



Alexis Bester

‘My aim is to enrich the lives of people and inspire them to higher thoughts and pure enjoyment.’



Alexis Bester
(1962 -)



Alexis Bester is an artist from the Western Cape in South Africa. He lives near Tulbagh at the foot of the Witzenberg Mountains on his family's farm where he also has his own studio. He was born in Oranjemund, Namibia in 1962, but two months later his family moved to SA.

After matric he completed his two years compulsory national service in the SA Air force and then trained as a cartographer at the Cape Technicon. For the next 12 years he worked as a cartographer and flying instructor before he started painting full time in 1999.

As a child Alexis had a vivid imagination and imaginary friends which allowed him to escape from life's realities and enter into the

more pleasant world of the unreal. Alexis had a great fascination with and love for the entertainment world especially the circus and shows on ice.

During his school years he never had any formal art training and never thought of himself as an artist.

The important catalyst towards his art career was when he injured his back during basic training of his two years compulsory service in 1981. He had to lay in traction for 6 months during which he started to draw and sketch to keep him occupied

Most of Alexis's recent compositions contain simple geometric forms and subjects painted from his imagination.

His work portrays **naive surrealism** in a colourful and simplistic way, with the use of shadows and bright colours and landscape scenes. Alexis also does work depicting the 1920's in an idealistic presentation of that period with subtle surrealist suggestions portrayed in deep shadows and autumn colouring.

Alexis' art focus is on the positive representation of how life can be rather than the negative. He prefers to look at life through the eyes of the child within.

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

Subjects:

Alexis's fascination with the circus and the performing arts explains the many harlequin and clown images in his work. Women often feature in his work as they represent wholeness and nurturing to Alexis. He will most often use a rural backdrop and then paint his subjects in a playful manner, often combining an indoors/outdoors feel to his paintings. This is to represent our reality of our inner and personal nature while living in the world. Alexis also adds humour to his work in an attempt to uplift and enrich the viewer by moving them away from everyday problems and drudgery.

Paris Arrival



Colour, Style, Composition and Technique:

Alexis's use of colour reveals a distinct Fauvism mentality.

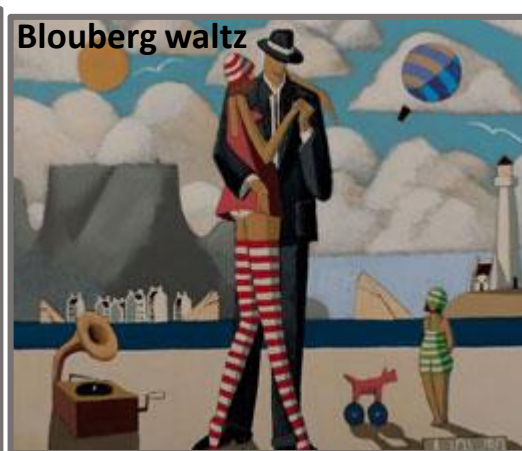
The bright colours reflect a vitality and energy that generate a spiritual and uplifting mood in the viewer.

Alexis practices interpretative realism.

He paints in a relative simplistic way to reintroduce the viewer to a child-like vision of the mystery and wonder in everyday things and events. He would rather make use of convex lines than concave lines to make his forms appear "bulky" to create a feel of wholeness.

Alexis's work also has a subtle surrealistic quality to it.

This reflects the surreal dimension of our lives and makes each painting more personal to the viewer.



His medium is mainly oil paint on board or canvas. He draws his composition in charcoal and adds preliminary shades and colour by mixing paint and turpentine. The painting is then allowed to dry before he starts to work through the painting, applying paint only and mixing colours as needed. He mainly uses flat brushes, but also uses round brushes, pallet knives and his fingers.