

Walter Oltmann



Biography

Born in 1960 in Rustenburg, Gauteng, South Africa, Walter Oltmann's main area of focus is sculpture, and more particularly in fabricating woven wire forms, which sometimes reference local craft traditions. He has researched and written on the use of wire in African material culture in this region and is deeply interested in the influence of these traditions in contemporary South African art. He has had numerous solo exhibitions with the Goodman Gallery, and has created several large-scale commissions for venues such as the Zeitz Sculpture Garden in Segera, Kenya.

Artist Statement

My main area of creative focus is in sculpture, and more particularly in fabricating woven wire forms which sometimes reference local craft traditions. My drawings are also based on and explore similar references. I have researched and written on the use of wire in African material culture in this region and am deeply interested in the influence of these traditions in contemporary South African art. While I exhibit my artworks quite regularly on group and solo exhibitions, I have in recent years also been involved in large-scale commissions.

In my sculptures I use images of natural phenomena (human, plant and animal) and play with the idea of mutation, hybrids and reconfiguring the familiar. Through dramatically enlarging and/or transposing features of one to the other, I play with the paradox between vulnerability and the monstrous. Using the language of craft, my artworks are always a product of labour and time.

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Solo Exhibitions

2015 *Cradle*, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

2014 *In the Weave*, Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

2013 *Penumbra*, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

2008 Shared exhibition with Peter Schütz, Goodman Gallery, South Africa

2007 *Walter Oltman* Solo exhibition at Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

Goodman Gallery

2001 *Standard Bank young Artist* travelling exhibition, South Africa

1998 *Icons and Idols*, Two person exhibition with Peter Schutz, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

1993 Two person exhibition with Peter Schütz, Goodman Gallery, South Africa

Group Exhibitions

2016 *New Revolutions: Goodman Gallery at 50*, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

2016 *New Revolutions: Goodman Gallery at 50*, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

2015-2016 *Disguise: Masks & Global African Art*, Seattle Art Museum WA, Brooklyn Museum NY, Fowler Museum CA, USA

2015 *TWENTY: Art in the Time of Democracy*, Beijing International Art Biennale, Beijing, China

2014 *From Sitting to Selfie*, Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

2012 *Coming of Age: 21 Years of Artist Proof Studio*, Johannesburg Art Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

2012 *Pointure*, University of Johannesburg Art Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

2011 *Water, The [Delicate] Thread of Life*, Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

2010 *9 Linocuts*, Gallery AOP, Johannesburg, South Africa

2010 *The Marks We Make*, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

2008 *Matrix Natura*, 18th International Contemporary Textile Exhibition, Como, Italy

2007 *Sasol Wax Art*, Johannesburg Art Gallery/Izikho Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

2005 *In the Making: Materials and Process*, group exhibition at Michael Stevenson Contemporary Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

2004 Michael Stevenson Contemporary Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa (shared exhibition with Kevin Brand and Samson Mudzunga)

2003 *Coexistence: Contemporary Cultural Production in South Africa*, The Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Boston, USA

1998 *Holdings: Refiguring the Archive*, Group exhibition, WITS University, Johannesburg, South Africa

1995 *Three Sculptors – Three Readers*, Three person travelling exhibition with Neels Coetzee and Peter Schütz

1985 *Cape Town Triennial Exhibition*, Cape Town, South Africa

Teaching, Lectureships and Workshop

Current: Lecturer, Division of Visual Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

Awards and Merits

2010 Ampersand Fellowship, Ampersand Foundation

2007 Sasol Wax Art Award

2001 Standard Bank Young Artist Award for Visual Art

Academic Record and Residencies

Postgraduate

1982-1985 MA WITS University, Johannesburg

Undergraduate

1978-1981 BA, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg

Collections

University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu Natal
University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town
Tatham Gallery, Pietermaritzburg
Durban Art Gallery Museum
Johannesburg Art Gallery
King George VI Museum, Port Elizabeth
Pretoria Art Museum
J Stegman Gallery, University of the Free State
Standard Bank Collection, Johannesburg
Oliewenhuis Museum, Bloemfontein
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Museum, Port Elizabeth
21C Hotel Museum, Kentucky
21C Hotel Museum, Ohio
Seattle Art Museum, Washington
Seguros Art Centre, Bogota, Colombia

Commissions

2008 SAB Headoffice, Sandton, Johannesburg (2 large banners)
2007 wall sculpture for the Wits Medical School foyer
2005/6 Wits Origins Centre: world map interpretation
2004 SAB wall sculpture, Sandton, Johannesburg
2003 New Constitutional Court, chandeliers and lamp shades, JHB
2003 Arabella Sheraton Hotel, Cape Town: suspended sculpture
2003 Dimension Data: suspended sculpture, Bryanston, JHB
2000 Sandton Convention Centre: wall sculpture
1999 ABSA North Towers: sculpture, Johannesburg
1998 MTN wall sculpture, Sandton, Johannesburg
1997 Durban Convention Centre: wall sculpture
1995 Gencor wall sculpture, Johannesburg