



Lionel Smit



**Lionel Smit
(1982 –)**

Lionel Smit was born in Pretoria, South Africa in 1982. He started exhibiting straight after Art school at Pro Arte Alphen Park. He now lives and works in Cape Town.

Best known for his contemporary portraiture executed through monumental canvasses and sculptures, Lionel is represented locally in South Africa and internationally in London. He exhibits regularly on solo shows and is considered one of SA's youngest investment artists.

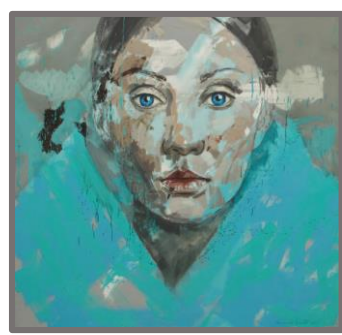
Lionel Smit's art is defined by a deeply rooted symbiotic relationship between sculpture and painting.

Smit was exposed to a world of sculpture through his father, renowned sculptor Anton Smit, who worked from his studio adjacent to the family home.

This studio played a central role in Lionel's upbringing. By age twelve, Smit was already working in clay and considered himself primarily as a sculptor in the making. At sixteen, his parents separated, after which Lionel, a student at Pretoria's Pro Arte School of Arts at the time, began to use the empty studio space his father occupied for painting. This was progressively becoming his preferred medium as he was finding his own artistic identity. He went on to graduate as the Best Painting Student in his class

His paintings start with abstract lines and swathes of colour that establish a base for the subsequently overlaid image of a face or bust – in most cases posed by anonymous models from the Cape Malay community. For Smit, the Cape Malay woman epitomises hybrid identity within a South African context, and reflects the disintegrating construction of identity within our increasingly globalised world

Smit's subject matter is consistent.. The sitter's face acts, quite simply, as a vessel for Smit's experimentation with colour, stroke and technique.



Brilliant streaks of blues and greens enrich the grooves of an ear, while the natural shadow of an eyelid is intensified by the deepening of rich black patinas.

Smit's avant-garde approach to the medium has allowed him to consistently push the envelope.



Smit's bronzes are created using the lost wax casting method – one of the oldest known metal-forming techniques.

Patinas commonly available to artists working in bronze include natural browns, blacks and greens. However, considering the importance of colour to Smit in his painting, he uses alternative methods that result in a unique fusion of intensely saturated patinas onto the bronze.



<http://www.lionelsmit.co.za>

Smit describes the creation of each painting as *'a burst of energy that feels uncontrollable at first'*. Once the initial surge is spent, Smit enters into an activity that requires *'a balance of spontaneous actions'* Within this, it is *'the process, the waiting, the controlled accidents'* that are most significant.