

creative spirit



Moments IN TIME



Peter Bonney's hyperrealistic depictions of the Karoo are legendary for the déjà vu they inspire

Do you have formal training?

No, I started out as an analytical chemist. My only art studies were at school. After that, I received much guidance and learning in the studio of fellow artist Hannes du Plessis.

Who or what inspires you?

Dutch artists from the 17th century, particularly Vermeer. Every time I visit my children in London, I make a pilgrimage to the British Museum and spend days soaking in the Dutch School galleries. I'm also inspired by our South African landscape, particularly the Karoo. I love the quietness and bigness and the stories that lie hidden among the relics and remnants of a life that is disappearing.

Discuss your artistic style.

Technically it's called realism or hyperrealism. The Dutch School was known for portraying daily life in a

realistic way, as though a moment in time was caught on camera. That's what I do, although I'm less figurative. My paintings are seldom of people, but have content that suggests the presence of humanity. I don't often paint a landscape that doesn't contain a man-made 'intrusion'. It's the intrusion that makes the story.

How does an idea become a finished artwork?

It's more an observation of reality than it is an idea. I've travelled thousands of kilometres in search of references but few, if any, of my paintings are an exact replica. People often say that a painting looks 'so real' or that they've seen 'that place', but they haven't, because it's composed of authentic elements from different landscapes to make an entirely fictitious scene.

Please describe your studio.

My wife calls it my 'man cave', I call it

my little corner of heaven on earth. We live in the beautiful town of Clarens and my studio is an old Free State thatched sandstone house in the heart of the village. The street side is part and parcel of the town while the other side looks out over a small forest of maple trees and the Maluti Mountains. The best of both worlds!

What have been your greatest career highlights?

I have one particular client, Doug Smollan, who gives me the opportunity to go big and do different; I did a massive painting of his wine cellar in Stellenbosch. Important highlights have been meeting certain people, namely fellow artist Hannes du Plessis and the late Chris Crake of Crake Gallery in Johannesburg who put me on the map.

Where is your work exhibited or sold?

My own studio in Clarens, as well as the Chérie de Villiers Gallery in Jo'burg. 

SOURCES Chérie de Villiers Gallery
gallery.co.za Peter Bonney Studio
peterbonney.co.za

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