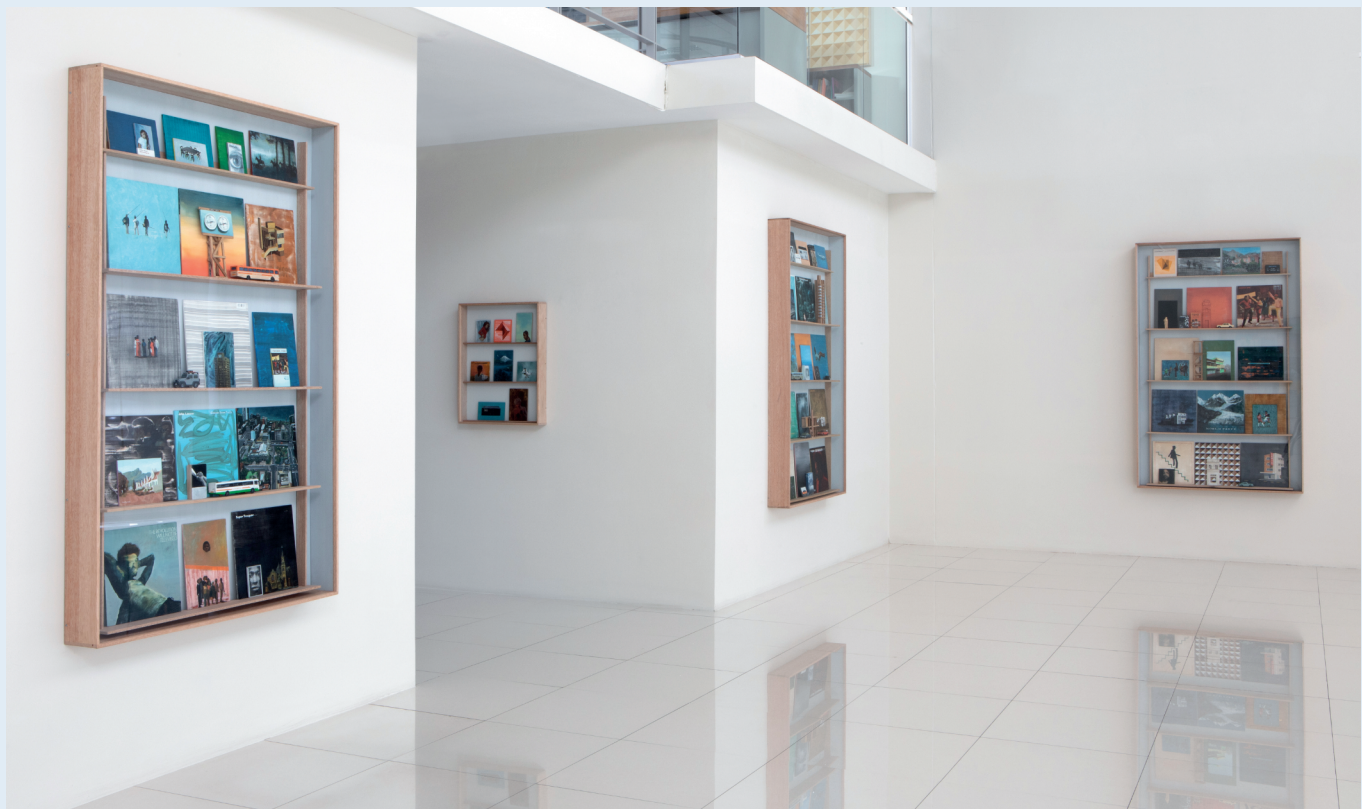


Classic Contemporary

At the base of the eastern slopes of Table Mountain, beyond the greenery of Newlands Forest is Newlands Village. With sophisticated boutique shops, bars and restaurants, Barnard Gallery complements the village perfectly

BY BONGIWE NOCANDA



With his background in interior design, founder **Christiaan Barnard** says building the gallery provided 'a great opportunity to design and plan the space to spec. Originally used as my design studio, my love for art and an understanding of spatial dynamics conducive to the presentation and viewing of art and design objects influenced my decisions from an architectural perspective. The double-volume interior in the main gallery space with floor-to-ceiling glass windows was an obvious choice facilitating the influx of natural light, a key element when viewing paintings in particular.'

Christiaan's grandfather was an avid collector of European masterpieces and his mother worked for Sotheby's. For him, the motivation was and continues to be about the artists and their careers. 'I didn't start with the intention of establishing a commercial enterprise as such – it developed in

this direction as I have endeavoured to promote and sell the work of contemporary artists, hopefully enabling them to pursue their dreams while earning a living from their practice.'

THE MARKET

The Barnard Gallery's Art Director, Alastair Whitton, says South Africa and indeed the larger African continent has and continues to produce skilled artists making relevant work at a level that is certainly on par with the rest of the world. 'We are somewhat hindered by our geographic position on the globe, which does have a bearing on an artist's reach into the international market. Art fairs on the continent, and in particular the Investec Cape Town Art Fair, which is arguably the premier event in the region, are crucial in that, not only do they expose the work of local artists to a wider audience in



POP IN AND BE INSPIRED!

Alexia Vogel:

'Strange Light' with an 'Interlude' show by Tom Cullberg opened for viewing on the 17th of February and will be on display until the 4th of April.

barnardgallery.com

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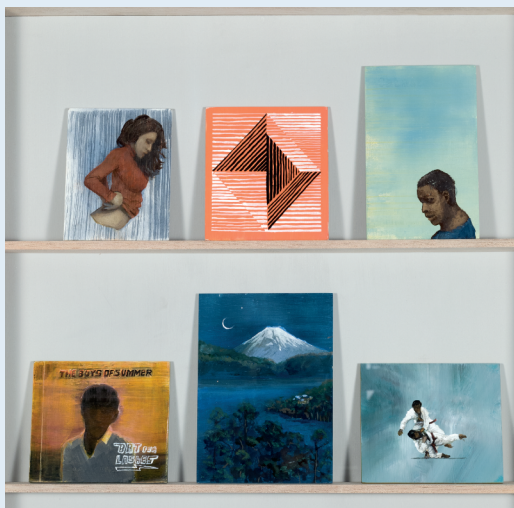
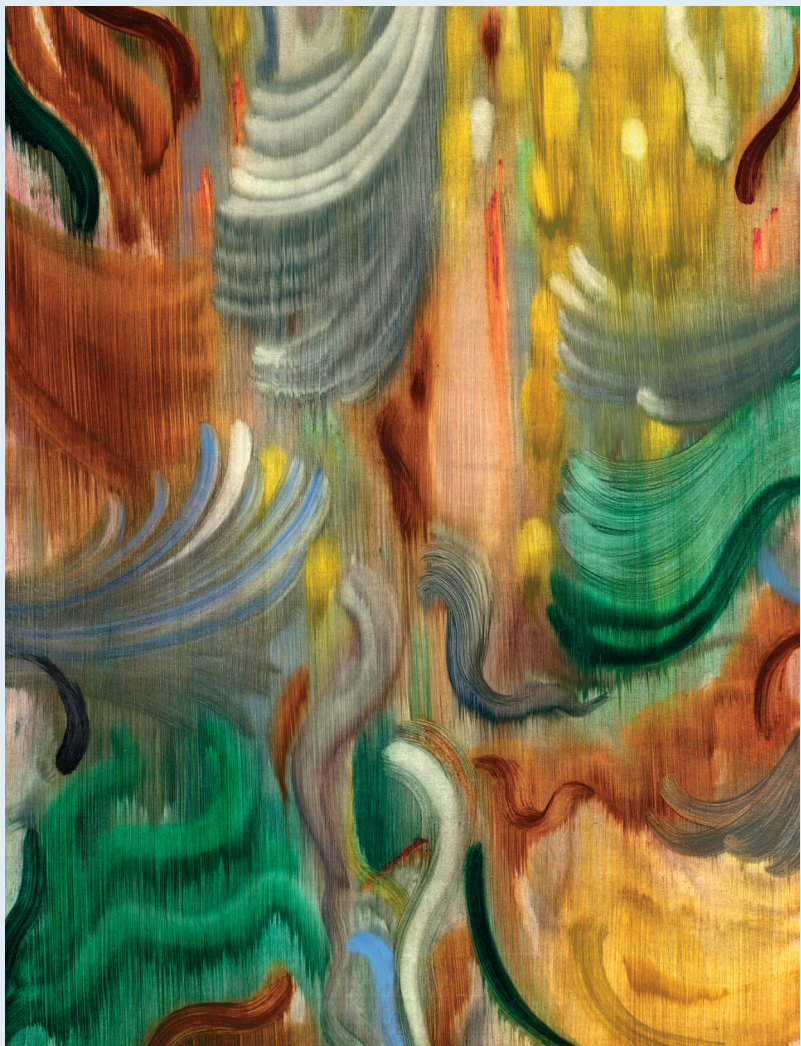
general, but more specifically to a broad range of international collectors who regularly attend these events. Conversely, there are a number of international artists collaborating with African galleries whose work is introduced to local collectors through this platform, thereby broadening and diversifying their collector base and furthering their careers in new markets.'

At the 10th edition of the fair in February, the Barnard Gallery presented a focus on painting, highlighting recent local and international developments in the genre with a particular exploration of the resurgence of abstraction in contemporary art. Participating artists included Jo Hummel, Dirk Salz, Tom Cullberg, Jennifer Morrison, Katherine Spindler, Paul Senyol, Jo O'Connor, Alexia Vogel, Jaco van Schalkwyk, Lien Botha and Richard Mudariki.

'We consider artists with a clear and dedicated commitment to their practice whose work evidences a high degree of skill in their engagement with their chosen medium,' says Alastair. 'The Barnard Gallery is not interested in following trends; that said, we believe it is important that an artist has an awareness of the times and context in which they live and work.'

THE SHOW

Space and light – these have always been central concerns within Alexia's practice. Whether fantasy landscapes or realms are evoked in memory, Alexia is exquisitely sensitive in capturing the emotional charge of an environment. Here, this sensitivity is not explicitly represented but implicitly manifested. Her paintings do not recreate her environment so much as they speak visually to their new constraints and unexpected inspirations. Far from home, Alexia yearns for wilderness, and the nostalgia which has characterised so much of her work reveals its melancholy nature. Arcing lines echo palm fronds, and swirling curves suggest waves or petals, but coalesce into a vivid new language thrumming with the tension between memory and novelty.



PHOTOS: COURTESY IMAGES