

Stefan Rossouw



**Free-spirited soul on a quest for
perfection...**



**This is a limited and signed edition of the Stefan Rossouw
“Free - spirited soul on a quest for perfection...” Catalogue
2020**

EDITION: /



Stefan Rossouw (1973 -)

Gracing public and private collections internationally and locally, artist, poet and philosopher Stefan Rossouw have been painting for 32 years and specialises in the art of classical oil painting.

A student of the renowned Elizabeth Riding, he developed a passion for the classic era that clearly shows in the brilliance and detail of his work.

He extensively studied the artwork from the Renaissance, Baroque and Romanic periods and has been greatly inspired by artists such as Caravaggio, Lord Leighton and Bourgeois.

Stefan have an exceptional, natural born talent and dedication, combined with an enthusiastic love and devotion for all painting and art forms, spending the majority of his life in front of his canvases.

He is continuously researching new techniques, which combined with experience and the study of classical techniques, allows him to constantly grow and develop his art form into an ever-changing canvas.

For the last 14 years Stefan made painting a fulltime career - dedicating his life to his passion.

Stefan has been privately teaching art for the last 12 years and his students all develop their own style and techniques under his vigilant guidance.

1973 - 1991

Stefan Rossouw was born on 25 March 1973 in Walvisbay, Namibia as the 13th sibling, growing up on a farm in Maltahohe, in the South of Namibia.

As far back as Stefan can remember, he only wanted to be alone with colouring books and pencils, even though his brother often got mad at him for not wanting to play.

His mother nurtured his hunger to create and continuously supplied new colouring books as he filled one after the other. From the age of 11 Stefan went to Swakopmund Primary School where he was fortunate to have art as a subject. Art was always a defining part of his schooling and childhood.

One Christmas, a school friend, Andre Myburgh, received a set of water colours and Stefan had a chance to paint with it.

After the fourth time Stefan asked to borrow the set, which he had almost finished at this point, Andre gave it to Stefan in exchange for a drawing of palm trees.

Later Stefan's room at the S.S.S. (Swakopmund Secondary School Hostel) had a view over the ocean and Stefan could look over the palm trees and see the sunset every day.

He considers himself very fortunate and loved his childhood years. It was not the easiest of times, in fact, it was often tough to say the least, but Stefan remember the time as years filled with fun and overflowing with love.

After his father passed away in 1985, Stefan attended Walvisbay High School and fondly remembers the way that he and his brother were often doing each other's homework. Stefan was responsible for the biology drawings and essays in exchange for his brother doing Stefan's maths and woodwork drawings.

Stefan reminisces: *"I will never forget around the age of 16 in 1988, after school one day, when we came into the kitchen and my mother had a map on the table. She asked us to decide where we would like to go. We all closed our eyes and pointed to the middle of the map and that is how we ended up moving to Reddersburg in the Free State, South Africa!"*

It was here Stefan met aunt Drienkie Wolmerans, a teacher/artist in her own right, that changed his life by introducing him various art mediums and supplied him with everything needed to start him off on his journey as an artist.

Her father made Stefan his first oil canvas and she gave Stefan all her old oil paints to get him started.

Stefan's first oil painting was a landscape that his aunt Lenie Muller, living in Namibia, still have.

Aunt Drienkie, who like Stefan is a night owl, would welcome him any time night or day and their door was always open to him.

She encouraged Stefan to enter an art competition arranged by the South African Defence Force, which he won in 1991.

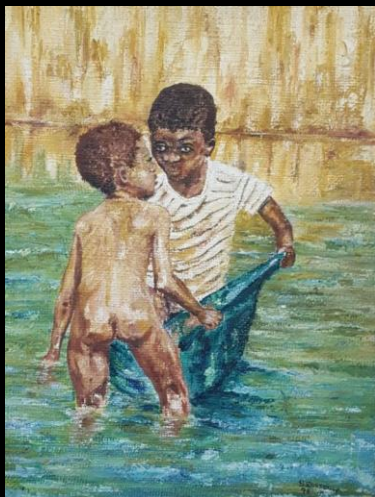
She further arranged an exhibition at his High School in 1991, for which she framed all his works at her own cost and afterward still bought numerous of the paintings at the event herself!

Stefan and Drienkie's special friendship led to many adventures. She even taught Stefan how to drive. Her undisputed influence leaves an indelible mark on his formative years and Stefan extends his heartfelt gratitude to her for believing in him.

1992 - 1993

After matriculating from Hendrik Potgieter High School Stefan went back to Namibia where he started work as an office technician for Schoemans Stationers.

Art class at Ida Wood Art Studio was a natural progression and Stefan started to prepare his own canvases, which he still does to this day. It was here that he had his first breakthrough in oil paintings, executing his first full figure drawings and paintings. He then knew unequivocally that all that he wanted to do was paint.



The original photo, giving inspiration to this painting, was taken by Stefan's friend Manuel Kauffman.

1993 - 1994

At the age of 20 Stefan moved to Pretoria and met Liz de Haas in Pretoria North.

She taught Stefan how to use colour pencils and pastels and taught him the lesson that *"an artist work is his proof, not his title"*.

1995 - 1998

Soon after, Stefan moved to Centurion, Pretoria where he met John and Elsa Blem. It was under their tuition that he learned portrait drawing, water paint, history of art and various different techniques such as impressionistic, post-impressionistic and surrealism.

They prepared young artists for University and here he met other artists and likeminded people. Stefan however always preferred to study and render the Old Masters.

2000 - 2008

Seeing a painting of the renowned local artist, Elizabeth Riding, "*Highlight of the Harem*", original done by Lord Leighton, Stefan instantly knew from that, that he wanted his art to have the same realistic character.



Stefan's first reproduction of "*Highlight of the Harem*" under Elizabeth Riding's watchful eye

First, he had to forget everything he had learned to date and start fresh. He even had to get rid of his old paint, had to learn to respect the Old Masters, not try to reproduce an image, but to understand how and why they did what they did. In other words, he had to find clues the Old Masters left the attentive viewer. How they manipulated the eye with paint so that if you look at work by an Old Master, you can see the story it tells in the work, how they took poetry and turned the words into an exquisite painting.

It was here he learned that once you complete a reproduction of an Old Master, you are humbled and faced with your own inexperience.

The main lesson to learn from the Old Masters is patience. Additionally, you learn to look closely at shape and form for any object to be brilliantly painted.

The best anyone can do is to learn to understand the medium they choose to work with and one day to bring their knowledge into practice. This is why and how Stefan is searching for the perfection that lies within him.



Stefan's reproductions of works by Albert Moore

2009

EXHIBITIONS

FIRST SOLO EXHIBITION

Stefan held his first solo exhibition "**REFLECTIONS**" in September 2009 at the Pretoria Arts Association.

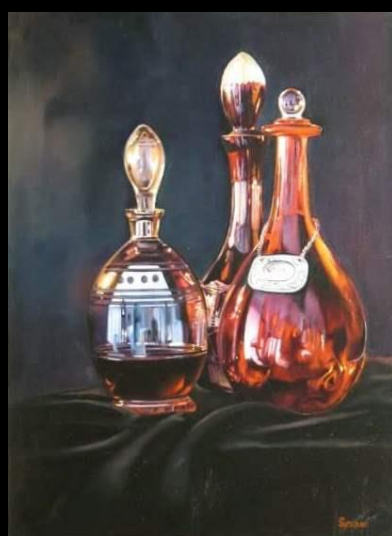
With this exhibition Stefan explored the properties of light and its reflective qualities - how it seduces the eye by reflection and refraction.

He further explored the effect light have on objects and colour, especially a variety of everyday surfaces and objects inspired from our heritage. These studies were approached with the same dedication and attention to detail as the Old Masters, yet with a contemporary and modern-day approach.

Each of the paintings presented, carried a powerful message, revealed through subtle reflections like puzzle pieces, how we are blinded by beauty as light dances through the shadows of our souls.

Jacques van Heerden described it eloquently: *"It is a contemporary interpretation of what our genealogy predicted we would be. Yet instead of fraying to the dust and cobwebs of what is perceived as history, we live in ways that keep the essence of our culture and descriptions. The essence of what makes us uniquely alive, makes us ourselves and the world we live in as much the narrative of a story than any other piece of history like a "Voortrekker Kappie" or the Crystal handed down by generations."*







2011

SECOND SOLO EXHIBITION

Stefan held his second solo exhibition *"SPIRIT OF MOVEMENT"* in October 2011 at the Pretoria Arts Association.

With this exhibition Stefan furthered his exploration of light and reflection. This time he focused on the movement of water and how light, as the spirit and soul, makes water an irresistible ever wondrous thing that holds our attention and fascination.

Stefan's work can best be described as a labour of love, dedication and the passion of a soul searching for the divine, as described in his own contemplative observation:

"Feel the contours of my deep water where my soul stretches in long shadows to the edge of the world. To the edge of where I get lost deep down. Deep down where, in a circle, I turn myself around you and leave a track of dreams like the ripples of where I echo my soul to you."

Here we finally get to see the *"real"* Stefan where he feels comfortable enough to make what was previously universal, more personal.

He etches to memory the message that in stillness lays power. To create stillness, you must rise above yourself. You must sacrifice yourself for the belief of all.

The spirit of movement purifies.

"I'm not this hair, I'm not this skin, I'm the soul that lives within." – Rumi







2015

THIRD SOLO EXHIBITION

Stefan held his third solo exhibition *"A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT"* in August 2015 at the Pretoria Arts Association.

Stefan reveals shattered moments, rarely exposed, but deeply experienced as reflected through glimpses of his soul.

He manages to communicate powerfully and with raw emotion a story with a twist – as viewed through a window – looking out to where a river runs through it.

His judicious use of space, form and colour set the stage for a travel through time as experienced from birth till young adulthood.

Clever use of props in the form of, amongst others, a sausage tied with a blue-ribbon proclaiming, *"it's a boy"*, boxing gloves and a dart board transports the viewer to stand in his bedroom and be introduced to the ghosts of time gone by.

He then narrates progressively the story of a boy, growing up near a river, until it is time to leave home as a young man. A simple enough tale to tell, but the illusion of life's simplicity is shattered by the enormity and reality of life itself.



"At first... at first you go back to the beginning.

You go back to the beginning to search. To search for what you are unsure about.

The waters have run dry into a thirst. A thirst that your tongue knows but your body hungers for.

You go back. You go back to find what was the beginning of now.

The future of when.

The run of till here . . to go back . . in time –

Like water to where I am.

Today:

Alive."

- Jacques van Heerden

(from his collection of poetry "...and my soul cried")



*“Are you searching for the river of your soul?
Then come out of your prison.
Leave the stream and join the river that flows into
the ocean.”*

- Rumi

2016

RENDEZ-VOUS D'ARTISTES AU NEGRESKO, NICE, FRENCH RIVIERA EXHIBITION

Stefan was invited to exhibit his art works at the renowned Negresco exhibition during September/October 2016 in the company of internationally acclaimed French artists.

Of varied inspirations, the seven artists were honoured to share the intimacy of their universes.

Paints and pastels take you in a pictorial world where every line, every colour, every sensibly stressed detail, translated this almost unreal association of the dream and the emotion, from here and there.



"Reflection of Blue" is a celebration of colour where blue is being reflected for the first time against the backdrop of silver with a hint of an ode to champagne.



"A Sour Affair I & II" tricks you into thinking they are oranges, when in fact, they are a special vintage variety of lemons. In a colour blast of orange and yellow, your senses are awakened. It is fitting that Nice is known for its splendid lemons!



“A Day too Late” speaks to the viewer on many levels. As a major concern at present, South Africans are faced with a water crisis. The drop shaped bottle gives the illusion and promise of rain to come, while the flowers are wilting away.



“A Penny for your Thoughts” represents Stefan’s journey to France. His use of colour mirrors the colours of the French National Flag. The symbolism of the Koi fish, silver and gold coins reflected in the water brings a message of hope for good fortune and luck.



“I am full of mistakes and imperfections and therefore I am real”

- Shaun Hick

2018

7 ARTISTES INTERNACIONALES EN ARAN EXHIBITION

Stefan was invited to exhibit his art works at Sant Joan Arties during February/March 2018 in the company of 7 internationally acclaimed French artists.

By invitation Stefan exhibits his art works at St Joan Arties, a 13th century Gothic church, near Barcelona, in Catalonia, Spain from February till March 2018 in the company of six of the Art Association of Luchon artists.

His collection of seven paintings depicts the cycle of life and death. It forces the viewer to contemplate the meaning of life. To love and to perish. To live perpetually in hope. To accept fate. To believe unconditionally in love. The love of our Creator. The love of mankind. The love of being. The love of the memories we leave behind.

With this collection of works Stefan provokes the viewer to contemplate life and death. A time to live and a time to die. A time to love and a time to let go. What are your expectations? What are your regrets? What memories do you take with you and what do you leave behind? How will you love? How will you be remembered? You are enticed by the possibilities, no, the promises of love, freedom, hope – even bliss.

A common denominator throughout the body of works is the colours blue, white, red and yellow.



“Till death do us part “

When two kindred souls love each other unconditionally, they will stay together even after death and their love will be declared holy.



"Aries"

Representational of the birth of Spring after the demise of Winter, allowing the sun to warm the bones again, letting the light into your life again.



"Born to be free"

Prayers are answered to be free like a butterfly. As the butterfly is at the end of its biological cycle, it can't wait to be born again.



"The gift of love"

A rose is so pure and perfect that God bestowed it to embed love, to personify love. It represents the biggest gift Christ has left us – the gift of love.



"Gone but not forgotten"

When the soul leaves its human domain, it will take moments of pure bliss with it into eternity.



"From a distance"

As you view life from a distance, you are either coming from the light or going towards the light.



"The road less travelled"

As your life represents a road you must travel, you can't predict or choose the weather, but you can hope for a sunny day.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

1991: First prize in the South Free State Art Exhibition

2003: First edition of poems published - "*Woorde van Waarheid*" by the Poetry Institute of Africa

2009: First solo exhibition – "*Reflections*"

2009: Garden & Home, September edition

2011: Second solo exhibition – "*Spirit of movement*"

2012: Short listed - The South African Artist Magazine, cover page.

2012: Re-Envisioned the Anglo-Boer (SA) War

2015: Third solo exhibition – "*A river runs through it*"

2016: Rendezvous D'Artistes Au Negresco – Nice, France

2018: 7 Arties Internacionaus en Aran Exhibition – Catalonia, Spain

2020: Exposition Maison du Curiste – Luchon, France



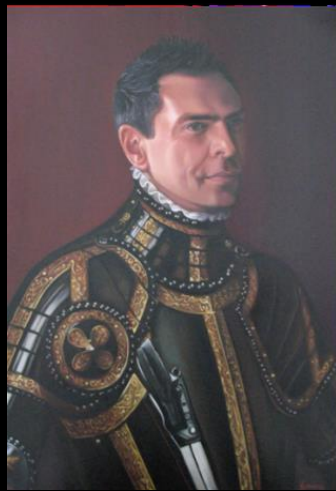
Short listed The South African Artist Magazine cover page 2012



“Right now, I’m stuck somewhere between what if, what might, what could have, and what never will and all I want to know is what actually is.”

- Christina Hart

...mastering his craft one painting at a time









*“Death is not the opposite of life.
Life has no opposite.
The opposite of death is birth.
Life is eternal.”*

- Anon











MADONNA AND THE SAINTS – an ongoing project

These images are central icons for both the believer and the non-believer (just like the love of a mother).

Madonnas were greatly diversified by the Renaissance and the Baroque masters like Duccio, Da Vinci, Michael Angelo, Raphael, Giovanni Bellini and Carlo Dolce, to name a few.

Madonnas were commissioned by churches and noble families for small chapels, but were never created as an image of beauty against a wall. Madonnas were created for motherly love.

Waiting for you to open your heart and to ease your mind without saying a word, she comforts you with love.

It has always been a childhood passion to recreate my favourite Madonnas. I've decided to share my motherly Madonnas with the world as seen through my eyes.

Everyone needs someone to lend us a shoulder to cry and an ear to listen.







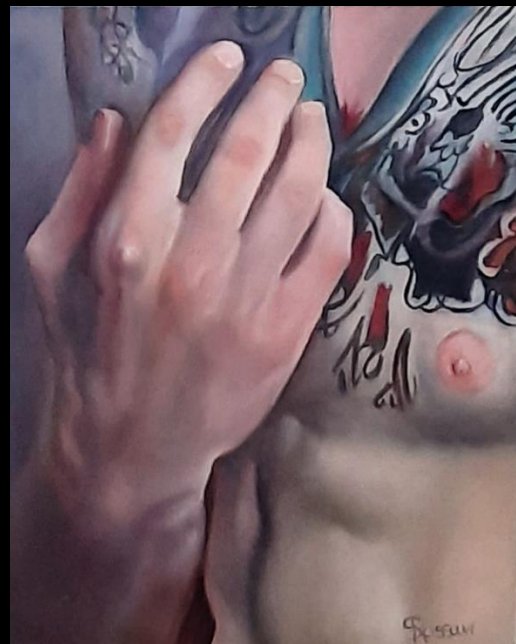
"Let your faith be bigger than your fear"

- Vybe Source

HANDS ON COVID-19 – ongoing project

Since the noble virus is spreading faster than we think and washing our hands has become like the latest hit on Eurovision 2020, I want to take the opportunity to focus on our hands that plays such a paramount role in our lives.

Let us take care of our hands and protect them that we may protect ourselves, as well as our loved ones.







References

Rendezvous D'Artistes Au Negresco

7 Artistes Internacionaus en Aran

Maison du Curiste

Hennie Pelser

Quotes

Rumi

Shaun Hick

Christina Hart

Vybe Source

Poem

Jacques van Heerden

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