

Art Times

Under the surface. WHITE RIVER Gallery

<https://whiterivergallery.co.za>

4 September - ? October 2022

Philip Badenhorst, Gwenneth Miller and Adelle van Zyl grew up in rural areas in vastly different landscapes – from the outposts in Western, Northern, and Eastern South Africa, yet they all currently live in Pretoria. Philip and Gwen have known each other since student days, sharing a passion for Neo-Romantic narratives and the sensual materiality of paint. Gwen and Adelle worked together at Unisa, where they both considered personal archives of belonging through their art and teaching. The three artists work as independent creative researchers who actively seek to reconsider the definition of painting in terms of revealing that which is hidden.

All three artists use various degrees of abstraction as a means to think through contemporary notions of interconnectedness. They envisage extending physical and psychological spaces through a layering of meaning and material. Thinking about “stories that gather stories” (Haraway 2016), there are links between real and imagined ecologies. Each artist works with different locations - as concrete dwellings, natural sites, and soul spaces.

Philip paints imagined dreamscapes in densely glazed oil paint and expressive brushstrokes, to evoke sanctified space. His work is characterized by a dramatic use of chiaroscuro, building illusive light and shadow plays. Philip weaves a poetic rendering of figurative abstractions in strong colour. He transforms real life into assertive symbols, playing intuitively to create bursting compositions and linear forms, which dances with bold colour fields in rhythmic structures. Transparent layers of paint speak about veiled longings and perishing glory. Philip’s work is born from an inner necessity, moving personal narratives to embodied expression. It acknowledges the creative act as a dynamic process.

Gwen merges landscapes and fungi to reflect on narratives of bio networks. She is fascinated with mushrooms and its mycelial body that lives vigorously, creating life from dead matter. Mushrooms release spores that contribute to the air surrounding us. Each group of fungi has different needs, behaviours and climates, much the same way as human societies. Relationships are cultivated where nourished, or perish when exposed to unfavourable

conditions. Gwen's drawings, paintings and photography draw comparisons between the complex biology of our own emotional experience and the bewildering beauty of the world embedded the folds of synapses and fungi's imbricated patterns. Her gestural mark making searches for a renewed awareness to imagine transience.

Adelle renders cropped, close-up views of ordinary architectural spaces in oil paint, translating photorealistic precision into rippling geometric abstractions. These everyday details vary from the embossed glass windows of mid-century buildings to abstracted architectural details of rural churches. Adelle's paintings emphasize reflected light and the transformative effect it has on everyday scenes. Her work alludes to internally laden aspects of the human condition and, through an intimate and intense focus on interior details, the viewer is transported to a psychological space of surreal alchemy.

Each artist's approach uniquely restricts access to a full 'picture', visualising the numinous under the radar of everyday existence. The works come from diverse cultural-ecological spaces, but brings to the fore a reciprocal flow of ideas and media response. On one hand these translations of space reflect how different the artists' observations and experiences are from each other. Yet, on the other hand the exhibition is unified as a sense of urgency to consider relations with earth and each other. The exhibition visualise how we as practitioners 'listen' to what is *underneath the surface*.

WHITE RIVER GALLERY

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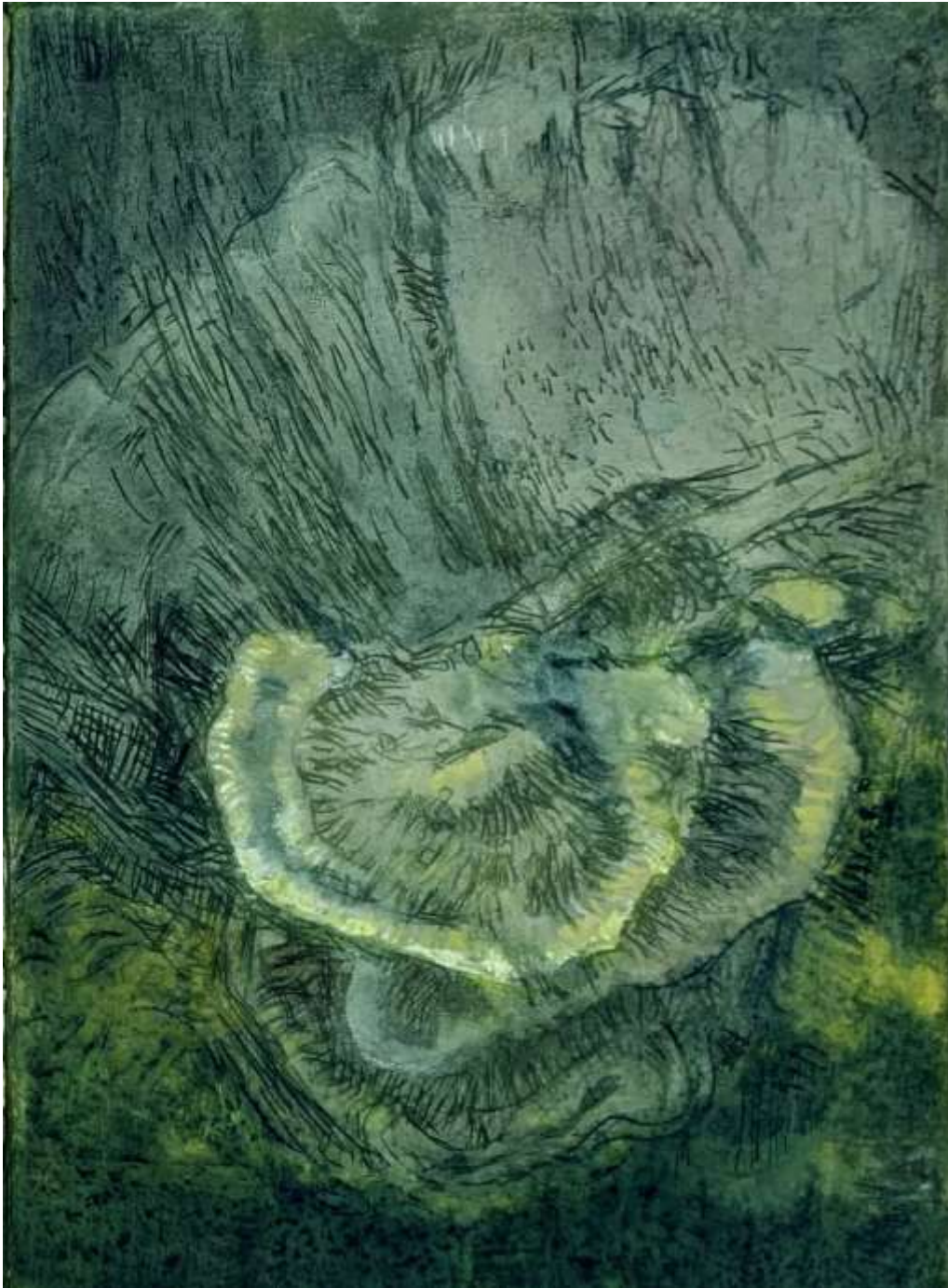
More images will be sent in a separate document.



Philip Badenhorst, *This storm is you*, 2020. Oil on artist's litho print (40 x 58cm)



Philip Badenhorst, *There will be time until the next darkness*, 2020. Mixed media on Saunders Paper (55 x 75cm)



Gwenneth Miller *Forest walk detail* 2022 Mixed media: Monoprint and oil paint. 200mm x 280mm



Gwenneth Miller, *Forest pickers*, 2022. Mixed media sketch for a painting. 200mm x 280mm



Gwenneth Miller Detail of *Gills of little creatures*, 2021- 2022. Derwent oil-based coloured pencils on Montmatre acid free paper, layered on ink and wood glue cut outs.



Adelle van Zyl, detail of *Green kitchen II* (2022). Oil on canvas. 710mm x 510mm.





Adelle van Zyl, detail of *Farm House II* (2021). Oil on canvas. 710mm x 510mm.

