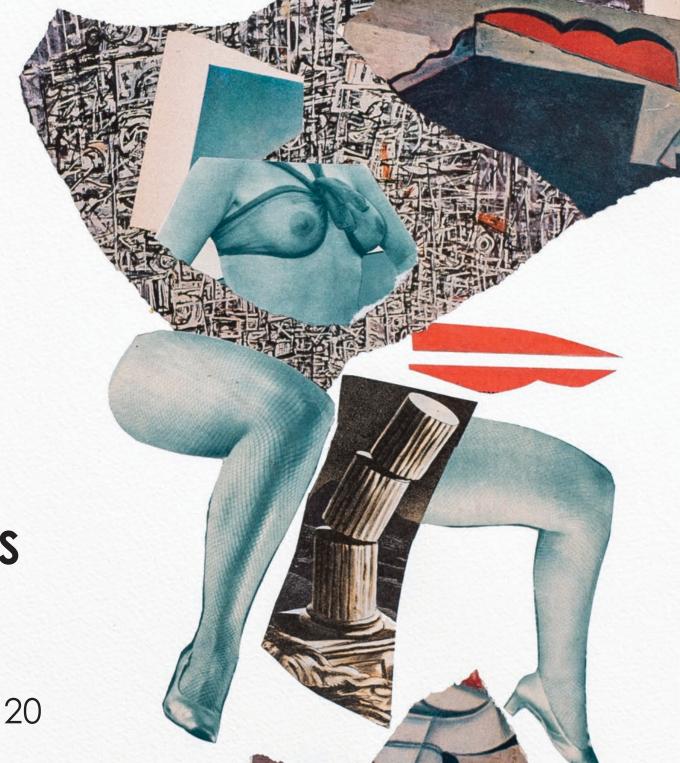
# smac



# KATE GOTTGENS

Artist's Room

10.06.20-10.07.20

# Kate Gottgens

Text by Alexandra Dodd

Surreal. Haunted. Erotic. Laconic. Her paintings are a daring exploration of the boundary between figuration and abstraction, and of the freedom in the process of painting itself. Risqué fictions spring up as characters, scenes and random events cohere into ghostly formal shapes. In the immediate pre-pandemic period, Kate Gottgens' work reached an apogee of louche post-pop sublimity. The world as we thought we knew it was teetering on the brink of collapse and it looked like so much weird fun at the poolside. And then there was Wuhan.

Sex and death loom large in this new body of works made at the start of the global state of emergency and in the ongoing period of lockdown. She begins by taking the swimming pool trope into unfettered new territory with an aerial view of an emptied-out pool in an emptied-out city that resembles an abandoned amusement park or the innards of a pin ball machine. It is the stuff of 1950s B-grade horror. In another aerial view, we encounter empty water slides, cut loose from the hold of gravity. The Kreepy Krauly has gone rogue, overcome by machinic impulses. Wet and wild, a knotted assemblage of lubricated tubing unfurls across the dripping surface of the canvas in pointless loops of pleasure seeking.

And then come the collages. Archival photographs are the imaginative stock from which Gottgens builds the parallel worlds in her paintings. In this new suite of catastrophic collages, the found image itself assumes centre stage. The images are taken from 'the Red Book – not Carl Jung's great work,' she jokes, but a scrapbook found at a flea market comprised of hundreds of images of artworks from ancient

to Modern, cut and pasted from vintage magazines of the 50s and 60s. Fragmentation reaches new depths of primal recognition. Here is the snake. There is the maiden, the pirate, the sun – visual archetypes washing up on the shore of our collective consciousness like flotsam and jetsam.

The collage works comprise a series of skulls, interiors and abstract figurations. Like acts of contemplation in real time, or screen grabs from an incessant livestream of subconscious desires, fears, urges and memories, these new works evoke an apocalyptic imaginary realm. We're inside now. Inside the crisis and inside our heads. But the interior is not a safe space to be. Miscellaneous forces of disruption rip through suburban lounges, molten larva or giant engulfing tsunami waves crashing in and smashing up the baroque couch. Not even the heavy drapes of high classicism can curtain the private realm from the great unleashing.

Collage lends itself to Gottgens' interest in quoting and appropriating elements from art history. Fragments of doric column cascade through the image plane, disrupting a storeroom of ornately framed oils and classical marble sculptures, ironically titled *Inheritance*. From Hieronymous Bosch's vestigial limbs and organs, to Salvador Dali's melting timepieces, these works are rife with intertextuality. The figure of a woman emerges from slashes of Hokusai's *Great Wave of Kanagawa*. Dressed in Amish blue, she tilts forward in reverence, her head a breaking wave amidst shards of scribbled tide and pointillist ripples. She is ocean.

KATE GOTTGENS

Text by Alexandra Dodd

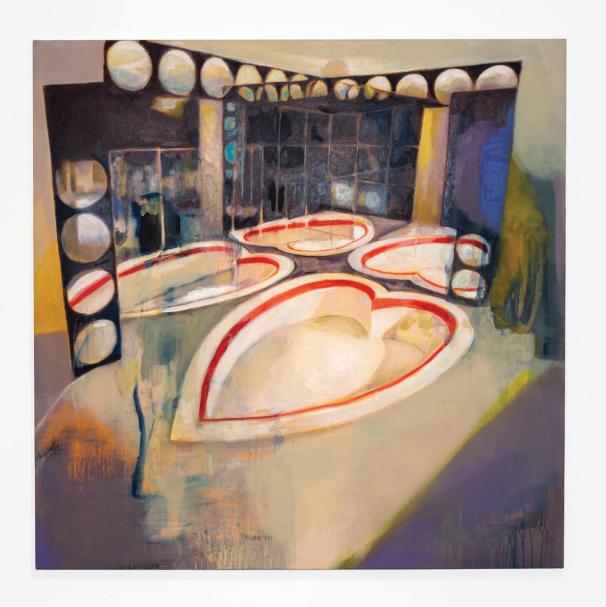
Handwritten scraps of prose appear on torn strips of paper like existential Post-its from the beyond – 'till the end', 'I forgive, 'I remain'... Connections form and fall apart as the harried eye moves restlessly over shards of half-recognised material seeking out the inherited codes, but rarely settling. Hands groping flesh form the apex of a skull. A mountain occupies the space of forehead. The nose is metonym for scent – a simulacrum of sweet wild flora. In several of the skull works, the eyes and mouths have been supplanted by jagged cave-like absences which deliver the memento mori message – the injunction to meditate on death. Perhaps there is more to them though. These flat voids dominate the image field materialising the inner dialogue of the artist – of all artists across time – concerning the burden of sight and speech in the face of war, inequality, injustice, chaos.

Vanitas 4 (I Can't Breathe) was made in response to the recent murder by asphyxiation of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin as two officers further restrained Floyd and a fourth prevented onlookers from intervening. Here, Gottgens channels Francisco Goya's Third of May 1808. The soldiers killing the unarmed men are turned away so that the viewer cannot connect to them. The victims have faces. The killers do not. Again the eyes of the skull

are voids of darkness. The cave of the mouth is occupied by some genteel, fussing white hands doing very little in the face the 400-year assault on black lives. There will be no going back from this.

Even the humour in this series is dark – quick dirty jokes hinged on the tango of gender and power. In *Nordic Noir* the grim reaper plays a game of bondage with a blonde in a pink bikini. A skeleton voyeur mildly surveys the scene from the cold comfort of an icy fjord. In *How is Old Master*, a Victorian gentleman sets off to the opera accompanied by his lady who is nothing more than her legs and arse, really – just the parts he desires.

Even so, the eroticism is real. And nowhere more incarnate than in The Rest. In this painting a topless girl lounges against a smudged pink wall. Coyly pinned to the side of her featureless face, her long dark hair alludes to the dark untamed bush at the epicentre of Gustave Courbet's L'Origine du Monde, which hangs on the wall above her head. The line of her neat parting echoes the slit between the naked legs of the painted woman, spread in easy abandon, revealing the origin of the world.



Kate Gottgens Love Abandoned 2020 Oil on Canvas 140 x 140 cm







R 38 000.00 (Selling Price Exclusive of VAT)



Kate Gottgens Haiku (Wave) 2020 Collage on Paper 76 x 57 cm







**Kate Gottgens** Vanitas VI (Till the end) 2020 Collage on Paper 105.5 x 75 cm

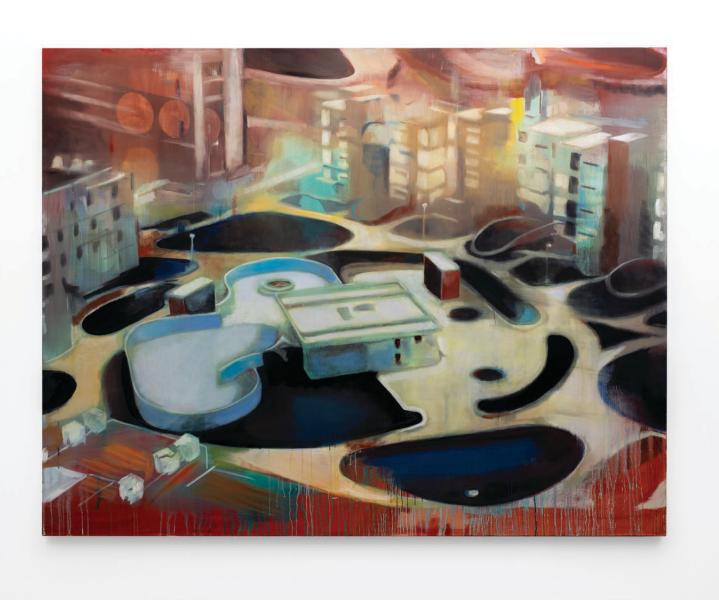
R 45 000.00 (Selling Price Exclusive of VAT)

Kate Gottgens Ghost 2020 Collage on Paper 76 x 57 cm

R 38 000.00 (Selling Price Exclusive of VAT)

**Kate Gottgens**A tale without handmaids
2020
Collage on Paper
77 x 57 cm





Kate Gottgens Tilt 2020 Oil on Canvas 168 x 214 cm





**Kate Gottgens** Vanitas II (Skull with Renaissance teeth) 2020 Collage on Paper 77 x 56 cm

R 35 000.00 (Selling Price Exclusive of VAT)



Kate Gottgens
Vanitas IV (I can't breathe)
2020
Collage on Paper
76 x 56 cm





Kate Gottgens
Behind the drapes
2020
Collage on Paper
77 x 57 cm

R 38 000.00 (Selling Price Exclusive of VAT)



**Kate Gottgens** Vanitas I (Skull with three gold teeth) 2020 Collage on Paper 77 x 56 cm

# R 35 000.00

(Selling Price Exclusive of VAT)





# **Kate Gottgens**Nothing is completely satisfying 2020 Oil on Canvas 125 x 150 cm



**Kate Gottgens** We need to talk about Cosimo 2020 Collage on Paper 77 x 56 cm

R 38 000.00 (Selling Price Exclusive of VAT)



Kate Gottgens Vanitas V (Skull with Devilish eye) 2020 Collage on Paper 76 x 56 cm





Kate Gottgens Inheritance 2020 Collage on Paper 77 x 57 cm

R 38 000.00 (Selling Price Exclusive of VAT)



**Kate Gottgens**The museum of unnatural history 2020 Collage on Paper 76 x 57 cm







Kate Gottgens
Fall
2020
Collage on Paper
100 x 71 cm

**R 45 000.00** (Selling Price Exclusive of VAT)



Kate Gottgens Cubist Lover

2020 Collage on Paper 76 x 57 cm





R 38 000.00 (Selling Price Exclusive of VAT)



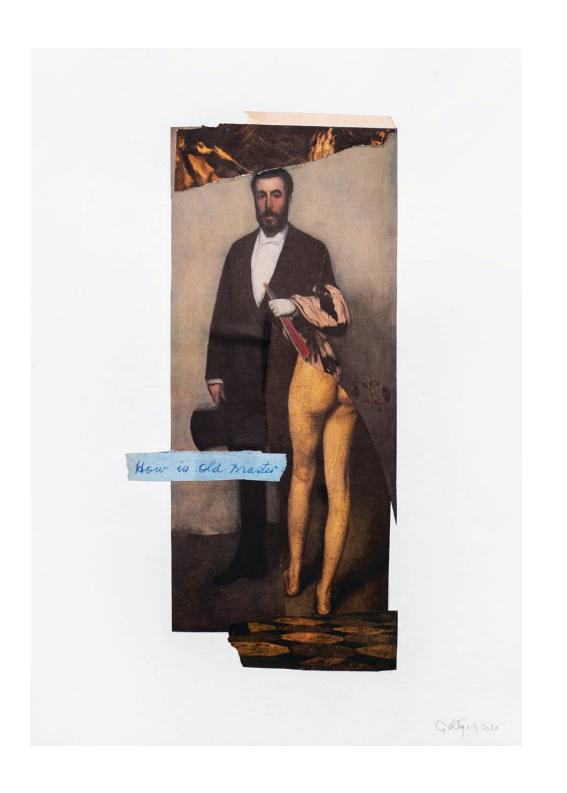
Kate Gottgens Room 101 2020 Collage on Paper 76 x 57 cm





Kate Gottgens
The Rest
2020
Oil on Canvas
90.5 x 69 cm

Reserved R 80 000.00 (Selling Price Exclusive of VAT)



Kate Gottgens
Old Master
2020
Collage on Paper
42 x 30 cm







# Kate Gottgens

Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so distressing 2020 Collage on Paper 77 x 57 cm

> R 38 000.00 (Selling Price Exclusive of VAT)

Kate Gottgens Nordic noir 2020 Collage on Paper 77 x 57 cm

R 38 000.00 (Selling Price Exclusive of VAT)

**Kate Gottgens** Vanitas III (Skull with a pious smile) 2020 Collage on Paper 76 x 56 cm

# **ARTIST BIOGRAPHY**

Kate Gottgens was born in 1965 in Durban, South Africa, and currently lives and works in Cape Town, South Africa. Gottgens graduated from the Michaelis School of Fine Art at the University of Cape Town, in 1987. Gottgens is the most recent recipient of the Ampersand Fellowship Award, resulting in a residency in New York City, USA.

Gottgens' work is currently included in a group exhibition titled A Show of Solidarity at SMAC Gallery in Cape Town, South Africa. In 2019 her works were included in the Ampersand Foundation Award 21 years celebration exhibition curated by Gordon Froud at the University of Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG) in Johannesburg, South Africa as well as SMAC Gallery's presentation at FNB Art Joburg at the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg, South Africa. Gottgens recently presented a body of new works as part of SMAC Gallery's presentation at Untitled, Art in Miami, USA.

Earlier solo exhibitions include: Cold Cuts as part of SMAC Gallery's presentation at Sydney Contemporary in Sydney, Australia in 2018; Tired from Smiling at SMAC Gallery in Cape Town in 2017: Famine at SMAC Gallery in Johannesburg in 2016; MALICE Aforethought at SMAC Gallery in Cape Town in 2013; Merry Hell and the Dreambody in 2010; Asleep Inside You in 2009; and Little Deaths in 2007. In 2014 Gottgens made her international debut Savage Nature at Espacio Liquido in Gijon, Spain. Following Gottgens' inclusion as the only South African selected for Thames and Hudson's publication, 100 Painters of Tomorrow in 2014, her work was exhibited at One Art Space in New York City, USA as part of the exhibition to launch the publication. In 2015, SMAC Gallery published Kate Gottgens // Paintings 2007 - 2015 to coincide with her exhibition Infinite Loop in Stellenbosch. In 2017 SMAC Gallery published Gottgens' second book,

Gottgens // Paintings 2015 – 2017 to coincide with her exhibition, Tired From Smiling. She presented her first solo exhibition in 1993 entitled Modern Wonders.

Gottaens has exhibited in numerous group shows locally and abroad since 1988-most notably; the 8th New Delhi Triennale in India in 1994 and Scurvy at the Castle of Good Hope in Cape Town in 1995. SMAC Gallery presented Gottaens at Miart in Milan, Italy in 2014, and selected international fairs including Artissima in 2017. Recent group shows include: Suitcase Show, at SMAC Gallery in Cape Town, as part of the group show in collaboration with Galleria Massimo Minini in 2019; Bathing, curated by Brian Shure at Planthouse Gallery in New York City, USA, in 2018; Summer Show '16 at SMAC Gallery in Stellenbosch, South Africa in 2016 and Imago Mundi, a travelling exhibition held at Museo Carlo Bilotti, Rome: Ca' dei Carraresi, Treviso, Italy both in 2014.

Gottgens work was recently acquired by the Hall Art Foundation, Derneburg, Germany & Reading, Vermont USA, the collection Majudia / Arsenal Contemporary in Montreal, Canada, and the Taylor Art Collection in Denver, USA. Further collections include the Luciano Benetton Collection in Treviso, Italy; The Royal Portfolio Collection in Cape Town, South Africa; The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) Collection in Johannesburg, South Africa; Hans Porer Collection in Cape Town, South Africa; Spier Art Collection in Cape Town, South Africa.

Gottgens' work was recently included in SMAC Gallery's group presentation at the 2020 Investec Cape Town Art Fair at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) in Cape Town South Africa.



# KATE GOTTGENS

**CURRICULUM VITAE** 



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# **BIOGRAPHY**

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

# **EDUCATION**

1987 Bachelor of Fine Art Degree (BA), Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town (UCT), Cape Town, South Africa.

## **SOLO EXHIBITIONS & PRESENTATIONS**

**2020 [upcoming]** Solo Exhibition, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

2019 Untitled, Art (SMAC Gallery), Miami Beach, Miami, USA.

**2018** Cold Cuts, Sydney Contemporary (SMAC Gallery), Sydney, Australia. Hermanus Fynarts Festival, FynArt Gallery, Hermanus, South Africa.

2017 Tired from Smiling, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.
The Meek, The Vault -The Silo Hotel, Cape Town, South Africa.

**2016** Famine, SMAC Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa.

2015 The Rising Sea, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (NUNC), Antwerp, Belgium.
Infinite Loop, SMAC Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa.

2014 Savage Nature, Espacio Liquido, Gijon, Spain.

2013 Malice Aforethought, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

2010 Merry Hell and the Dreambody, João Ferreira Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

**2009** Asleep Inside You, João Ferreira Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

**2007** Little Deaths, Universtity of Cape Town (UCT) Irma Stern Museum, Cape Town, South Africa.

**2004** Groundwork, Knysna Fine Art, Knysna, South Africa.

2000 Symbols of the Self, University of Cape Town (UCT) Irma Stern Museum, Cape Town, South Africa.

1993 Modern Wonders, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa.

## **GROUP EXHIBITIONS & PRESENTATIONS**

South Africa.

2020 A Show of Solidarity, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.
Investec Cape Town Art Fair (SMAC Gallery), Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC), Cape Town, South Africa.

2019 That Was Then, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.
Ampersand Foundation Award 21 Years Celebration Exhibition, University of Johannesburg Art Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa.
FNB Art Joburg (SMAC Gallery), Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg,

The Suitcase Show, in collaboration with collaborative exhibition with Galleria Massimo Minini, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

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

**2018** Wish You Were Here, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

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

Bathing, curated by Brian Shure, Planthouse Gallery, New York City, USA. artmonte - carlo (SMAC Gallery), Monte Carlo, Monaco.

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

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

ARTISSIMA, (SMAC Gallery), OVAL Lingotto Fiere, Turin, Italy.

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

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

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

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

**2016** Summer Show '16, SMAC Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa.

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

UPSTART/STARTUP, SMAC Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Cape Town Art Fair (SMAC Gallery), Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC), Cape Town, 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 100 Painters of Tomorrow, One Art Space, New York City, USA.

In Search of Imaginary World, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (NUNC), Antwerp, Belgium.

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

SCOPE FAIR (National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art - NUNC), Miami Beach, Miami, USA.

KATE GOTTGENS C

PAN Amsterdam (National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art-NUNC), RAI Amsterdam Convention Centre, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Cape Town Art Fair (SMAC Gallery), The Pavillion - V&A Waterfront, Cape Town, South Africa.

Viewing room #2: Architecture, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

PAPERWORK: An Exhibition of Contemporary South African Works on Paper, SMAC Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa.

This is Happening Now, Edinburgh International Fashion Festival, Edinburgh, Scotland.

Imago Mundi, [Travelling Exhibition], Museo Carlo Bilotti, Rome; Ca' dei Carraresi, Treviso, Italy.

MiArt (SMAC Gallery), Milan, Italy.

2013 The Xmas Show, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

Cape Town Art Fair, (SMAC Gallery), The Lookout - V&A Waterfront, Cape Town, South Africa.

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

2012 PAINT I: Contemporary South African Painting 2002 - 2012, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

Collection 17: Modern and Contemporary South African Art: 1952 – 2012, Aardklop National Festival (SMAC Gallery), Potchefstroom, South Africa.

Collection 16, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

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

- 2011 Contemporary South African Painters: Kate Gottgens, Simon Stone, Giovanna Bialo-Stone & John Murray, Kalk Bay Modern, Kalk Bay, South Africa.
- **2010** FNB Joburg Art Fair, Sandton Convention Centre (João Ferreira Gallery), Johannesburg, South Africa.
- **2009** FNB Joburg Art Fair, Sandton Convention Centre (João Ferreira Gallery), Johannesburg, South Africa.
- 2007 17th International Association of Analytical Psychology Congress, Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC), Cape Town, South Africa.
  16th Art Salon, Rose Korber Art, Cape Town, South Africa.
- 2001 'Group Exhibition', Knysna Fine Art, Knysna, South Africa.
- 1999 Unplugged, Rembrandt Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- 1998 'Group Exhibition', João Ferreira, Cape Town, South Africa.
- 1996 'Group Exhibition', Hanel Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.
- 1995 Laager, Africus Biennale, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Scurvy, Castle of Good Hope, Cape Town, South Africa.

Volkskas L'Atelier Award Exhibition, ABSA Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa.

- Woman on South Africa, Paarl Museum, Paarl, South Africa.
- 8th New Delhi Triennale, New Delhi Academy of Fine Art, New Dheli, India.
  X it, curated by Malcolm Payne, Association for Visual Arts (AVA) Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.
  Kate Gottgens and Barend de Wet, 74 Hout St, Cape Town, South Africa.
  Volkskas Atelier Award Exhibition, ABSA Gallery, Johannesbura, South Africa.
- 1992 Vita Art Now Award Exhibition, Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG), Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Other Visibilities, Newtown Galleries, Johannesburg, South Africa.
  'Group Exhibition', F.I.G Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa.
  Kate Gottgens and Conrad Weltz, F.I.G. Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa.
  'Group Exhibition', Dal Josaphat Art Foundation, Paarl, South Africa.
  'Group Exhibition', Association for Visual Art (AVA) Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.
- 1990 Pawn/Porn, F.I.G Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- 1988 Urban Melodrama, Market Theatre Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

- 2017 Gottgens, K. | 2017, Kate Gottgens Paintings // 2015 -2017. 2017, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.
  Jamal, A. | 2017, In the World: Essays on Contemporary South African Art, SKIRA Publications, Rome, Italy.
- **2016** Flanery, P. | 2016, Interior: Monkeyboy, Granta Issue 136 'Legacies of Love', Granta Publications, London, UK.
- 2015 Dodd, A. | 2015, Kate Gottgens Paintings 2007-2015. 2015, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.
- 2014 Beers, K. | 2014, 100 Painters Of Tomorrow, Thames & Hudson, London, UK. Benneton, L. | 2014, SOUTH AFRICA: 10 x 12 @ Sa. Contemporary Artists From South Africa, FABRICA, Treviso, Italy.

KATE GOTTGENS C

## **SELECTED PRESS HIGHLIGHTS**

O'Toole, S. 2017. Artist Kate Gottgens captures the essence of suburban restlessness. The Times [online]. Available: https://www.timeslive.co.za/sunday-times/lifestyle/2017-12-05-artist-kate-gottgens-captures-the-essence-of-suburban-restlessness/. [Accessed 5 Dec. 2017].

Leiman, L. 2016. Are you scared of this too? Kate Gottgens' new show 'Famine'. [online] Between 10 and 5. Available at: https://10and5. com/2016/09/26/are-you-scared-of-this-too-kate-gottgens-new-show-famine/ [Accessed 20 Oct. 2016].

IAM Team. 2018. "Tired From Smiling" by Kate Gottgens. Intense Art Magazine [online]. Available at: http://www.iam-africa.com/tired-smiling-kate-gottgens/ [Accessed 16.01.2019].

Pollak, L. 2015. Colour, Blur, Memory: Kate Gottgens' 'Infinite Loop'. ArtThrob [online]. Available at: http://artthrob.co.za/2015/10/14/colour-blur-memory-kate-gottgens-infinite-loop/ [Accessed 16.01.2019].

Art Super. 2017. Collector's Guide | Top 10 | Artissima 2017. Art Super Magazine [online]. Available at: https://artsupermagazine.com/collectors-guide/collectors-guide-2017/artissima-torino-2017/top-10-artissima-turin-2017/ [Accessed 11.07.2017].

## COLLECTIONS

Majudia / Arsenal Contemporary in Montreal, Canada.

Taylor Art Collection in Denver, USA.

Luciano Benetton Collection, Treviso, Italy.

The Royal Portfolio Collection, Cape Town, South Africa.

The Leeu Collection, Franschhoek, South Africa.

The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) Collection, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Hans Porer Collection, Cape Town, South Africa.

Spier Art Collection, Cape Town, South Africa.

Homestead Collection (Norval Foundation), Cape Town, South Africa.

Hall Art Foundation, Derneburg, Germany & Reading, Vermont USA.

# FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please contact SMAC Gallery for more information for any other queries.

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