

## **Thys Walters – Biographical sketch**

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Thys Walters was born on 8 June 1970 and raised in the University town of Stellenbosch. South Africa. He started his art classes at the PJ Olivier Art Centre during his high school years. He matriculated in 1989 from the High School Stellenbosch, after which he studied Industrial Design at the Cape Technicon for two years. His serious work as a sculptor started in 1992, when he became a full time artist.

Being a master falconer his love for animals, birds and nature were captured in rough materials such as hard wood and sandstone. With hobbies which range from collecting animal specimens to training of falcons and hawks, it is quite understandable why the human form is of secondary importance. Sometimes he combined animal and human forms in one sculpture, because he believes that they are closer interwoven than modern man would admit.

When materials such as wood and sandstone are used, the inspiration for each piece of work is mainly determined by the natural shape and appearance, while the opposite happens when casting in bronze. Thys makes his original sculpture out of wax, rather than clay, because more detail can be achieved when carving or molding the wax. This is especially true when birds of prey is the chosen subject, for they are delicately structured with feather groupings that differ all over the body.

Recently he started to explore the medium of painting and express his ideas in a colourful way by the use of oil paint on canvass, paper and other materials.

During the years 1992 – 2006 Thys Walters exhibited at a number of galleries:

Local: Hout Street Gallery, Paarl (1993); The Arts Association of Bellville (1993, 1994); Johan Coetzee Art Gallery, Stellenbosch (1994); Kirstenbosch, Cape Town (1994); Vriesenhof (Lesser Kestrel Expo), Stellenbosch (1994, 1996), The Cape Gallery, Cape Town (1995 – 1997), PJ Olivier Art Centre, Stellenbosch (1999); Dorpstreet Gallery, Stellenbosch (2001); “The Complete Gallery” Ceres (2004) )

International: On invitation at the Wildlife-Art exhibition “Wild in de Natuur” Kunsthuis van het Oosten, Enschede, The Netherlands (2006); Deutscher Falkenorde Annual Meeting, Billerbecks, Germany (2006).

Apart from his art endeavors he also trained and handled eagles and falcons in the production of several movies (“Alaska”, “The cell” and the “Sinbad” TV series) as well as several TV advertisements. He also gave “Birds of Prey” talks and demonstrations on a regular basis to the public, school children and students. Together with Johan Botha he made a TV documentary in the Nature Program “50/50” on SABC2 highlighting his falconry skills with birds of prey, as well as his dedicated rehabilitation of injured raptors.