

# talent watch

Get to know leading creatives – BY SHEREEN LURIE



“I enjoy playing with turpentine and oil paint. I love the way they combine and at the same time separate – pigment from oil.”

Picture by Vanessa Cowling



## ALEXIA VOGEL ARTIST

**A**lexia Vogel is an artist based in Cape Town. She attended the Michaelis School of Fine Art, where she

graduated with a distinction in painting in 2013, and has since had two solo exhibitions with the Barnard Gallery. Her artistic practice explores notions of nostalgia, fantasy and wanderlust on large-scale canvasses and on paper. Vogel vividly explores the realms of imagination to create imagined paradises in suspended states of reverie.

**My interest in painting** began at school. Art was always my favourite subject and I took it very seriously. My love for painting was ignited again in my third year at Michaelis, where I chose it as my major. We were encouraged to explore other media aside from traditional paint, but I immediately went back to oil paint because I feel it has a quality that cannot be substituted.

**I decided to become a full-time** artist at the end of my third year. It was a fun, encouraging, yet challenging year, and the first time that I actually considered becoming an artist professionally. I think the combination of a great studio atmosphere, talented peers and influential lecturers really inspired me to pursue painting as a career.

**I enjoy** playing with turpentine and oil paint. I love the way they combine and at the same time separate – pigment from oil. The way the “turpsy” paint moves across the surface of paper or canvas often surprises me with the mark it leaves behind. This is the way I always start my paintings; these surprises direct my composition.

**I liken the process of painting** to a wandering. My painting process starts when I stretch the canvas onto the frame,

followed by days of priming. It is these first tactile steps of making the surface that allows my painting journey to begin. I never know what the outcome of the painting will be, and it is that uncertainty that drives me to create. Every mark made and removed is a part of the process. There is no pattern or expectation – it is like choosing a route; you never quite know where you will end up.

**Awards I have won include** the Simon Gerson Prize in 2013. This is awarded to fourth-year Michaelis students who receive distinction in their major.

**Through my artworks I explore** the notions of wanderlust and immersion. When I make work, I feel immersed in the experience of making it. I want to transfer that immersion into my paintings by creating places that could transport the viewer into a dream-like realm.

**I am currently working towards** the AKAAs (Also Known As Africa) Fair in Paris in November, with the Barnard Gallery.

**My time at the Michaelis School of Fine Art** gave me the opportunity to explore painting. Although it was challenging at times, we had freedom, critical direction and guidance from some excellent lecturers. The lessons learned have helped me to develop as an artist.

**My favourite South African artists are** Georgina Gratrix, Jake Aikman, Ian Grose, Peter Eastman, Matthew Hindley, Zander Blom, Alexandra Karakashian, Sarah Biggs, Simphiwe Ndzube, Katherine Spindler, Michael Taylor, Siwa Mgoboza, Mia Chaplin and Nabeeha Mohammed.

**South African art is** very exciting! There are so many talented and inspiring artists who are putting our country on the Art World Map. There are also exciting things happening with project spaces and new museums, and I think this is going to open up some interesting dialogues and opportunities for artists.

**Future plans include** my first residency in St Émilien in France next year. The residency is with the Southern African Foundation For Contemporary Art (SAFFCA). I can't wait for the opportunity to work in a new environment and meet new people. 🏠

Take a look at Alexia's Instagram page, [www.instagram.com/alexiavogel](http://www.instagram.com/alexiavogel), or email [galleries@barnardgallery.com](mailto:galleries@barnardgallery.com)