

THINGS WHICH ARE NOT AS THOUGH THEY WERE



AN EXHIBITION BY **RORY EMMETT**
3 NOV - 12 JAN



Rory Emmett

THINGS WHICH ARE NOT AS THOUGH THEY WERE
(left)

acrylic and spray paint on polypropylene woven fabric
292 x135cm
R 72 000

Rory Emmett

CARRIER
(below)

acrylic on found image
24 x 31cm
R 10 800





Rory Emmett

SPILL
(above)
reconstructed drop sheets used by my father
paint, drop sheet, and wood
72 x 82cm
R 25 500

Rory Emmett

VEIL
(below)
found object
74,2 x 25,5cm
R 3 500





Rory Emmett

LANDSCAPE I

reconstructed drop sheets used by my father
paint, drop sheet, and wood

222 x 65cm

R 58 500



Rory Emmett

LANDSCAPE II
(left)

reconstructed drop sheets used by my father
paint, drop sheet, and wood

182 x 82cm

R 54 000



Rory Emmett

LANDSCAPE III
(right)

reconstructed drop sheets used by my father
paint, drop sheet, and wood

182 x 82cm

R 54 000



Rory Emmett

QUARRY STUDY (FIELDWORK)

stone installation
dimensions variable
R 72 000

BIOGRAPHY

Rory Emmett

Rory Emmett (b.1992) lives and works in Cape Town, where he is currently a resident artist at Greatmore Studios. He completed his BAFA at Michaelis School of Fine Art (UCT) in 2014, where he majored in painting and won the Judy Steinberg Painting Prize as well as the Director and Staff's Special Prize in his final year. Emmett was a Top 5 Sasol New Signatures Merit Award winner in 2015 for his video work titled *Transcending (2014)* as well as a Sanlam Portrait Award 2015 finalist. In 2016 Emmett went on to teach art at Cedar High School of the Arts in Mitchell's Plain, Cape Town. He subsequently completed his PGCE with art and design didactics through the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) in 2017. After the success of Emmett's first solo show *Concerning Alchemy (2017)*, he decided to pursue working full-time as a practicing artist. In 2018 Emmett was selected as a top 5 finalist for the ARPART Video Competition, in Cape Town/Italy for his work *Concerning Alchemy (2017)*, and was most recently nominated as a finalist for the inaugural edition of the Emerging Painting Invitational (EPI), which took place at the First Floor Gallery in Harare, Zimbabwe (2019). Recent projects include two solo shows in 2019, namely *Building Ground: Grey Areas* at 99 Loop Gallery in Cape Town, and *Reprise* at SMAC Gallery in Stellenbosch. Emmett also participated in the 2019 edition of the Investec Cape Town Art Fair, and has participated in a number of local and international group shows including *The Main Complaint* at the Zeitz MOCAA (2018/19) and *Present Passing: South by Southeast* at The Osage Foundation in Hong Kong (2019).

Artist Statement:

I try to work in a de-constructivist approach to the language, performance and alchemy of painting. Through my artistic practice, I attempt to transcend the superficial surface of things by interrogating colour and its various material and ideological assumptions and associations. The various forms of these visual enquiries employ colour mainly as a racial construct as well as a medium in painting. In the Post-Colonial and Post-Apartheid South African context, I often find myself questioning what the privilege or value

systems are that have and continue to separate people via overt and covert structures, resulting in one person's labour being worth more than another's. This body of work is a probe into these and other concerns and ongoing questions I am coming to terms with. The title *Things Which Are Not As Though They Were* is derived from a Biblical reference, which grapples with the dichotomy of *faith* and *reality* – seeing the 'would-be' potential in that which appears hopeless. The process of alchemy also informs this meditation, in that the act of transmutation of base-materials into objects of value speaks of an inherent belief, ability and capacity for one's own spiritual transcendence – or elevation beyond the mundane. This body of work comprises of thoughts and sentiments expressed through various material manifestations which can be utilized towards this quest. I have reconstructed and appropriated found objects and images collected over time, in which I have either intervened on the surface or shifted the formal structure to make something from seemingly 'nothing'. Mostly, these iterations take on the form of hessian drop sheets once used by my father – who was a house-painter/decorator for the majority of my childhood and upbringing. His occupation has informed my artistic practice and ways of thinking about painting in profound ways. I grew up seeing these surfaces, which are essentially the residue of *work*, become more and more dense with paint marks and smudges. Drop sheets are mostly used to protect and preserve one's floor of any splats and drips of paint that may fall from the painters' brush or roller, whilst cutting in corners or coating the surface of a wall. Upon further study of these materials, and as my knowledge of art historical associations grew, I began to find these 'meaningless' materials intriguingly, even hauntingly beautiful. I began using them in installations and performances and eventually began stretching them over stretcher frames. I have stretched and framed a selection of these sheets of material to construct painterly fields, which begin to read as abstract surfaces of marks made over an extensive period of time and *activity*. By rearranging what already exists, in this case found stones and sheets of cloth, and by shifting the context of these 'readymade' paintings and sculptures within the gallery space, I hope to shift their perception away from pre-conceived associations.