



MEDIA RELEASE

August 2017

A TWO-MONTH CELEBRATION OF ART AT MELROSE ARCH

Friedrich Nietzsche once said, "An artist has no home in Europe except in Paris." If he were alive today, he would probably say, "An artist's home in Johannesburg is at Melrose Arch."

Art is important to Melrose Arch, as can be seen by the inclusion of various elements throughout the precinct, such as the beautiful Gaudí-inspired mosaics between Orient and Moyo restaurants and the tiles on the Square, as well as the solid blocks of coloured tiles on the High Street Tower, reminiscent of Mondrian's work. Melrose Arch is also home to The Melrose Gallery, which focuses on contemporary African art.

Melrose Arch believes art must be easily accessible and enjoyed often, and artists must be encouraged and supported whenever possible, which is why August and September are being devoted to a celebration of art at Melrose Arch, with an outdoor exhibition of bronze statues by Jean Doyle, a two-day Mpumalanga Traditional Art Market and the inaugural SculptX Fair, an annual indoor and outdoor sculpture display that kicks off in September.

An outdoor exhibition of bronze sculptures of women by Jean Doyle 9-27 August, 2017

Being immortalised in a work of art is reserved for people of stature, so it was with great delight that Melrose Arch learnt of renowned sculptor Jean Doyle's latest work, The Ladies of Melrose Arch, which will be unveiled at an outdoor exhibition of bronze sculptures of women at Melrose Arch from 9-27 August.

Jean Doyle is one of South Africa's leading sculptors. Internationally renowned, Doyle has had a number of solo and group exhibitions and her work is in private collections all over the world. South Africans will know her statue of Just Nuisance, the famous Navy dog, which stands in Simon's Town's Jubilee Square, and her statue of a jubilant Nelson Mandela at the gates of Groot Drakenstein (formerly Victor Verster) Prison that pays tribute to the country's most beloved statesman, standing on the spot where Madiba took his first steps as a free man.

Doyle's veneration of the fuller female figure has become a trademark of her work. To celebrate Women's Month, there will be 30 Jean Doyle bronze sculptures of women dotted around Melrose Arch from Women's Day on 9 August. Bold, capable and confident, with curvaceous bodies, the women exude resilience, strength and warmth, and depict the cultural diversity of our country.

The Ladies of Melrose Arch comprises two magnificent pieces so far, the first being of two beautiful Johannesburg women taking some time out during a shopping spree to enjoy a glass of wine. An extra chair at the table allows members of the public to join the women and have their photographs taken. The second piece is of a woman making the most of a shopping trip, happily carrying a parcel.

“I had an exhibition at Melrose Arch in 2005, during which time I spent many hours in various coffee shops and restaurants watching sophisticated people go by,” Doyle says. “I was particularly taken with the beautiful women I saw, their elegance, poise and energy. I decided then I would do a series of sculptures of The Ladies of Melrose Arch.

“I believe Melrose Arch is one of the best meeting places and business centres in the country. I envisage this to be the first of about five sculptures in the Ladies of Melrose Arch series, all celebrating multicultural friendships and the beauty of the women seen in Melrose Arch.”

“We are honoured that an artist of Jean Doyle’s stature is paying tribute to Melrose Arch in such a manner,” says Mike Vermaak, MD of Melrose Arch. “This sculpture captures perfectly one aspect of Melrose Arch, and we look forward to seeing the rest of The Ladies of Melrose Arch sculptures in years to come.”



The Mpumalanga Traditional Art Market at Melrose Arch 2-3 September, 2017

The Mpumalanga Traditional Art Market is a non-profit organisation that promotes the work of traditional women artisans from rural Mpumalanga, in a bid to empower and uplift them and help them sustain a decent livelihood through selling of their arts and crafts. Every year, the organisation hosts a special craft market in Johannesburg to celebrate Heritage Month and this year, Melrose Arch has been selected as the perfect venue to introduce the work of traditional craftswomen to shoppers and art lovers with discerning taste.

Beading, pottery, wood carvings, wired art, stitching, tapestry and embroidery are among the beautiful works that will be at the market, as well as paintings, fabrics and pots decorated with the bright geometric designs inherent in traditional Ndebele art. The artists themselves will be present throughout the weekend, affording market-goers the opportunity to learn more about the traditional crafts first hand.

In addition, there will be an exciting programme of entertainment throughout the weekend, with live traditional music, poetry readings, cultural dance performances and jazz by Peter Jasper and the Quartet.

The Mpumalanga Traditional Art Market will be held in The Tent (behind the Square).

SculptX Fair 2017

The Melrose Gallery, which opened its doors on Melrose Arch's High Street on 1 December last year, is launching SculptX Fair, an annual urban sculpture exhibition, on 6 September. The large group sculpture show will feature works from more than 30 leading and emerging South African and international sculptors in the gallery and throughout the precinct, and will run until 8 October.

The exhibition includes Willie Bester, Pat Mautloa, Wilma Cruise, Anton Smit, Gordon Froud, Pitika Ntuli, Paul du Toit, Arlene Wandera from Kenya, Rodney Place, Strijdom van der Merwe, Thabo Pitso, Andre Stead, Collen Maswanganyi, Stanislaw Trzebinksi, William Sweetlove from Belgium, Samuel Allerton, Ndabuko Ntuli, Monica van den Berg, Thulani Zondo, Jaco Kruger, Ella Cronje, Heidi Hadaway and Martyn Schickerling, among others.

As part of SculptX Fair 2017, The Melrose Gallery will be hosting an exhibition of artworks and the launch of a book on Paul du Toit (date to be confirmed).

"We are very excited about SculptX Fair 2017," says Craig Mark, director of The Melrose Gallery. "Large sculptures will be installed in public spaces in the precinct as part of the SculptX Urban Sculpture Park. This launches a wonderful initiative that will see large sculptures adorning the precinct as a permanent activation.

"The SculptX Park aims to add to the beauty of the precinct while providing a valuable platform for sculptors to showcase their works and add value for those who work, live and play in Melrose Arch. We expect the SculptX Park to become a popular destination for art lovers and tourists alike."

For more information on any of these events, please contact the Melrose Arch Marketing Department on (011) 684-0002.

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