

smac



JOHANN LOUW

Lacrimosa

15 . 02 . 19

23 . 03 . 19

The word *lacrimosa* – which is the title under which this collection of work by Johann Louw falls – is central to understanding his current artistic preoccupations. Deriving from the Latin *lacrimosus*, which is the state of being tearful or mournful, Louw underscores the act of weeping as one of the most important qualities that he wishes to activate in this body of work. In addition, the *Lacrimosa* is a significant part of the *Dies Irae* sequence in the Roman Catholic Requiem Mass. The Latin text that makes up this sequence have inspired various composers, including Mozart, Berlioz, and Verdi, who have all used the text as a focal movement of their own compositions. As the *Lacrimosa* movement reads:

Lacrimosa dies illa [Full of tears will be that day]

Qua resurget ex favilla [When from the ashes shall arise]

Judicandus homo reus. [The guilty man to be judged.]

Huic ergo parce, Deus: [Therefore spare him, O God:]

Pie Jesu Domine, [Merciful Lord Jesus,]

Dona eis requiem. Amen. [Grant them eternal rest. Amen.]

Within such a context where the symptoms of sorrow and the ritual of supplication are predominant, Louw's work begs an important question: how can eternal rest be achieved, and is it possible at all? What do we call those places where sorrow resides, and how do we represent them? For in his largescale paintings, we see humans confronting the beasts of their own sorrow – be it a giant squid floating in a glass tank or a beached whale stranded on a shore. Staring at these creatures from the deep, the human figures that Louw paints seem to be at once mesmerised by the sight of these fantastical beasts, but also overcome by their magnitude and the strangeness of their lifeless bodies. These creatures dominate the pictorial space, and their fleshiness – the pink and white and grey of their bodies – offers a striking counterpoint to the enraptured human spectators who gaze at them.

It is exactly at this intersection between life and death, presence and absence, that Louw's work dwells. For in many ways, Louw is dealing with a theme that spans much of his work, which is the form and texture of the body in times of weakness and loss – the corporeal remnants, so to speak. But these are bodily forms bereft of some essential vitality, which leaves the viewer with the aftermath of life. In the context of his current work, the creatures that he paints – suspended between the states of animism and decay – remind us of the vulnerability of existence, and our profound longing to capture and understand the fleeting qualities of life.

In both his paintings and sculptural work, Louw activates another derivative of the Latin *lacrimosus*, namely that of the lachrymatory – a small vessel of terracotta or glass, mostly found in Roman and late Greek tombs, that was allegedly used for storing the tears of mourners. As the legend goes, these tear-catchers were placed with the body of the deceased as a reminder of those who were left behind, bereft and inconsolable. Louw's work functions in a similar manner, as he presents us with vessels that speak of grief and loss. When life departs, when faced with the lifeless body, we need some ritual for marking our loss, for recognising death and making sense of our relation to the unknown thereafter. But, as Louw suggests, there is beauty to be found in this process of grieving, especially in the vessels and the objects, the paintings and the sculptures, that we use to store our tears and tell our stories of life and death.

Text by Ernst van de Waal



Johann Louw
Goeiendag Monsieur Courbet, op Jakobsbaai
2019
Oil on Canvas
193 x 284 cm



Johann Louw
Klein Requiem
2018-2019
Oil and Oil Pastel on Canvas
197 x 338.5 cm



Johann Louw

Qua resurget ex favilla

2018

Metal, Plaster of Paris, Paper, Nylon, Charcoal and Ashes

Dimensions Variable

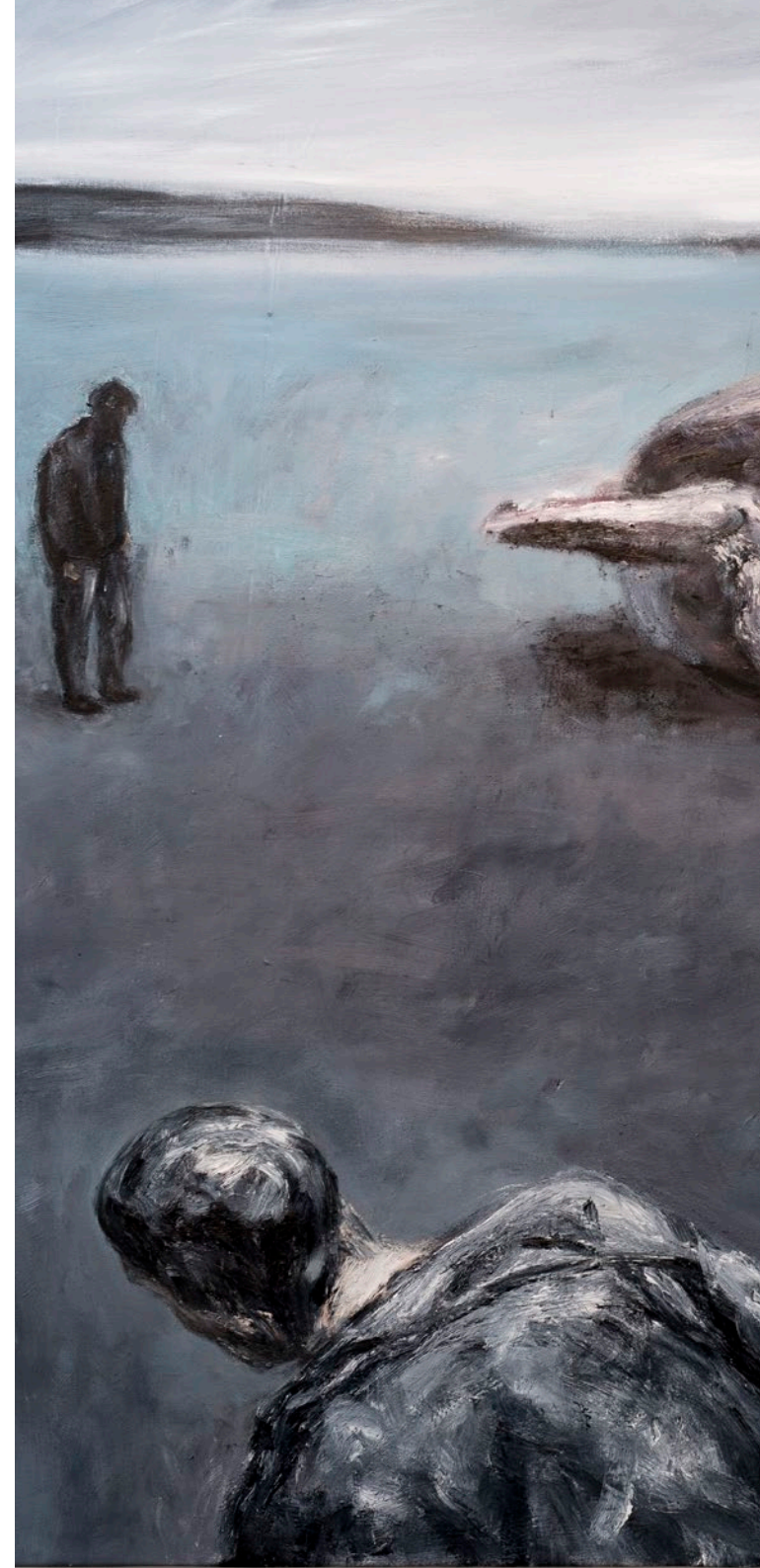
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

b. 1965. Cape Town, South Africa. Lives and works in Cape Town, South Africa.

Johann Louw is one of South Africa's pre-eminent painters. Louw's paintings are intense responses to notions of identity and space, as well as to the particular relationship that exists between the artist and his subjects. Introspective and empathetic, Louw's ambiguous subjects and deserted scenes are testament to a particular psychological spirit of place and time, experienced with discomfort across social structures within a fast transitioning South Africa. There is a pervading uneasiness as vulnerably exposed figures and forsaken landscapes occupy non-descript and paradoxical spaces. Louw's masterful handling of his materials draws the viewer in and demands an emotive engagement. Although primarily a painter, Johann Louw also produces expressive drawings and graphic works.

Johann Louw graduated with a Masters in Fine Art from Stellenbosch University in 1992, and has since exhibited to great critical acclaim both in South Africa and abroad. In 2007, the Sanlam Art Collection presented a mid-career retrospective as a tribute to Louw's extensive output and distinguished career over the past two decades. This exhibition toured the country in 2008 and 2009, and was accompanied by a publication on the artist.

Most recently, Louw participated in a group show, entitled *Endless Horizons Gráfica Sudafricana*, at the Mexican Art Expo in Mexico City, Mexico. Louw also presented a solo booth with SMAC Gallery at Istanbul Contemporary, Istanbul, Turkey.

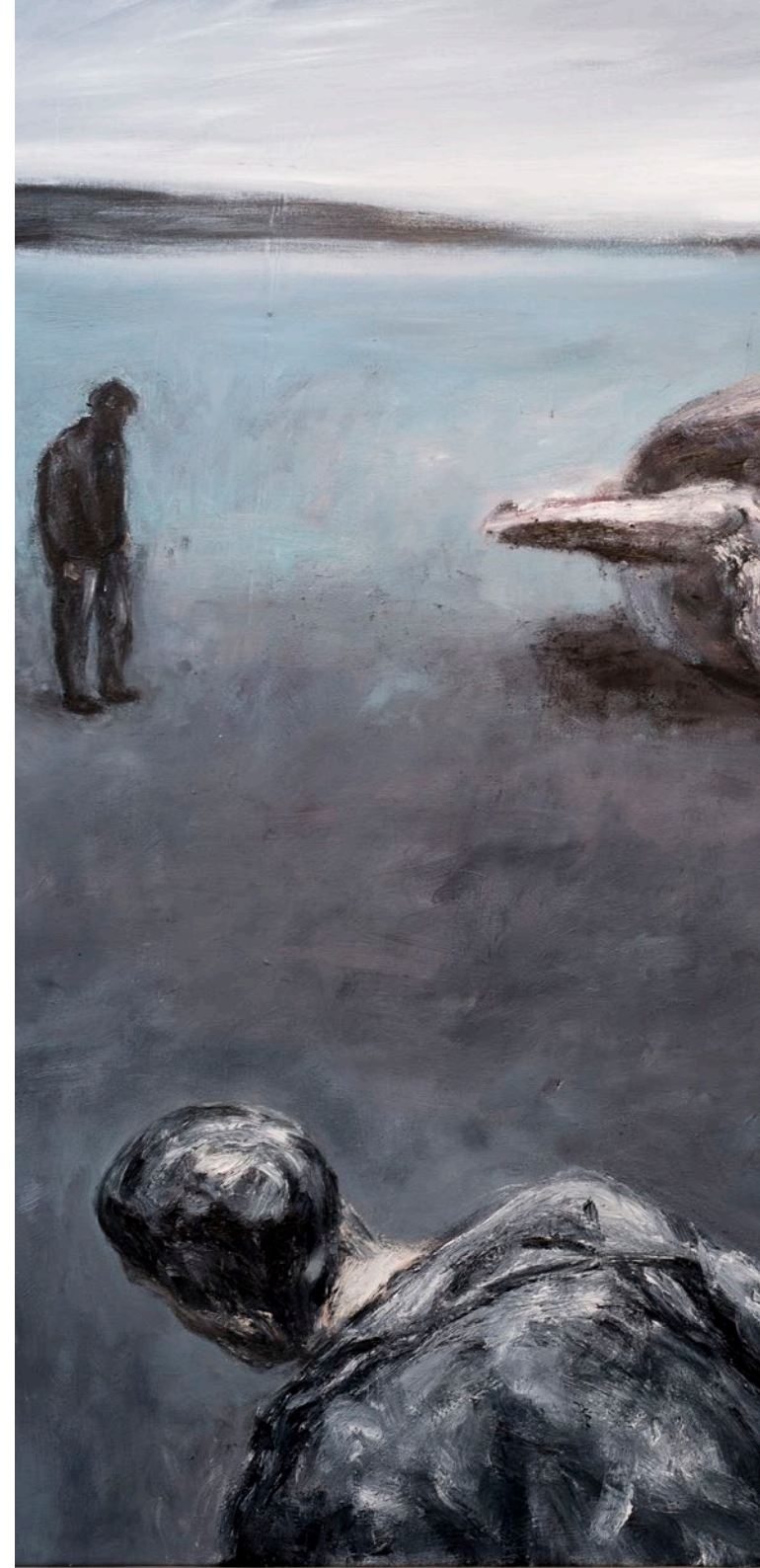


In 2009, Louw was selected to form part of *Linguaggi del Mondo: Languages of the World* – an official collateral exhibition to the 53rd Venice Biennale in 2009. In 2010 he exhibited in *Environmental Concern and Human Existence* at the 4th Beijing International Art Biennale, China, and *Paralleli* – the official exhibition of the Sabbionetta Biennale for Contemporary Art in Italy.

Louw was awarded the Ampersand Fellowship in 2014. He was included in *Home Truths*, curated by Michael Godby, that opened in late 2016, at the Iziko South African National Gallery in Cape Town, and later at the Sanlam Art Gallery in Belville. In the same year, the Association of Visual Art (AVA) Gallery in Cape Town, South Africa presented a solo exhibition of works by Johann Louw, entitled *AVA Alumni: Johann Louw*. The

exhibition was the first in a series where a selection of established artists had the opportunity to showcase the history of their practice and their progression since originally showing with the AVA Gallery.

Solo exhibitions include: *Der Abschied* at SMAC Gallery in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2017; *Loog* at SMAC Gallery in Stellenbosch, South Africa in 2016; *New Paintings* in 2010 at SMAC in Stellenbosch, *Terugkoms van Cythera (Return from Cythera)* in 2013 at SMAC in Cape Town and *Gestalten*, an exhibition of large scale works on paper at SMAC in Cape Town, in 2014. The University of Johannesburg Art Gallery presented his *Et in Arcadia Ego* in 2013.



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JOHANN LOUW

CURRICULUM VITAE

JOHANN LOUW

C.V

BIOGRAPHY

Born 1965, Bellville, South Africa.
Lives and works in Cape Town, South Africa.

EDUCATION

1992 Master of Fine Arts (MA), University of Stellenbosch, South Africa.

1985 Bachelor of Fine Arts (BA), University of Stellenbosch, South Africa.

AWARDS & RESIDENCIES

2014 Artist in Residence, The Ampersand Foundation, New York City, USA.
The Ampersand Foundation Fellowship Award, New York City, USA.

2011 Artist in Residence, Nirox Foundation Sculpture Park, Arts on Main, Johannesburg, South Africa.

2010 Artist in Residence, Le Atelier Pons, Paris, France.

1991 Standard Bank Drawing Competition Award, Grahamstown, South Africa.

1989 Volkskas Atelier Merit – Award, Pretoria, South Africa.
HSRC Bursary for Postgraduate Study, Pretoria, South Africa.

1988 Rolfes Student Art – Merit Award, Durban, South Africa.
Volkskas Atelier – Merit Award, Pretoria, South Africa.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS & PRESENTATIONS

2019 [upcoming] *Lacrimosa*, SMAC Gallery, CApe Town, South Africa.

2018 Contemporary Istanbul (SMAC Gallery), Istanbul, Turkey.

2017 'Der Abschied', SMAC Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa.
AVA Alumni: Johann Louw, Association for Visual Arts Gallery (AVA), Cape Town, South Africa.

2016 *Loog*, SMAC Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa.

2014 *Gestalten*, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

2013 *Et in Arcadia Ego*, University of Johannesburg Art Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa.
Terugkoms van Cythera, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

2010 *New Paintings*, SMAC Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa.

2007 *Johann Louw: A Mid-Career Retrospective*, [Travelling Exhibition], Sanlam Art Gallery, Bellville; Pretoria Art Museum, Pretoria; Oliewenhuis Art Museum, Bloemfontein; SASOL Museum, Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa.

Untitled, Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees (KKNK), Oudtshoorn, South Africa.

Gaze, Erdmann Contemporary, Cape Town, South Africa.

2005 *Recent and Not So Recent Paintings by Johann Louw*, Irma Stern Museum, Cape Town, South Africa.

2003 *Sixth Solo Exhibition*, Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa.

2001 *Fifth Solo Exhibition*, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

1999 *Fourth Solo Exhibition*, Harris Fine Art Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

Third Solo Exhibition, Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa.

1998 *Second Solo Exhibition*, Association for Visual Arts Gallery (AVA), Cape Town, South Africa.

1996 *First Solo Exhibition*, Association for Visual Arts Gallery (AVA), Cape Town, South Africa.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS & PRESENTATIONS

2018 *Forward? Forward! Forward...*, Stellenbosch University Museum, Stellenbosch, South Africa.

Wish You Were Here, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

Endless Horizons [Travelling Exhibition], Taller Rufino Tamayo, Oaxaca, Mexico.

FNB Joburg Art Fair, Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Impressions, Association of Arts Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa.

2017 *X: Part III*, SMAC Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa.

FNB Joburg Art Fair (SMAC Gallery), Sandton Convention Centre,

Johannesburg, South Africa.

X: *Part I*, SMAC Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa.

Cape Town Art Fair (SMAC Gallery), Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC), Cape Town, South Africa.

X: *Part II*, SMAC Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa.

- 2016** FNB Joburg Art Fair (SMAC Gallery), Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa.
UPSTART/STARTUP, SMAC Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa.
Home truths: Domestic Interiors in South African Collections, IZIKO South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.
 Cape Town Art Fair (SMAC Gallery), Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC), Cape Town, South Africa.
SUMMER SHOW '16, SMAC Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa.
- 2015** FNB Joburg Art Fair (SMAC Gallery), Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa.
 Cape Town Art Fair (SMAC Gallery), The Avenue, V&A Waterfront, Cape Town, South Africa.
- 2014** *PAPERWORK: An Exhibition of Contemporary South African Works on Paper*, SMAC Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa.
 Cape Town Art Fair (SMAC Gallery), The Pavilion, V&A Waterfront, Cape Town, South Africa.
 Miart (SMAC Gallery), Fieromilanocity, Milan, Italy.
 FNB Joburg Art Fair (SMAC Gallery), Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- 2013** *The Xmas Show*, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.
 ARCOmadrid (SMAC Gallery), IFEMA- Feira de Madrid, Madrid, Spain.
 Cape Town Art Fair, (SMAC Gallery), The Lookout, V&A Waterfront, Cape Town, South Africa.
Weerberug, Curated by Luan Nel, Aardklop National Festival, Potchefstroom, South Africa.
 FNB Joburg Art Fair (SMAC Gallery), Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa.
SPI National Portrait Award Finalist Exhibition, Sanlam Private Investments in Collaboration with Rust-en-Vrede Art Gallery, Rust-en-Vrede Art Gallery,

Cape Town, South Africa.

Vanitas, Curated by Clare Menck, Dorp Street Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa.

The Loom Of The Land, curated by Anton Kannemeyer, STEVENSON, Johannesburg, South Africa.

- 2012** *PAINT I: Contemporary South African Painting 2002 - 2012*, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.
Collection 17, SMAC Gallery, Aardklop National Festival, Potchefstroom, South Africa.
 FNB Joburg Art Fair (SMAC Gallery), Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa.
Collection 16, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.
Contemporary Selection, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.
- 2011** *Collection 15*, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.
Collection 14, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.
Designs of Time, Fried Contemporary, Pretoria, South Africa.
Collection 13, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.
 FNB Joburg Art Fair (SMAC Gallery), Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- 2010** *Painters Who Print*, [Travelling Exhibition], Aardklop Kunstefees, Potchefstroom; The Gallery at Grande Provance, Franschoek, South Africa.
Paralleli, Official Exhibition of the 2nd Sabbionetta Biennale, Palazzo Ducale, Sabbionetta, Italy.
Index 40: Leading works from the Sanlam Art Collection [Travelling Exhibition]; SMAC Gallery, Stellenbosch; Oliewenhuis Art Museum, Bloemfontein; University of Johannesburg Art Gallery, Johannesburg; Sanlam Art Gallery, Bellville, South Africa.
Divisions: Aspects of South African Art 1948-2010, SMAC Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa.
Rendezvous: Focus Original Lithography, University of Johannesburg Art Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa.
Environmental Concern and Human Existence, Group Exhibition of the 4th Beijing International Art Biennale, The National Art Museum of China, Beijing, China.
 FNB Joburg Art Fair (SMAC Gallery), Sandton Convention Centre,

Johannesburg, South Africa.

2009 *I Linguaggi del Mondo: Languages of the World*, Exhibition at the 53rd Venice Biennale, Pallazzo Querini Art House, Venice, Italy.

FNB Joburg Art Fair (SMAC Gallery), Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa.

2008 *Collection 10*, SMAC Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa.

Home is my Castle, Erdmann Contemporary, Cape Town, South Africa.

FNB Joburg Art Fair (SMAC Gallery), Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Johann Louw & Sanell Aggenbach: Portraits, SMAC Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa.

2007 *Collection 6*, SMAC Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa.

2006 *Out of Context*, Erdmann Contemporary, Cape Town, South Africa.

Drawings & Prints, Art on Paper, Johannesburg, South Africa.

2004 *New Identities, South African Artists Exhibition*, Museum Bochum-kunstsammlung, Bochum, Germany.

2003 *Group Show*, Strydom Gallery, George, South Africa.

Teken, Art on Paper, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Artseason, Group Exhibition of Contemporary South African and German art, Santé Winelands, Paarl, South Africa.

2002 *Three Person Show*, with Clare Menck & Kennet Sinclair, Tokara, Stellenbosch, South Africa.

1999 *Postcards from the Edge*, Axis Gallery, New York City, USA.

1998 *Garob*, Knysna Fine Art Gallery, Knysna, South Africa.

Vital Signs, Australia National University (ANU) School of Art Gallery, Canberra, Australia.

Private Histories, Munich, Germany.

Landscape, Association for Visual Arts Gallery (AVA), Cape Town, South Africa.

Summer Salon, with Rose Korber, Bay Hotel, Cape Town, South Africa.

1997 *Three-person show*, Primart, Cape Town, South Africa.

Unplugged 2, Rembrandt Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Love (artwork in collaboration with Clare Menck), The Lounge, Cape Town, South Africa.

Die Ses : A Sculptural Requiem, (in collaboration with Clare Menck), Zonnebloem Estate/ District Six, Cape Town, South Africa.

Cyst : works in paint, [Travelling Exhibition], Fringe Exhibition for Cape Town Biennale, Castle of Good Hope, Cape Town, Sandton Civic Gallery, Johannesburg South Africa.

1996 *Group Exhibition*, Dorp Street Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa.

Portraits, The Planet Contemporary Art Site, Cape Town, South Africa.

Group Exhibition, Primart Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

Group Exhibition, Labia Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

1995 *Committee's Choice*, Association for Visual Arts, Cape Town, South Africa.

1994 *Staff Exhibition*, University of Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch, South Africa.

Displacements – South African Works on Paper, The Block Museum, Chicago, USA.

1991 *The Triennial Exhibition*, Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

1990 *Critic's Choice Exhibition*, Association for Visual Arts Gallery (AVA), Cape Town, South Africa.

1989 *Nudes Exhibition*, Association for Visual Arts Gallery (AVA), Cape Town, South Africa.

PUBLICATIONS

Louw, J. | Johann Louw: Artist's Monograph (2010)

Johann Louw and Sanell Aggenbach: Portraits (2008)

SELECTED PRESS HIGHLIGHTS

Minnaar, M. 2014. Aanslag op onderbewuste. Die Burger. 5 December 2014.

Liebbrandt, T. 2016. Scraping away to essential shape. The Weekend Argus. 13 March 2016.

Kritzinger, N. 2017. Louw art: baboon in our psyche is there when we die.

JOHANN LOUW

CV

Business Day [online]. 20 December 2017. [Accessed 22.01.2019].

Myburg, J. 2013. Dood Skuil in Louw se 'Arcadia'. Die Beeld. 21 August 2013, p.18.

Van Bosch, C. 2011. Louw se Skilderye Spreek Kleurtaal. Die Burger. 14 January 2011.

COLLECTIONS

Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

Johannesburg Art Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Durban Art Gallery, Durban, South Africa.

Sasol Art Collection, Johannesburg, South Africa.

University of Stellenbosch Collection, Stellenbosch, South Africa.

University of Cape Town Collection, Cape Town, South Africa.

Spier Art Collection, Stellenbosch, South Africa.

Pepkor, Cape Town, South Africa.

Media24, Cape Town, South Africa.

Sanlam Collection Cape Town, South Africa.

Old Mutual, London, UK.

Johannesburg Stock Exchange, Johannesburg, South Africa.

ABSA Bank, Johannesburg, South Africa.

J P Morgan Ltd, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Bochum Kunsthalle, Bochum, Germany.

Johann C Porer Collection on loan to University of Cape Town, Oppenheimer Library, Cape Town, South Africa.

Hollard, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Cazenove, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Barclays, UK.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please contact SMAC Gallery for more information regarding the availability of the works included in this portfolio, or for any other queries.

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