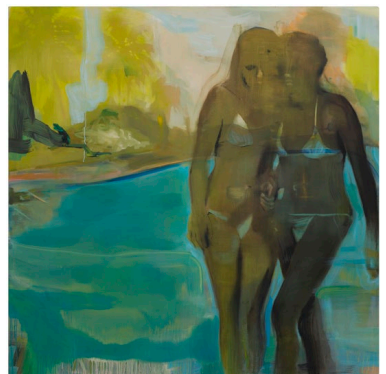
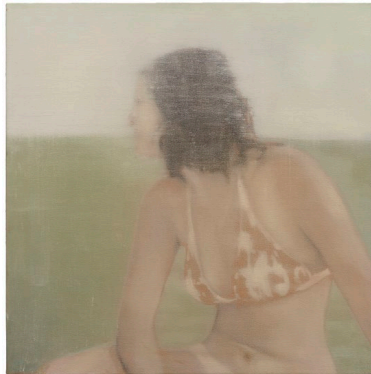
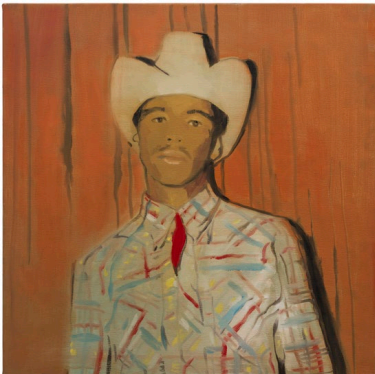


KATE GOTTGENS

UNTITLED, ART, Miami Beach

BOOTH A14



CONTACT

Shona van der Merwe
+27 (0)82 855 4625
shona@smacgallery.com

Leigh Bassingthwaighe
+27 (0)84 423 6017
leigh@smacgallery.com

CAPE TOWN

The Palms
145 Sir Lowry Rd
Woodstock, 7925
T +27 (0)21 461 1029

JOHANNESBURG

The Trumpet
19 Keyes Avenue
Rosebank, 2196
T +27 (0)10 594 5400

STELLENBOSCH

De Wet Centre
Church Street
Stellenbosch, 7600
T +27 (0)21 887 3607

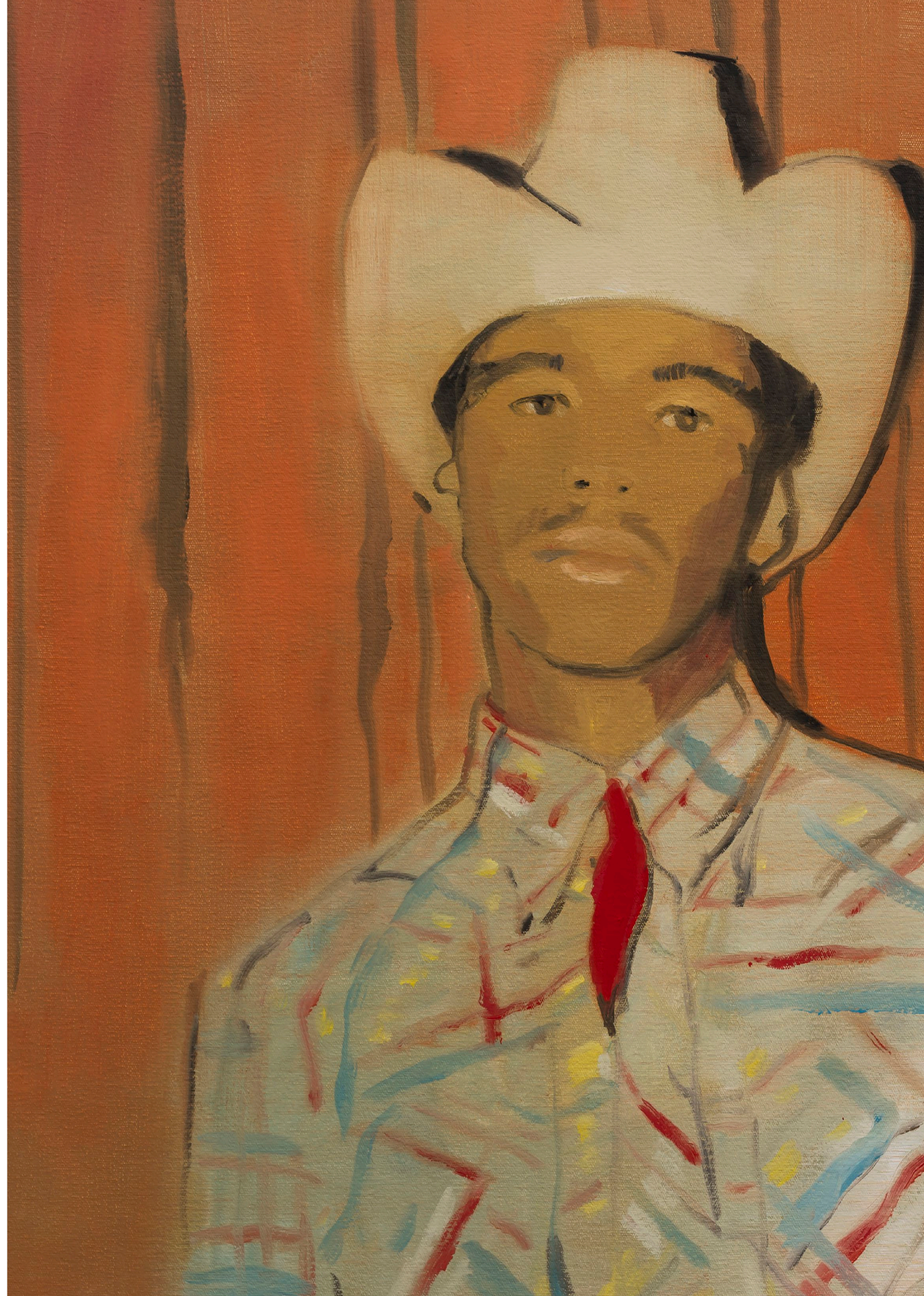
info@smacgallery.com
www.smacgallery.com

REPRESENTED ARTISTS

Lhola Amira
Leonce Raphael Agbodjélou
Willem Boshoff
Margaret Courtney-Clarke
Barend de Wet
Galia Gluckman
Frances Goodman
Kate Gottgens
Georgina Gratrix
Masimba Hwati
Cyrus Kabiru
Alexandra Karakashian
Johann Louw
Wallen Mapondera
Mongezi Ncaphayi
Musa N. Nxumalo
Gareth Nyandoro
Giovanni Ozzola
Jody Paulsen
Usha Seejarim
Mary Sibande
Marlene Steyn
Simon Stone
Pierre Vermeulen
Asha Zero

Please contact SMAC Gallery for any further information or queries.

All prices in this portfolio exclude VAT and shipping charges, and are subject to change.



KATE GOTTGENS

Kate Gottgens was born in 1965 in Durban, South Africa. Gottgens graduated from the Michaelis School of Fine Art at the University of Cape Town, in 1987. Gottgens is the most recent recipient of the Ampersand Fellowship Award, resulting in a residency in New York City, USA.

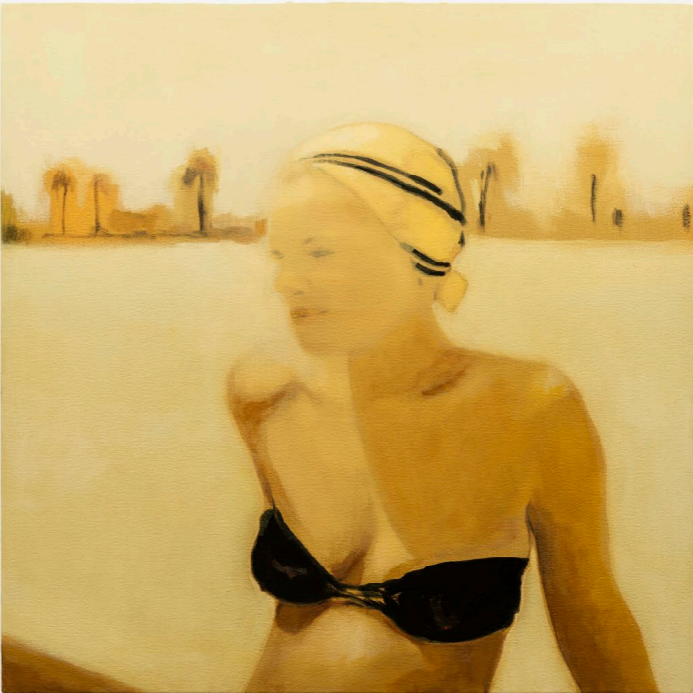
In 2019 her works were included in The Ampersand Foundation Award 21 years celebration exhibition curated by Gordon Froud at the University of Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG) in Johannesburg, South Africa as well as SMAC Gallery's presentation at FNB Art Joburg at the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Earlier solo exhibitions include: Cold Cuts as part of SMAC Gallery's presentation at Sydney Contemporary in Sydney, Australia in 2018; Tired from Smiling at SMAC Gallery in Cape Town in 2017; Famine at SMAC Gallery in Johannesburg in 2016; MALICE Aforethought at SMAC Gallery in Cape Town in 2013; Merry Hell and the Dreambody in 2010; Asleep Inside You in 2009; and Little Deaths in 2007. In 2014 Gottgens made her international debut Savage Nature at Espacio Liquido in Gijon, Spain. Following Gottgens' inclusion as the only South African selected for Thames and Hudson's publication, 100 Painters of Tomorrow in 2014, her work was exhibited at One Art Space in New York City, USA as part of the exhibition to launch the publication. In 2015, SMAC Gallery published Kate Gottgens // Paintings 2007 – 2015 to coincide with her exhibition Infinite Loop in Stellenbosch. SMAC Gallery published Gottgens' second book Gottgens // Paintings 2015 – 2017 in 2017 to coincide with her exhibition, Tired From Smiling.

Selected group shows include: The Suitcase Show, at SMAC Gallery in Cape Town, a group show in collaboration with Galleria Massimo Minini in 2019; Bathing, curated by Brian Shure at Planthouse Gallery in New York City, USA, in 2018; Summer Show '16 at SMAC Gallery in Stellenbosch, South Africa in 2016 and Imago Mundi, a travelling exhibition held at Museo Carlo Bilotti, Rome; Ca' dei Carraresi, Treviso, Italy both in 2014. Earlier exhibitions include the 8th New Delhi Triennale in India in 1994 and Scurvy at the Castle of Good Hope in Cape Town in 1995.

SMAC Gallery presented Gottgens at Miart in Milan, Italy in 2014, and selected international art fairs including Artissima in 2017.

Collections include: the Luciano Benetton Collection in Treviso, Italy; The Royal Portfolio Collection in Cape Town, South Africa; The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) Collection in Johannesburg, South Africa; Hans Porer Collection in Cape Town, South Africa; Spier Art Collection in Cape Town, South Africa.



RIGHT

Kate Gottgens
The Distance #1
2019
Oil on Canvas
68 x 68 cm

The Sensitive Surface of Time

By Patrick Flanery

Sometimes an artist creates a character in the image of a person they might wish to know, filling in attributes to suit the individual in their mind. These characters may become imaginary friends who accompany them into ordinary life, lifting a shoulder, cocking the head and pouting when the artist's attention strays to the dogs or partner or child, reminding their creator they're still around, waiting to be made complete.

In Kate Gottgens' new series, *The Distance*, a crowd of such imaginary friends pose for us while we, standing in Gottgens' place, must consider the gazes meant for someone else, as well as the energies of our own gaze as it falls on subjects who variously invite and resist our attention. Gottgens has long worked with found photographs, but *The Distance*, which wholly embraces the constraints and potential of the square-as-form, suggests more strongly than ever the presence of the photographic within her practice. Alert to the allusions such compositions encode to the Instamatic or Polaroid mid-twentieth-century still, Gottgens is also, in a more submerged way, alluding to Malevich's *Black Square* (1915), as if that painterly precursor were the abstract unexposed film onto which Gottgens develops her own arrestingly representational images. Black shimmers beneath the surface and erupts into visibility in works like *The Distance* #5, where the cadre of fast-food workers are constantly at risk of receding into the darkness of the background. Equally, in *The Distance* #2, the deep shadows of this Hans Castorp-like figure's coat lapels both manifest the melancholic psychology suggested in his expression and threaten to consume him and his world.

In each case, it is possible to locate in Gottgens' response to the photographs she finds the presence and operation of a Barthesian *punctum*. Whether the red tie of the cowboy or the finger in the mouth of the fast-food worker, the flashing right nipple of the photographer figure, or the black stripes on the sun-worshipper's headscarf, there is a moment in every work that engages the viewer in a transcendent piercing of the spacetime that separates us not only from the moment of Gottgens' painting, her production of what she describes as a 'sensitive surface' in which the flatness and fluidity of the paint bids us enter her world, but also from the more distant and unlocatable moment in time past when the originals of Gottgens' figures were caught by the lens of someone's camera.

Even as backgrounds slip into abstractions of place and context that range from the bucolic beach to a melancholy suburban anywhere, from the red-curtained background of a Lynchian fever dream to the Alpine sublime of Caspar David Friedrich's *Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog* (or even Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain*), the paintings of *The Distance* offer a series of largely stable locations and temporalities. Paintings like *Red Light* and *Before the Flood*, however, radically complicate the spacetimes of their particular worlds. These works are representative of Gottgens' shift into a mode that merges multiple times, spaces, and universes in a single frame, as if several images of one location taken from different angles at different moments, recording different events, were superimposed on one another as a means of suggesting an unstable mood that resists easy interpretation even as it proclaims its vivid narrativity.

In a Gottgens painting, *something* is always happening, has just happened, or is about to happen: the world is never static. Even when evacuated of a human subject, we presume a recent departure or anticipate an imminent arrival, and in every case the work establishes an overarching mood. Nonetheless, such moods can oscillate in one canvas from moments of calm (the pale blue Tang Dynasty horse in the middle of *Red Light*), to menace (the collision of the black chair and red lamp in the same painting), to the ecstasy of a glistening physical transformation that suggests what an out-of-body experience might look or feel like for the person experiencing it: a moment of levitation in yellow tights, the upper body little more than the suggestion of an arm, the head that produces clarity or dissociation evaporating into its surroundings.

It would be easy to claim Gottgens is working in a tradition whose practitioners include artists as varied as Sigmar Polke, David Salle, Neo Rauch, and even Ilya Kabakov, but Gottgens brings a purposefulness and particular acuity to the depiction of potentially queer subjects (the cowboy, the photographer, the ambiguously gendered figure on the left in *Couple Lounging*) and people of color, as well as returning with ever greater force to an exploration of what it means to be a woman repeatedly susceptible to the male gaze. This last dynamic is present most visibly in *The Tanners*, where the presence of male figures over and alongside a prone woman crackles with a predatory energy and fiery malice. In *Before the Flood*, the nonchalance and fleshy embodiedness of the three male figures gleams in contrast to the act of violence—or sexualized play—unfolding between two women in the middle-ground. Rendered as mere outlines, it is as if the women, in the eyes of these men, were nothing but form and virtually without volume: objects as dispensable and utilitarian as the screen erected behind them.

The implied male gaze operates, too, in those images of women where no man is present. In *Ambergris*, the two women clutch each other for support even as the gaze that provokes such a mood of caution and anxiety seems also to render them transparent. In *The Distance* #1, the figure, although looking off to the side, appears pleasantly conscious of a viewer (even perhaps welcoming appreciation), while in *The Distance* #6 and #7, the women engage much more ambivalently with the gaze that must register their partial or total nudity. The bare-breasted woman of the latter painting, feathery hair half obscuring her face and eyes, denies the viewer any sense of reciprocity: we view what she may or may not wish us to see, what she (the actual subject of the photo that circulates and stands as referent for Gottgens' painting) is now unable to control.

Gottgens' balance of care for the identity of the subject alongside the boldness of her compositional approach produces an enigmatic tension that insists the viewer stand in a sustained state of self-reappraisal. In ways profoundly attuned to the ethics of each act of representation, the sensitive surface of the canvas—and no less than that, the sensitive surface of each subject in Gottgens' world—challenges us to confront our desires and repulsions, our sense of attraction and refusal, inviting us in while also demanding we remain alert to our own complicities, position, and power.



Kate Gottgens
The Distance #3
 2019
 Oil on Canvas
 68.5 x 68.5 cm
 Unique

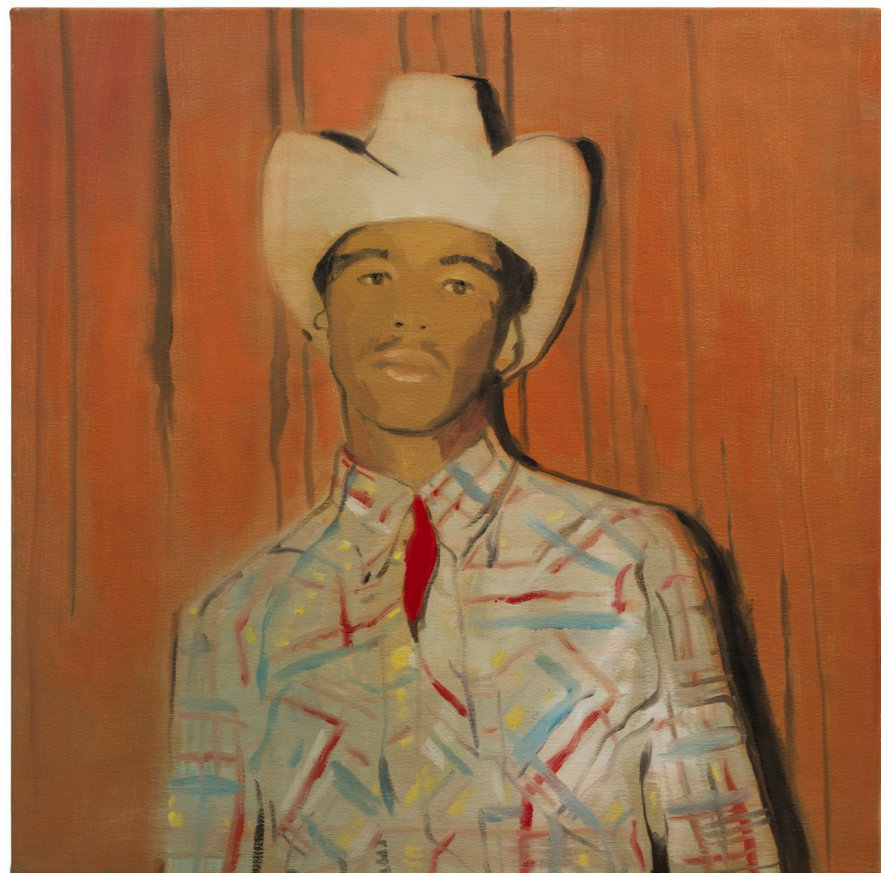


Kate Gottgens
Couple Lounging
 2019
 Oil on Canvas
 95 x 95 cm
 Unique

Kate Gottgens
The Distance #1
2019
Oil on Canvas
68 x 68 cm
Unique

Kate Gottgens
The Distance #1
2019
Oil on Canvas
68.5 x 68.5 cm
Unique





Kate Gottgens
The Distance #4
 2019
 Oil on Canvas
 68.5 x 68.5 cm
 Unique



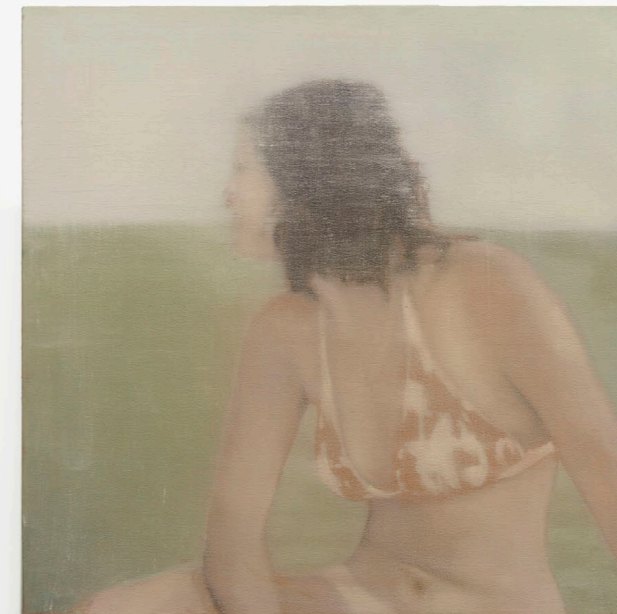
Kate Gottgens
The Distance #2
 2019
 Oil on Canvas
 68.5 x 68.5 cm
 Unique



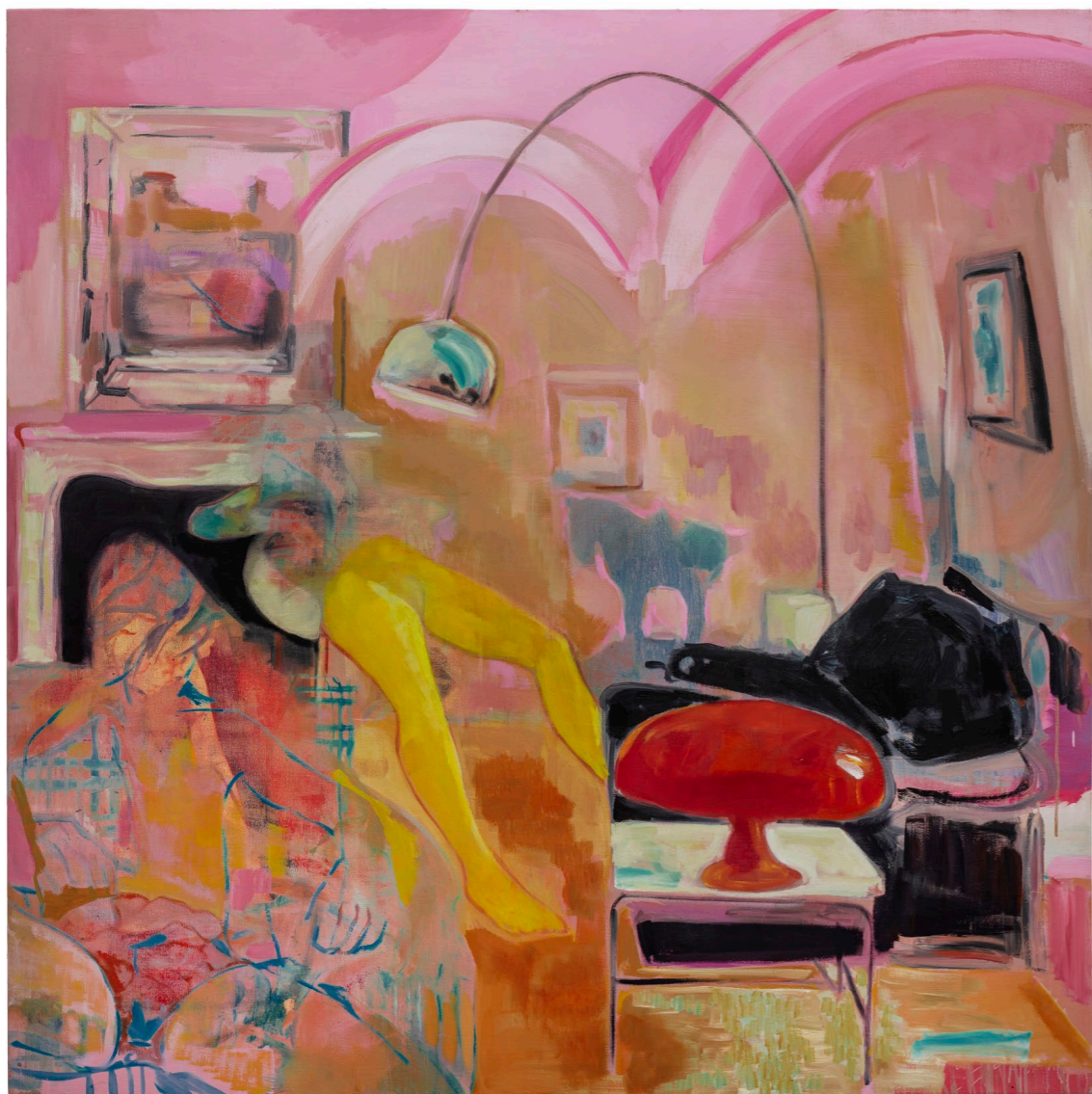
Kate Gottgens
The Tanners
2019
Oil on Canvas
102 x 150.5 cm
Unique



Kate Gottgens
Ambergris
 2018
 Oil on Canvas
 150 x 150 cm
 Unique



Kate Gottgens
The Distance #6
 2019
 Oil on Canvas
 68.5 x 68.5 cm
 Unique



Kate Gottgens
Red Light
 2019
 Oil on Canvas
 145 x 145 cm
 Unique





Kate Gottgens
The Distance #5
 2019
 Oil on Canvas
 68.5 x 68.5 cm
 Unique



Kate Gottgens
The Distance #8
 2019
 Oil on Canvas
 68.5 x 68.5 cm
 Unique



Kate Gottgens
Before the Flood
2019
Oil on Canvas
125.5 x 150 cm
Unique



SMAC gallery was established in 2007 in Stellenbosch, South Africa. The gallery was developed through off-site projects, the first of which was dedicated to pioneering South African artists Edoardo Villa and Cecil Skotnes in 2004 under the banner of Sandri Art. SMAC launched its first exhibition space in 2007, in the De Wet Centre on Church Street in Stellenbosch with a solo presentation by Peter Clarke. At its inception, the gallery's programming centred on presenting large-scale retrospective and critical review exhibitions, focusing primarily on the modernist abstract era, the protest era and the neglected contribution of African artists in the post-war period.

In recent years, SMAC has seen a shift to representing the work of contemporary artists from Africa such as Mary Sibande, Gareth Nyandoro, and Cyrus Kabiru. The gallery expanded to its current flagship space in Woodstock, Cape Town, in 2014 and opened a third space in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2016.

SMAC participates in between 10 – 12 international fairs per year, including The Armory Show, Art Brussels, Artissima, artmonte-carlo, and Miart. The gallery maintains an active publishing initiative, and in addition to its contemporary programme, the gallery regularly presents large-scale historical exhibitions and projects that offer a critical re-evaluation of South African art history within a global dialogue.

s m a c

info@smacgallery.com

www.smacgallery.com