuster-Skolimowski Gallery, Pretoria

1988: Pretoria and Pietersburg Art Museums

1989: One-man Exhibition, South African Association of Arts (SAAA)

1991: Exhibitions in Rome and Milan,

1991: International Exhibition of Two Worlds in Spoleto, Italy

1992: Large sculptures commissioned by BMW Head Office, Johannesburg

– Monument for the Common People

– Large Reclining Figure

– Passover

1993: Solo exhibition, Sweeguan Art Gallery, Singapore

1994: Solo exhibition, Omni Gallery, New York

1994: 35 Sculptures on exhibition in New York at the Jacob Jawitz Exhibition Centre and Grand Central Station, New York

1994: Exhibition at the inauguration of President Nelson Mandela at the Presidency

1994: Germany, Bonn, Wolfsburg

1995: Vincent Art Gallery, East London

1997: Designed Millennium Art Gallery, Pretoria

1998: South African Embassy, Bonn, Germany

1998: Solo exhibition, Artfolio Gallery, Singapore

1999: Inter Art Galerie Reich, Köln

2000: Laguna Beach, California; Potchefstroom Museum, Aardklop Festival; University of Pretoria

2001: Hamburg, Germany

2001: University of Pretoria

2002: Work personally purchased by philanthropist, Anton Rupert for the Rembrandt Foundation – Stellenbosch

2003: Established the Anton Smit Sculpture Park, Bronkhorstspruit dam

2003: “Age of Grace”, University of Pretoria Museum, Hatfield Campus

2003: “Shielded Man”, University of Pretoria Museums, Hatfield Campus

2004: Delaire Graff Estate, Stellenbosch, Collection purchased by Laurence Graff

2005: “Identity of South Africa”, Amsterdam

2007: Public Commission: National Library of Tshwane/Pretoria

2007: Aardklop Festival, Potchefstroom

2007: Ebotse Golf Estate, Benoni

2008: “Revelations Wall”, Anton Smit Sculpture Park

2008: Platform on 18th, Pretoria

2009: “No Second Death”, Grande Provence, Franschhoek

2009: Delaire Graff Estate, Stellenbosch

2009: Additional bronze commissions for Delaire Graff Estate

2010: “Facets of Personality”, Anton Smit Sculpture Park & Gallery

2010: “Angels”, Grande Provence, Franschhoek

2010: Private Commission, Mauritius

2010: Public Art Project, Centurion/Pretoria

2010: Private Commission, Mykonos, Greece

2010: Charity Exhibition, St. Lorient

2010: Main Sculpture for Potchefstroom's Sports Village, commissioned by North West University for the opening of the Soccer World Cup

2011: "Transitions", Anton Smit Sculpture Park & Gallery

2011: "Burning Man", commissioned by University of PTA Museums

2011: Faith at the Grand Hyatt Regency Hotel and Golf Estate, Oubaai

2012: "Transcendental Head", public sculpture on the R25, Symbol of the New South Africa

2013: "Burning Man", "Metal Work", Public Art in Stellenbosch II

2013: Innibos Kunstefees, Arts Festival, Nelspruit

2013: "The Continuous Redemption of Man", The Gallery on Leviser, Bloemfontein

2014: "Art Affair", Saxon Hotel, Johannesburg

2014: "Transections", Young Blood Gallery, Cape Town

2014: Commission of a Monumental Sculpture - Spirit of Tshwane (Part of the 'Cool Capital' Biennale participation), Menlyn Maine

2014: "In Retrospect", Stephan Wertz, Cape Town

2015: "Smit & Smit", Imibala Gallery

2015: "Cross Section", Jan Royce Gallery, Cape Town

2015: "In Retrospect", Menlyn Boutique Hotel, Pretoria

2016: "Colossal", 40 piece exhibition, Australian Bronze, Australia

2016: Public Sculpture Exhibition, Menlyn Maine, Pretoria Exhibition

2016: Puerto Rico Exhibition – Miami

2016: "Charity Auction" MAD Foundation, Sculpture (Spiritus Mundi) sold for R120 000

2017: "7m Faith" Stream Conference, Spier Wine Farm

2017: Stellenbosch Public Sculpture Exhibition

2017: The Capital Hotel, Menlyn Maine, Pretoria

2017: "Between the Shadow and the Soul", Imibala, Somerset-West

2017: "Brick Face", Imibala Charity, Community Upliftment Project

2017: Charity Auction for MAD Foundation ('Head of a Young Boy & Head of a Young Girl')

2017: "Smit & Smit Collaboration", Cape Wine Auction for charity

- "Stream of Consciousness" – raised a record high bid price of R 1,2 million
- Collaboration with Anton's son, Lionel Smit

2017: "Rite of Passage", Jan Royce, Cape Town

2017: Public Sculpture Exhibition, Melrose Arch, Johannesburg

2017: "Essence" Expo Exhibition, Durban, South Africa

2017: Grande Provence Exhibition, Walking Man, Franschhoek

2018: "Submerge", Imibala Gallery, Somerset West, Cape Town

2019: Ferrari Fine Arts Exhibition, Scuderia, Bryanston, Johannesburg

2019: “Colossal”, Genk, Belgium

2019: “Faith” public statue inaugurated, Thor Park, Genk, Belgium

2019: The Ivy Hotel Villa & Spa – Exclusive Public Exhibition – Sandton – Johannesburg

2019: Benguela Cove – Exclusive Public Exhibition – Hermanus – Cape Town

2020: Erinvale Country Estate – Somerset West

2020: Restore Campaign – Anton Smit Art Investment Initiative to aid those in-need affected by the national COVID lockdown

2020: “New Futurism”, Uitstalling Art Gallery, Belgium

2020: “Rapture” Grande Provence Heritage Wine Estate – Franschhoek, Western Cape

2021: Launched Century City Open Air Exhibition - a 30-piece collection of Sculptures spread out in public spaces around the Century City precinct – Century City, Cape Town, Western Cape

2021: Front Cover feature, Art Times Magazine, April Edition

2021: Major Exhibition opens in the UK: Leonardslee Lakes & Gardens

2021: Established Anton Smit Art Route at Lourensford Wine Estate, Somerset West, Cape

2021: “Faith” bronze sculpture, Benguela Galleries, Hermanus

2022: Colossal, solo exhibition, 25 Monumental pieces, Nelson Mandela Square, Sandton, Johannesburg

2022: Anton Smit Art Trail, Milhor Lodge, Rustenburg

2023: "Landscape of the Soul", subway Faces 33m wall panel, Century City

2023: Rustenburg Marikana Memorial

2023: "Urban Echoes", exhibition collaboration with graffiti artist, Mars – Nelson Mandela Square, Sandton

Collections

The works of Anton Smit grace public and private collections locally and abroad, which include the permanent collections of the Pretoria Art Museum, Rembrandt Foundation, Graff/Delaire Collection.

Art Fairs

Anton Smit featured at SCOPE Art Fair New York in 2017.

Competitions

Anton Smit entered his first sculpting competition at the age of sixteen, and won the first prize. Smit received an honourable mention in 1988 at the SA Association of Arts' New Signatures competition and proceeded to win the first prize in the same competition in 1979.