



Rina Stutzer

Tswalu: A parallel World of Slowness and Light



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An exhibition in collaboration with Everard Read and the Tswalu Foundation
AiR Program

10 November – 21 December 2022

*all prices include South African VAT of 15%

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Air Residency Notes:

Early on in the residency, I decided to move the studio into the veld to be as close to and immersed in the environment as possible. My ‘en plein air’ session had many wild ‘models’ traversing the surrounding landscape. Being exposed to roaming passers-by in the wilderness made me feel alert and focused. But amongst all the memorable experiences during the residency, being exposed directly to the flora affected me most.

A parallel World of Slowness and Light*

I had been observing the Boscia Albitrunca* tree from a distance for years en route between South Africa and Namibia to visit family. At the beautiful Boscia Pan in Tswalu, I found myself surrounded by a concentrated formation of trees dotting an endless sea of soft-yellow ‘suurgras’. I admire Boscia Albitrunca trees’ formal qualities that attest to their adaptations to environmental pressures. A highly specialised, yet ‘hidden’ reason for its resilience is the plasticity of its roots combined with its deep root water uptake. They brought to mind a more careful consideration of the specie as subject matter for my artwork.

First, I familiarised myself with the trees through in-situ visual studies: ‘en-plein-air’ oil painting, watercolour sessions, charcoal sketches, and photos. Thanks to a new in-house printmaking studio at our own studio/foundry, I could explore an array of new materials which I brought back from a residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris. After numerous monotype-based experimentations, I found a risky process that offered interesting visual feedback with many surprising rewards.

The series of tree prints revealed an honest and ‘plain-speaking’ directness in the chosen process. To create the monotype images, I had to start with a mirror-image of the ideal, only seeing the result of the “right-way-around” after the paper was lifted off the ink tablet.

Once the drawing had been completed on the back of the rice paper and the thin sheet carefully lifted off the ink tablet, a clean off-white rice paper sheet was cautiously laid over the residue of the drawing on the ink slab. From this a ghost print (or ‘reduction print’) is produced by rolling the surface through the etching press.

This printing process results in a study of a tree captured by day and by night. To me, there is a calm, repetitive, cyclic, even meditative feeling emanating from the series. The starkness of black and white and the simplicity of the subject matter relates to the silent, calm atmosphere of final work.

I decided to title the monotype representing day ‘Lightbearer’ since Boscia trees embrace and ‘bear’ the blazing Kalahari sun by turning the ‘light’, through photosynthesis, into growth. They present themselves as lightbearers, with a white-washed trunk. Thirdly, the trees are proverbial ‘lightbearers’, or even teachers, since my interaction with them ultimately inspired me to learn more about their environment and place therein.

I also continued with a body of work using patina on copper that I started some years ago. The patina is unfixed and of a shifting nature, changing over time, reflecting and referring to an ever-changing landscape. The patina paintings are made from rolled copper plate ‘painted’ by applying intense heat from gas flame and moisture (with chemicals) from water spray or brush application. This process produces an image that ‘grows’, by manipulating the oxidation process with different chemicals. The copper background, and the ground surface it provides, matches the Kalahari sand hue that forms the underlining base layer of the ‘treescapes’. The shrubs, grasses and trees painted on the copper will change as the rusts continue to develop, just as trees, shrubs and grass.

Trees extend the human mind, help shape our cognitive development, and support our evolution as they offer us shelter, medicine, food, tools, and technology. They were part of creating the conditions for life on earth. Trees ought to make us think more!

The night version of the printed monotypes I titled ‘Until the trees bring me to mind’. After every day’s veld excursions, I took time to consider what I had seen and learnt, which led me to ask, ‘When do we take time to consider the mammoth supportive role that trees play in our lives?’

“If what a tree [...] does is lost to you, you are surely lost/ Stand still” (‘Lost’ by David Whyte).

The conservation of indigenous trees, such as Boscia Albitrunca in the Tswalu reserve, helps to lessen the impact of climate change. They can sustain life during long periods of little or no rainfall, as they continue to grow and yield fruit. They also house biodiversity, thereby maintaining genetic diversity. They are indeed little ecosystems in themselves. By conserving these keystone species, all the life-forms they sustain are inherently protected.

In the words of Hermann Hesse, ‘trees are the most penetrating of preachers’.

- RINA STUTZER

Footnotes:

*Ramakrishnan, E.V. (2006) ‘Tamarind Tree.’ Terms of Seeing: New and Selected Poems, Konark Publishers, 2006.

*Ramakrishnan, E.V. “Tamarind Tree.” Terms of Seeing: New and Selected Poems. 2006. Poetry International. Poetry International Publisher, https://www.poetryinternational.com/en/poets-poems/poems/poem/103-14081_THE-TAMARIND-TREE. Accessed 3 September. 2022.

*Boscia Albitrunca’s common names are; Shepherd’s Tree, White-stem Tree, and Coffee Tree (English); Witgat, Witstamboom Matoppie (Afrikaans); umGqomogqomo (Xhosa); umFithi (Zulu), molthopi (Tswana); mohlopi (North Sotho); muvhombwe (Venda) and omutenderereti (Herero).



A HYMN TO TIME, 2022
PATINA ON ROLLED COPPER PLATE
100 x 67 x 2,5 cm
AC51947
SOLD



LIGHTBEARER I, 2022
BOOK BLACK INK ON RICE PAPER
64,8 x 64,8 cm
AC51951
R15 000,00



UNTIL THE TREES BRING ME TO MIND I, 2022
BLACK INK ON HANDMADE CONDA RICE PAPER
64,8 x 64,8 cm
AC51965
R15 000,00



LIGHTBEARER II, 2022
 BOOK BLACK INK ON HANDMADE RICE PAPER
 64,8 x 64,8 cm
 AC51952
SOLD



UNTIL THE TREES BRING ME TO MIND II, 2022
 BLACK INK ON HANDMADE CONDA RICE PAPER
 64,8 x 64,8 cm
 AC51966
 R15 000,00



LIGHTBEARER III, 2022
 BLACK INK ON HANDMADE CONDA RICE PAPER
 64,8 x 64,8 cm
 AC51953
SOLD



UNTIL THE TREES BRING ME TO MIND III, 2022
 BLACK INK ON HANDMADE CONDA RICE PAPER
 64,8 x 64,8 cm
 AC51967
 R15 000,00



*A PARALLEL WORLD OF SLOWNESS
AND LIGHT, 2022*
PATINA ON ROLLED COPPER PLATE
100 x 67 x 2,5 cm
AC51948

SOLD





THEY CHANGE THE SHAPE OF TIME I, 2022
BLACK INK ON HANDMADE CONDA RICE PAPER
369,3 x 95 cm
AC51944
R120 000,00





LIGHTBEARER IV, 2022
 BLACK INK ON HANDMADE CONDA RICE PAPER
 64,8 x 64,8 cm
 AC51954
SOLD



UNTIL THE TREES BRING ME TO MIND IV, 2022
 BLACK INK ON HANDMADE CONDA RICE PAPER
 64,8 x 64,8 cm
 AC51968
 R15 000,00



LIGHTBEARER V, 2022
BLACK INK ON HANDMADE CONDA RICE PAPER
64,8 x 64,8 cm
AC51955
R15 000,00



UNTIL THE TREES BRING ME TO MIND V, 2022
BLACK INK ON HANDMADE CONDA RICE PAPER
64,8 x 64,8 cm
AC51969
R15 000,00



LIGHTBEARER VI, 2022
 BLACK INK ON HANDMADE CONDA RICE PAPER
 64,8 x 64,8 cm
 AC51956
 R15 000,00



UNTIL THE TREES BRING ME TO MIND VI, 2022
 BLACK INK ON HANDMADE CONDA RICE PAPER
 64,8 x 64,8 cm
 AC51970
SOLD



PROMISES OF NOMADIC THOUGHT
XVIII, 2022
PATINA ON ROLLED COPPER PLATE
120 x 50 cm
SOLD





LIGHTBEARER VII, 2022
BLACK INK ON HANDMADE CONDA RICE PAPER
64,8 x 64,8 cm
AC51957
SOLD



UNTIL THE TREES BRING ME TO MIND VII, 2022
BLACK INK ON HANDMADE CONDA RICE PAPER
64,8 x 64,8 cm
AC51971
R15 000,00



LIGHTBEARER X, 2022
BLACK INK ON HANDMADE CONDA RICE PAPER
64,8 x 64,8 cm
AC51958
R15 000,00



UNTIL THE TREES BRING ME TO MIND X, 2022
BLACK INK ON HANDMADE CONDA RICE PAPER
64,8 x 64,8 cm
AC51972
R15 000,00



LIGHTBEARER XI, 2022
BLACK INK ON HANDMADE CONDA RICE PAPER
64,8 x 64,8 cm
AC51959
R15 000,00

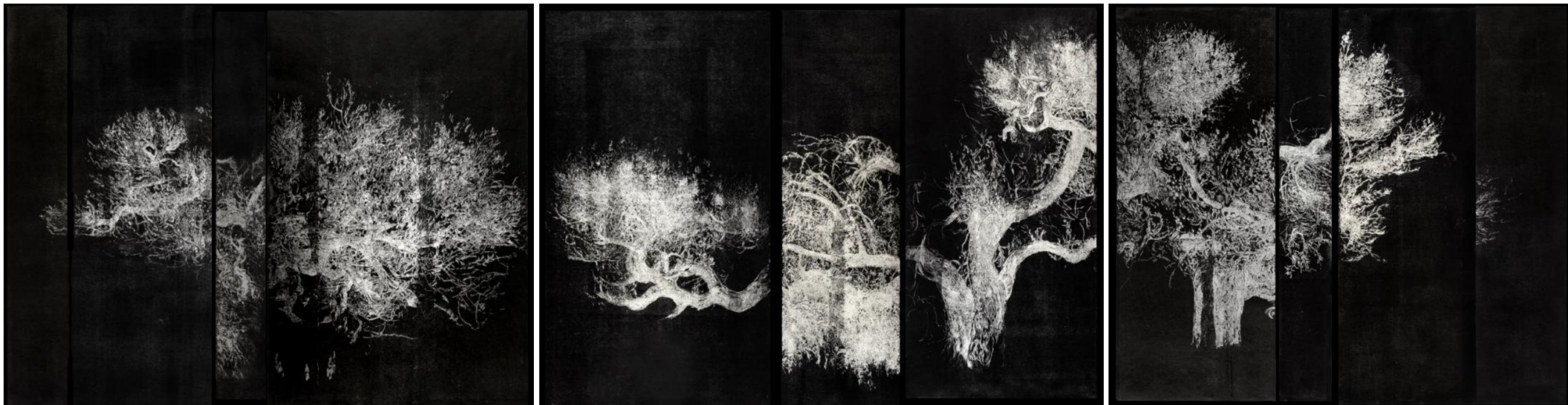


UNTIL THE TREES BRING ME TO MIND XI, 2022
BOOK BLACK INK ON HANDMADE RICE PAPER
64,8 x 64,8 cm
AC51973
R15 000,00



INNER VELD, 2022
PATINA ON ROLLED COPPER PLATE
50 x 40 x 2,5 cm
AC51949
SOLD





THEY CHANGE THE SHAPE OF TIME II, 2022
BLACK INK ON HANDMADE CONDA RICE PAPER
353,6 x 95 cm
AC51945
R120 000,00





LIGHTBEARER XII, 2022
BLACK INK ON HANDMADE CONDA RICE PAPER
64,8 x 64,8 cm
AC51960
SOLD



LIGHTBEARER XIV, 2022
BLACK INK ON HANDMADE CONDA RICE PAPER
 64,8 x 64,8 cm
 AC51961
SOLD



UNTIL THE TREES BRING ME TO MIND XIV, 2022
BOOK BLACK INK ON HANDMADE RICE PAPER
 64,8 x 64,8 cm
 AC51975
SOLD



LIGHTBEARER XX, 2022
BLACK INK ON HANDMADE CONDA RICE PAPER
64,8 x 64,8 cm
AC51964
SOLD



UNTIL THE TREES BRING ME TO MIND XX, 2022
BLACK INK ON HANDMADE CONDA RICE PAPER
64,8 x 64,8 cm
AC51976
SOLD



A GROWING POEM, 2022
PATINA ON ROLLED COPPER PLATE
50 x 40 x 2,5 cm
AC51950
SOLD



LIGHTBEARER XVIII, 2022
 BLACK INK ON HANDMADE MULBERRY PAPER
 64,8 x 64,8 cm
 AC51963
SOLD



LIGHTBEARER XVII, 2022
 BLACK INK ON HANDMADE CONDA RICE PAPER
 64,8 x 64,8 cm
 AC51962
SOLD



UNTIL THE TREES BRING ME TO MIND XXII, 2022
 BOOK BLACK INK ON HANDMADE RICE PAPER
 64,8 x 64,8 cm
 AC51977
 R15 000,00



UNTIL THE TREES BRING ME TO MIND XXI, 2022
 BOOK BLACK INK ON HANDMADE CONDA RICE PAPER
 64,8 x 64,8 cm
 AC51978
 R15 000,00





Rina Stutzer (born 1976) completed her BAFA at the University of Pretoria in 1999 and went on to complete her MAFA at the same university in 2007. After graduation, she started lecturing part-time in Painting and Drawing in the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Pretoria. She works as a full-time artist, focusing on her own creative process and production, investigating sculptural form, printmaking and painting. Her work deals with 'impermanence' (the provisional, temporal, perishable and transitory) in both materials and process. In her recent paintings, she has been exploring 'painting' with acid as an ever-changing image on copper plate as well as on paper. However, during the patina and subsequent oxidisation processes (due to the acid content and its reaction to the metal), the original images continue to be altered and thus change in appearance. Similarly, through printmaking and her most recent exhibition, she explores the reduction or ghost print pulled after the initial monotype, offering an inversed image. Through these types of methodologies, Stutzer investigates and questions ideas of permanence in contrast to the transitory nature of life.

Stutzer has achieved a number of accolades, including The Bettie Cilliers-Barnard Bursary from the University of Pretoria for excellence in painting (1999) and the SASOL New Signatures Art Competition: People's Choice Award (1999). She was awarded the first prize in the Ekurhuleni Fine Arts Award Competition (2007) and achieved a distinction in Painting for her Master's degree in Fine Arts from the University of Pretoria in the same year. In 2012, she was awarded the Rendezvous: Focus Painting bursary. This prestigious bursary afforded her the opportunity to attend a painting residency in France at the Cité Internationale des Arts in 2013, to which she returned to in

2019. In 2016, her work "Pinned Transitory II" was exhibited at Reporting from the Front - Biennale Architettura 2016, South African Pavilion, Venice, Italy. Her 2018 sculptural installation is a stainless-steel diptych of mirroring continents engaged in a dynamic visual dialogue, charged with an ever-changing present titled "There is No Time Like the Present". The installation is situated at the Gateway buildings, at Mall of Africa, in Midrand.

Stutzer frequents work-stays away from her studio and has attended local and residencies abroad. Apart from the two sojourns to the Cité Internationale des Arts in 2013 and 2022, she was invited in 2016 to attend the residency at the Nirox Sculpture Park in the Cradle of Humankind, a UNESCO World Heritage site and in 2014 she participated in the Sydney Art Fair and was a part of 20 Stellenbosch. In 2021 was invited to take part in the 6 months Tswalu 'Air' program and residency in Tswalu, Northern Cape which was followed by an exhibition at Everard Read gallery.

She has participated in several group and solo exhibitions since 2000 in South Africa as well as in Great Britain, France, Australia, India, Italy, Switzerland and in the Netherlands. Apart from her private art practice, Stutzer is a creative advisor at the collective art studio and foundry, Dionysus Sculpture Works (DSW) in Pretoria. She also holds a studio space within the DSW collective where she prints, paints and sculpts. Stutzer is represented by Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg, Cape Town and London.



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