

Artist Statement

“Art, no less than wisdom, waits on life” – Louis Bourgeois. Inside my studio are plastic boxes filled with cut-up unresolved works, waiting for the chance to be reconstructed, art waiting to find a place in the world. I consistently destroyed my work and threw it away, so drawings not good enough were burnt or cut up violently. The obsessive cutting in the process of my work is cathartic, helping me to cope with the challenges in my life. Many artists have inspired me over the years but the real reason for my process is very personal. Feeling undervalued as a child became an ongoing influence in my making process as an adult. My history in art is figurative. In 2015 I received a residency at The Bag Factory, an experience that led my work into abstraction. I found a way to use my destructive process as a more positive creative journey, cutting up failed works and reassembling them into the abstract works I produce today. Living in Hamburg, Eastern Cape has influenced my new work. Inspired by the marks I see in nature such as the sea, the sand, rocks and driftwood. I wake up everyday watching the sun rise and in the evenings I watch the sun set. My work is a diary of my life journey.”

Biography

Toni-Ann Ballenden spent three months as an Artist in Residence at the Bag Factory in 2015, before moving on to Ariel Empire Studios with Bronwyn Lace. At the end of March 2016, this group of artists relocated to August House, an old five-story office building in Doornfontein, Johannesburg, with over 50 contemporary artists, making it the largest group of artists in one building in South Africa.

Education

Since qualifying Cum Laude with a National Higher Diploma in Fine from the Wits Technikon in 1993, Ballenden has been creating art and teaching.

Exhibition History

Her work can be found in three major collections, namely 2 drawings in the Anglo-American Collection (1994), the Sasol Collection (2004), and the Johannesburg University Collection. Toni has exhibited in nine solo exhibitions and multiple group exhibitions.

Collections

1992 - First Prize Thami Mnyele Fine Arts Award.

1993 - Wits Tech Collection.

1994 - Anglo American Collection.

2004 - The Sasol Collection.

2015 - Artists Residency Bag Factory Fordsburg, Johannesburg.

2017-2018 - Chairman Bjorn Ronneberg, The Astrup Fernley Art Museum.

2018-2019 - SAFFCA, Pierre Lombard Collection.
