

# FNB JOBURG ART FAIR 2017

Thursday 7th–Sunday 10th September  
Sandton Convention Centre

**ART FIRST** is very pleased to be taking part in the 10th edition of the **FNB Joburg Art Fair**. On **Stand C06** we are presenting a dynamic group of five artists, all of whom are represented in museum collections and public institutions, world wide. Included are works by **Joni Brenner** and **Karel Nel**, both key figures at the Wits School of Art, and for the first time, we are showing the work of **Jack Milroy** with specially commissioned pieces.

We are introducing a body of photographs by locally and internationally renowned wildlife photographer and film maker **Kim Wolhuter** and also showing photographs from three noteworthy photographic essays by **Graeme Williams** that document life in a rapidly changing post-apartheid South Africa.



**Graeme Williams** *Painting Over the Present: Intabazwe Township Harrismith, 2011*, image size 44 x 51 cm

# JONI BRENNER

The tall thin format of Brenner's new series of torso paintings makes an oblique reference to the ancient Greek herms—those protective quadrangular column-like stone sculptures that marked boundaries, served as signposts or memorials. These oil on canvas torsos offer a concentrated and cropped view, the slim sections punctuated by calligraphic markers of the body: head, navel, groin.

Brenner's work has long engaged the relationship between sculpture and painting: her paintings are sculptural in the sense that the paint is thick, gestural, pushed, scraped, cut and carved; her sculptures, in examples like *Elder*, are fluidly shaped relief panels of malleable clay, and thus painterly.

Both sculptural and painterly, the off-white monochrome torso paintings evoke stony marble as much as they do living flesh. They recall those portraits of hers painted directly onto slabs of granite and marble—long-lasting materials that allude to notions of preservation and memorial.

These new paintings continue her engagement with the processes of repetitive observation: looking and relooking, paying attention to subtle shifts and changes, in herself, and in her subject.

Born in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, Joni Brenner is Principal Tutor in Art History at Wits School of Arts, University of the Witwatersand, Johannesburg. Her work is represented in Museum and public collections in South Africa, including Johannesburg Art Gallery, Wits Art Museum, and the Unisa Art Gallery, Pretoria. She has twice been awarded residencies at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris. In 2006 she was an Ampersand Fellow in New York and in the same year was awarded a Lineus Palmer teaching exchange in Stockholm. Brenner has been represented by Art First, London for a decade.



**Joni Brenner** *Elder*, 2005  
clay on glass & enamel plinth  
24.5 × 33.5 × 11 cm



**Register, 2017**  
oil on canvas 100 x 40 cm

**Joni Brenner**





Understanding  
2014, oil on canvas 51 x 41 cm

**Joni Brenner**

# JACK MILROY

With an irrepressible sense of humour and a surrealist interest in the art of transformation, sabotage and chance, Milroy's work is also marked by a serious formal investigation and a darker preoccupation with monumental events and big themes: 9/11; Darwin's theory of evolution; the Garden of Eden; global warming; and much more besides. He works with diverse materials, such as illustrated books, tubes of paint, stamps, sardine tins, and recently, computer generated imagery with archival inkjet print making. He manipulates imagery and in all his paperwork constructions uses a scalpel for virtuosic interventions, 'liberating' the contents of books.

For his first appearance at the Joburg Art Fair, Milroy has completed *Flowerfall II*, 2013, from *The flowering plants of the Tsitsikama Forest and Coastal National Park, South Africa, 1967*.• He releases flowers into a cascade of weightless, falling forms, allowing us to admire each bloom as it escapes the page of its out of print book, liberated from the definitions written in Afrikaans, English and Latin.

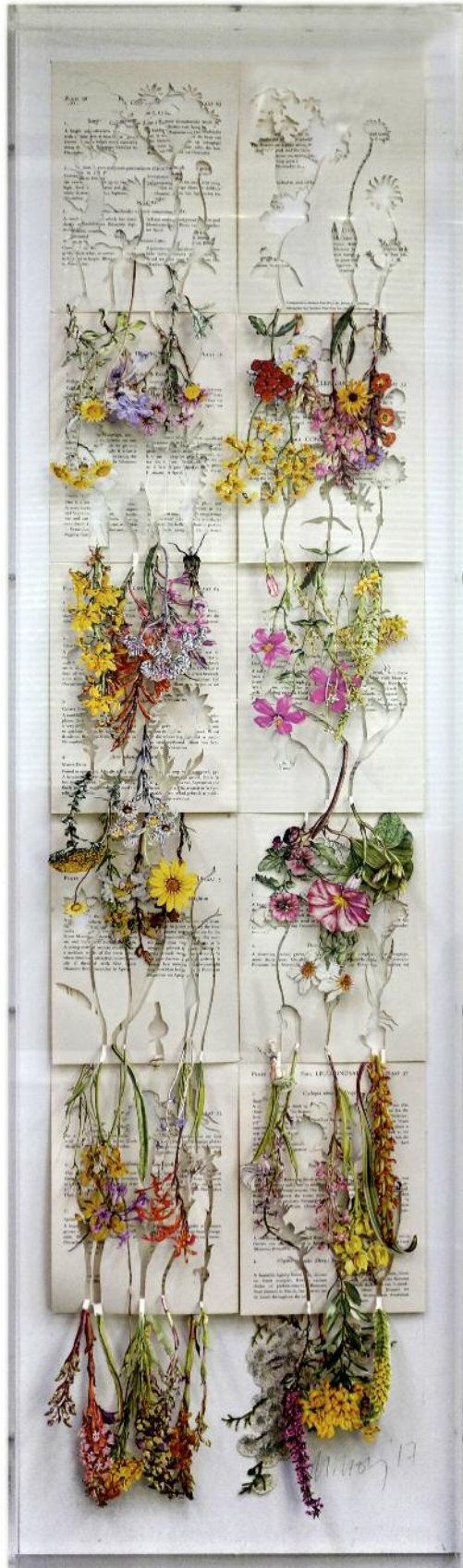
Repagination and other forms of book subversion appear in *Knot Study* and *Not Knots*, where he takes a hard covered book and teases its contents out of the pages in a wonderful defiance of gravity, to reveal a surprising new formal arrangement of the subject.

Jackie Wullschlager, chief art critic of *The Financial Times* has followed Milroy's art and wrote in one of her several reviews:

'Milroy's sculptural collages of printed images on paper and film blend fairy tale and conceptual art, meditations on rhythms and shapes with references to Darwin. Like Jeff Wall, Milroy came of age when beauty was suspect and has found his own subversive way of incorporating sumptuous colour and formal rigour into work that is offbeat and unexpected. He has the gentle wit of a late surrealist, yet the sense of infinite possibilities of mutation, rearrangements of species . . . is fraught with 21st Century tension about science and nature: a pertinent contemporary vision.'

Milroy was born in Glasgow and spent his boyhood there; he trained at Scarborough School of Art and the University of London. He has since lived, taught and worked in London, exhibiting over a 40 year period. His work can be found in museum collections including the Victoria & Albert Museum, the Imperial War Museum, the British Library, and the Government Art Collection among others. A new monograph on his work, *Cut Out*, by *The Financial Times'* former chief critic, William Packer, is now being distributed by Black Dog in association with Art First.

\*Courtenay-Latimer, M. and Smith, G.C., illus. H. Bokelman and A. Batten, National Parks Board of the Republic of South Africa, Pretoria, 1967



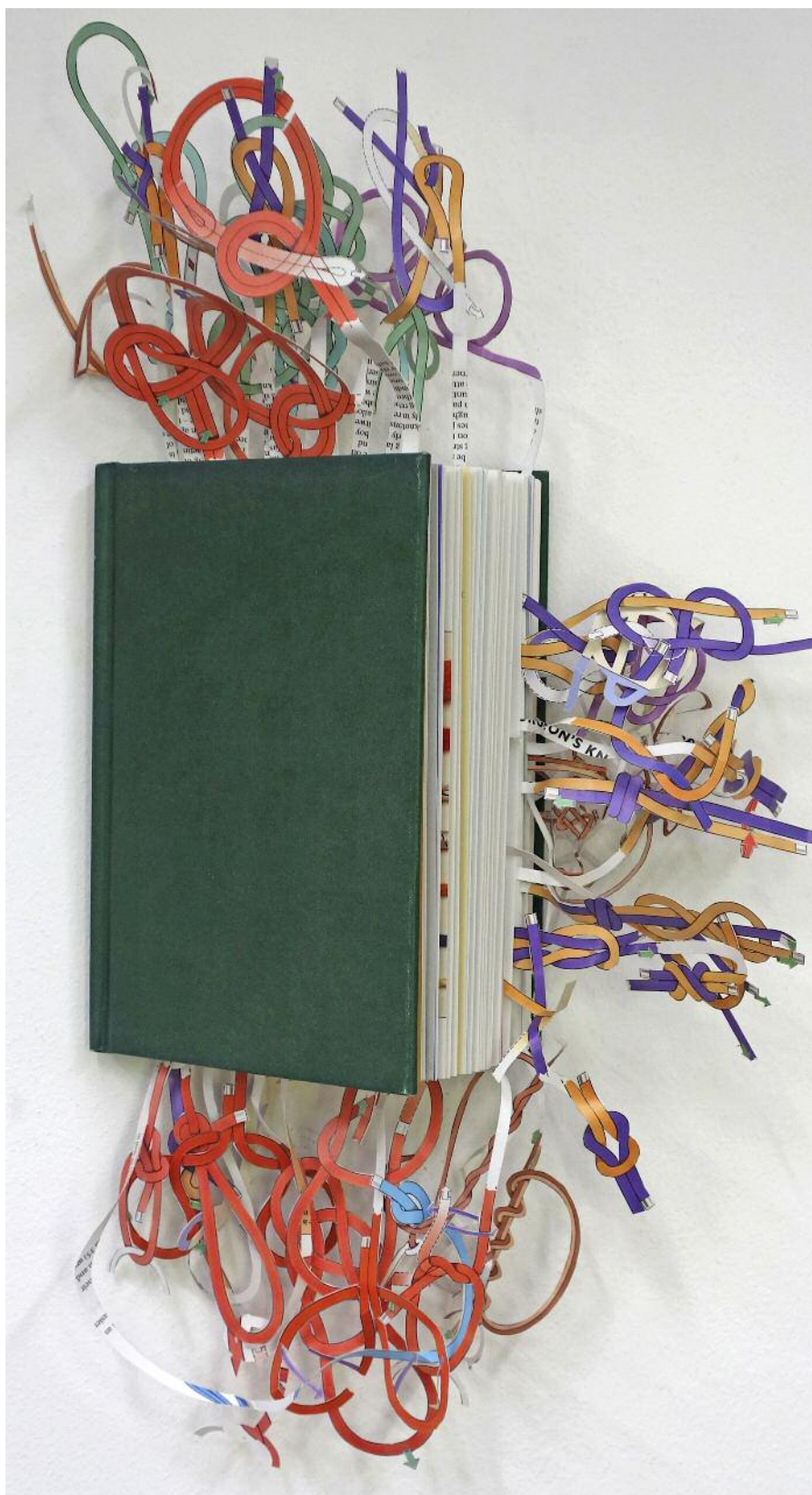
*Flower Fall II – The flowering plants of the Tsitsikama Forest and Coastal National Park, South Africa, 2017*  
cut and constructed book, 122 x 35 x 60 cm

**Jack Milroy**

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*Not Knots*, 2017  
cut book, 53 x 35 x 9.5 cm

**Jack Milroy**

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# KAREL NEL

Karel Nel has been the resident artist working with a team of the world's foremost astronomers on COSMOS, one of the most ambitious projects ever undertaken to map two degrees of the universe. Since his appointment in 2004, much of Nel's work has been informed by the ideas, insights, images and raw data issuing from radio, x-ray, infrared and optical telescopes.

He has just returned from the University of Kyoto where he joined the team of astrophysicists gathered to exchange new information regarding the Two Square Degree Survey of the Universe. Here he delivered a presentation entitled *The Structure of Darkness* which engaged broad issues regarding dark matter, dark energy and other powerful informing agents that shape our universe.

Art First is delighted to present a group of works which have emerged from his involvement with this cutting-edge alliance. In these works, the imagination is stretched and challenged by the enormous intellectual complexities related to the paradoxes of deep time, deep space, dark matter, gravity and dark energy.

Made from carboniferous dust, white salt and pure pigments, Nel's precise drawings of the geometry of the two square degrees evoke galactic rhythms, expansion and infinity.

Nel's work, *Leaping Darkness*, being exhibited at the FNB JoburgArtFair, is illustrated in the publication *The African Cosmos: Stellar Arts* which accompanied a ground-breaking exhibition presented by the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art in 2012. Nel's work was a prominent feature of this exhibition, curated by Christine Mullen Kreamer. The large and comprehensive exhibition focused on ethnoastronomy, and on related traditional and contemporary African art.

A companion piece to *Leaping Darkness* called *Stacked Coda* will be also be exhibited. This work symbolically represents the process of aligning successive layers of astronomical data to form composite images for diagnostic interpretation. In this work Nel represents the layers of information gleaned from successive meetings over years and distilled into an image representing the stratigraphy of learning and discovery.

Nel is Associate Professor in Fine Art at the Wits School of Arts. A forthcoming book on his life and work as an artist, collector, curator and scholar, is under way. His work is held in private collections worldwide: in the majority of South Africa's museum, public and corporate collections; the British Museum; The Metropolitan Museum, New York; and the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art, Washington DC.



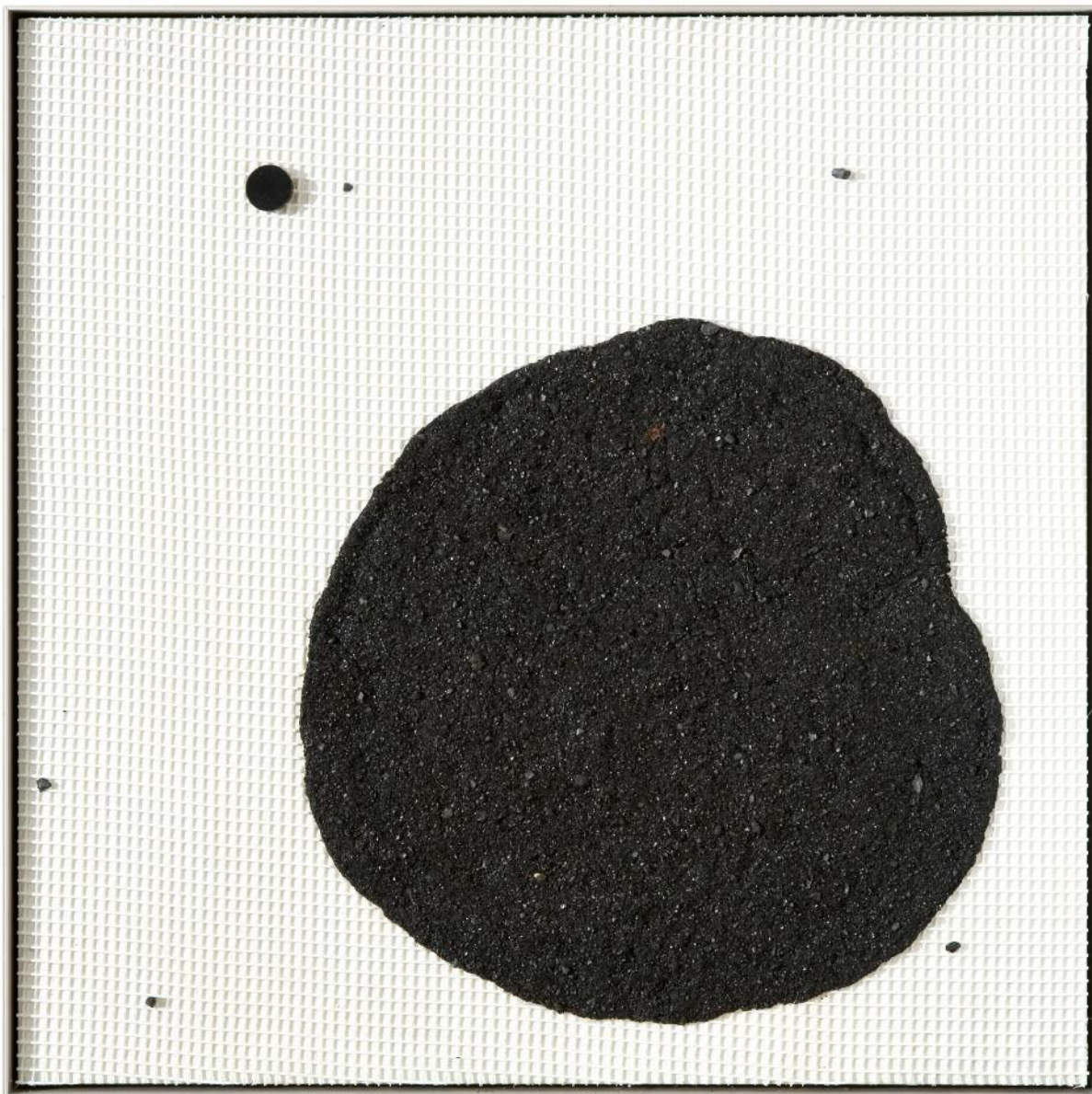


**Leaping Darkness, 2008**  
sprayed pigment on bonded fibre fabric, 250 x 80 cm

**Karel Nel**

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**Stellar Mask, 2010**

540 million year old carboniferous dust and salt, 51 x 51 cm

**Karel Nel**

# GRAEME WILLIAMS

We are very pleased to be introducing work from three compelling photographic essays by Graeme Williams, covering a period from 2006 to 2013. Our selection is taken from *Painting Over the Present*, *The Edge of Town* and *Scratching the Surface*, each surveying themes that on occasion merge into one another, while preserving a specific vision, with a penetrating observation of living realities within a rapidly changing South Africa. Township life with its many paradoxes, abandoned and reinvented structures, transitional or impermanent juxtapositions, captures the moments and the places which speak of a truth seldom documented in this way.

Between 1989 and 1994, Williams covered South Africa's eventful transition to democracy for Reuters and other news organizations. In the period which followed, he has produced a distinctive and contemporary body of work and exhibited world wide.

His photographs featured in the *Figures and Fictions* exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum (2011), *Apartheid and After* at The Huis Marseille, Amsterdam (2014), and a series of images was showcased in *The World Atlas of Street Photography* published in 2014 by Yale University Press and Thames & Hudson. In 2013 he was awarded the prestigious Ernst Cole Photography Award for the series *A City Refracted*, a photographic essay based on post-apartheid Johannesburg. Now published as a book by Jacana, it toured as an exhibition from the Irma Sterne Museum, Cape Town, to the Wits Art Museum, Johannesburg.

In 2016, twelve works from his series *As the Grass Grows* featured at the Louis Vuitton Foundation, Paris, in the exhibition *Being There* in the section *About a Generation, works by three South African photographers—Graeme Williams, Kristin-Lee Moolman and Musa Nxumalo* reveals contrasting portraits of South African youth, notably, those 'born-free' (i.e. born after 1994 when the newly democratic South Africa came into being

Williams's work is held in permanent collections including Cape Town University; the South African National Gallery; Duke University, USA; the Finnish School of Photography, Helsinki; the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC; and the Victoria & Albert Museum, London.





Edge of Town: Springfontein South Africa, 2006

image size 54 x 80 cm

**Graeme Williams**



**Painting Over the Present: Intabazwe Township, 2011**

image size 41 x 55 cm

**Graeme Williams**



**Painting Over the Present: Phutanang Township, Kimberley, 2011**

image size 41 x 55 cm

**Graeme Williams**



# KIM WOLHUTER

Kim Wolhuter is a wildlife photographer and film-maker whose famous grandfather was a founding game ranger of the Kruger National Park. For over 30 years he has been making wildlife documentary films on leopards, wild dogs, hyenas and most recently cheetah for a number of world renowned channels including *Animal Planet*, *National Geographic*, *The Discovery Chanel*, and the *BBC*, which broadcast his astounding film *Cheetah–Growing up Fast*, narrated by Sir David Attenborough, earlier this year.

Wolhuter works in a unique way, mostly barefoot, getting to know his subject over sustained periods, sometimes for several years, taking things much further than most in developing a close, trusting relationship with the animals he is filming.

‘I bond with the animals in a way that gives me the kind of access that other film-makers have rarely enjoyed. This allows me to portray their lives in the most intimate and natural way, revealing things new to science and exposing unknown vulnerabilities or insights into how the animals live in the wild day to day.

‘In my *Man Cheetah Wild* movie I followed two cheetah cubs from the age of two months for two years and formed the most incredible bond with them. I used to walk and hunt with them regularly while filming. A few weeks ago I came across one of them. I hadn’t seen her for about a year. I was out walking and just came across her so I whistled as I approached and sat down a few meters away. She then got up and came over and groomed me, licked me. It must be one of the most amazing experiences I’ve ever had. I spent about three hours with her hunting that day and then went my way. That’s why I do what I do.’

Photographer and film maker, Adrian Steirn made a series of short films, known as *21 Icons*, focusing on South Africans who have made a difference. Here is the link to his film on Kim Wolhuter, which gives a unique insight into how and why he does his work: <https://vimeo.com/114874838>





**Wild Dog, 2012**  
digital print, 80 x 120 cm, edition of 10

**Kim Wolhuter**



**Dog days, 2014**

digital print, 80 x 120 cm, edition of 10

Winner of the Gerald Durrell Award for Threatened Species, *World Wildlife Photography*  
exhibition 2012, The Natural History Museum, London

**Kim Wolhuter**





**Bull Elephants and Rhino, Hwata Pan, Zimbabwe, 2014**  
digital print, 80 x 100 cm, edition of 10

This image was in the finalist category at the *World Wildlife Photography*  
exhibition 2014, The Natural History Museum, London

**Kim Wolhuter**

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