

Corné Eksteen

Corné Eksteen was born 1973 in Zastron in the Free State. He studied towards a BA in Fine Art at the University of Pretoria and at the University of South Africa. He then spent several years working in related fields, from menswear design to interior decorating and digital design. He now lives in Durban and has been actively working and exhibiting as a visual artist since 1996.

His work relies on both figurative and abstract painting traditions in the creation of pieces that not only represent the physical appearance of his sitters, but also reflects on and explores their inner life and state of mind. “The works attempt to visually dissect and deconstruct the subject matter in the pursuit of an understanding of the dynamics and transient nature of the 21st-century psyche,” he says. “They are intended to evoke discussion on the idea of personal identity as a series of disjointed concepts in a continuous state of flux: a search for new archetypes for the 21st century.”

His works are created through a process that includes several sessions with a sitter, followed by digital manipulation of reference materials before the actual painting is started. Paintings are created using several often experimental techniques and rely on finding a balance between the transparent and opaque, dark and light, the controlled and the expressive. The completed images are seemingly simplistic, but confront on many levels with their raw emotional complexity.

Eksteen is one of South Africa’s most respected portrait artists and had numerous very successful solo exhibitions.