

JP MEYER / WRONG ARCHIVE

OPENING : WEDNESDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER 2017
17H00-20H30 / ALEX HAMILTON STUDIO GALLERY

Growing up, art was something I only read about in encyclopedias. My first personal encounter with this creative medium was when I walked into the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam during a backpacking trip through Europe aged nineteen. Captivated by this journey of exploration, I decided to join SAA as a flight attendant and so embarked on a 15-year career that would see me travel to and visit museums and galleries on many continents.

At the time I didn't understand contemporary art and was overwhelmed by the sheer volume of art history, but the process piqued my interest in making art. In 1996, at the age of 36, I resigned from my job at SAA and enrolled as full-time art student at the Foundation School of Art in Cape Town, receiving my Diploma in Fine Art at the end of 1999. With the emergence of video art and computer graphics in the 80s/90s, painting was declared dead. What captivated me more than any other subject, however, was the craft of painting.

Fuelled by an emerging midlife crisis, I sold my possessions after graduation and spent a year travelling around Asia. On my return to South Africa I settled in the Karoo, where my work gradually changed from representation to abstraction. During the period 2000 to 2013 my paintings were predominantly large fields of pattern in monochrome colours.

My first visit to the Venice Biennale in 2013 was dazzling and served as a very significant watershed, and the months that followed revealed an increasing need to return to figurative painting. In 2014 I exhibited a series of small figurative works at the Breytenbach Gallery in Wellington and in 2016 I was invited to participate in the Woordfees Visual Art programme, mounting a solo exhibition entitled DOOP/INITIATE.

Photo, Vanessa Cowling



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Safety net, Oil on Canvas, 40 x 50cm



Weekend Pass, Oil on Canvas, 100 x 150cm



Wash, Oil on Canvas, 85 x 117cm



Voortrekkers, Oil on Canvas, 85 x 117cm



Pirates, Oil on Canvas, 85 x 117cm

Last year I mentioned to artist and curator Alex Hamilton that I was working on larger canvasses and that although I was struggling, I was excited about the process. Being familiar with my work, he offered to host an exhibition at his Studio + Gallery, a robust industrial space in Woodstock.

The exhibition, titled WRONG ARCHIVE, will include a number of oil paintings on canvas.

It may sound like a cliché but many aspects of the creative process remain a mystery. While most contemporary art disciplines require thorough research and conceptualization, painting for me works in a different way: the practice of applying paint and constructing an image is in itself a kind of research, often enabling one to work with abstruse ideas and concepts which can lead to new insights. Therein lies the magic of painting for me.

At present I work mostly with an archive of photographs collected over time from newspapers, manuals, encyclopedias, family albums and the internet.

The images and thoughts, ideas, memories and experiences that emerged during the painting process of the last months may have given birth to the theme for this exhibition: Conformity versus individuality and a wry irony! Our search for identity and security often leads us to associate with

others who hold similar values, and are of the same ethnic group, culture, language, religion etc. and yet it is this selfsame identification that is often the cause of conflict.

What direction is your work currently heading in?

For me the exciting thing about making art is that I never know what to expect next, but I am dreaming of getting a bigger studio and making larger works.

What currently inspires your work?

The more I work, the more inspired I am. The recent Philip Guston exhibition at the Accademia in Venice is one of the most inspiring shows I have ever seen.



The Competition, Oil on Canvas, 40 x 40cm

Title of the exhibition : WRONG ARCHIVE

Opening : Wednesday, 20 September 2017 from 17h00-20h30

Address : Alex Hamilton Studio Gallery, 9 Barron Road, Woodstock, Cape Town
 Opening times : Wed to Fri 09h00 – 16h00
 Contact : Zelda Hamilton at 072 376 7984 or zelda.hamilton@gmail.com