



**GARY STEPHENS**

*Tswalu – Muses of the Kalahari*



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6 July – 28 September 2024

**Fireblade Aviation – By appointment only**

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### *Tswalu – Muses of the Kalahari*

In a sense Gary Stephens has come full circle.

For an Arizona-raised, who's early work captured the cactus-dotted terrain of his home state, three months spent working in the Kalahari was a natural fit.

"It's certainly been a return to landscape painting", says Stephens from his base in Johannesburg. "When I was in my twenties, I would go camping in the desert for a week and paint and not talk to anybody. I have found it beautiful to return to the subject matter", he adds.

Stephens is the latest Everard Read artist to exhibit the work he created while part of the Tswalu Foundation's Artists in Residence Programme (AiR).

For the last few decades, he has been known for the vibrant portraits he creates. Now, Tswalu's vast expanse of arid savannah, dotted by mighty Shepherd's Trees and flanked by the Korannaberg mountains, has served as a spark for a new path of artistic endeavour.

Each day while at Tswalu, Stephens struck out on early morning and dusk walks to observe the light change. He watched work being done by environmentalists on adjacent residencies, and above all, made the most of the Northern Cape quiet and space to reflect and explore his craft.

The result is a new body of bold landscapes, joyful watercolour studies, contemporary depictions of endemic animals and a series of weavers' nests. The latter, rendered in a riot of bright tones, take on an abstract quality of galaxy-like swirls.

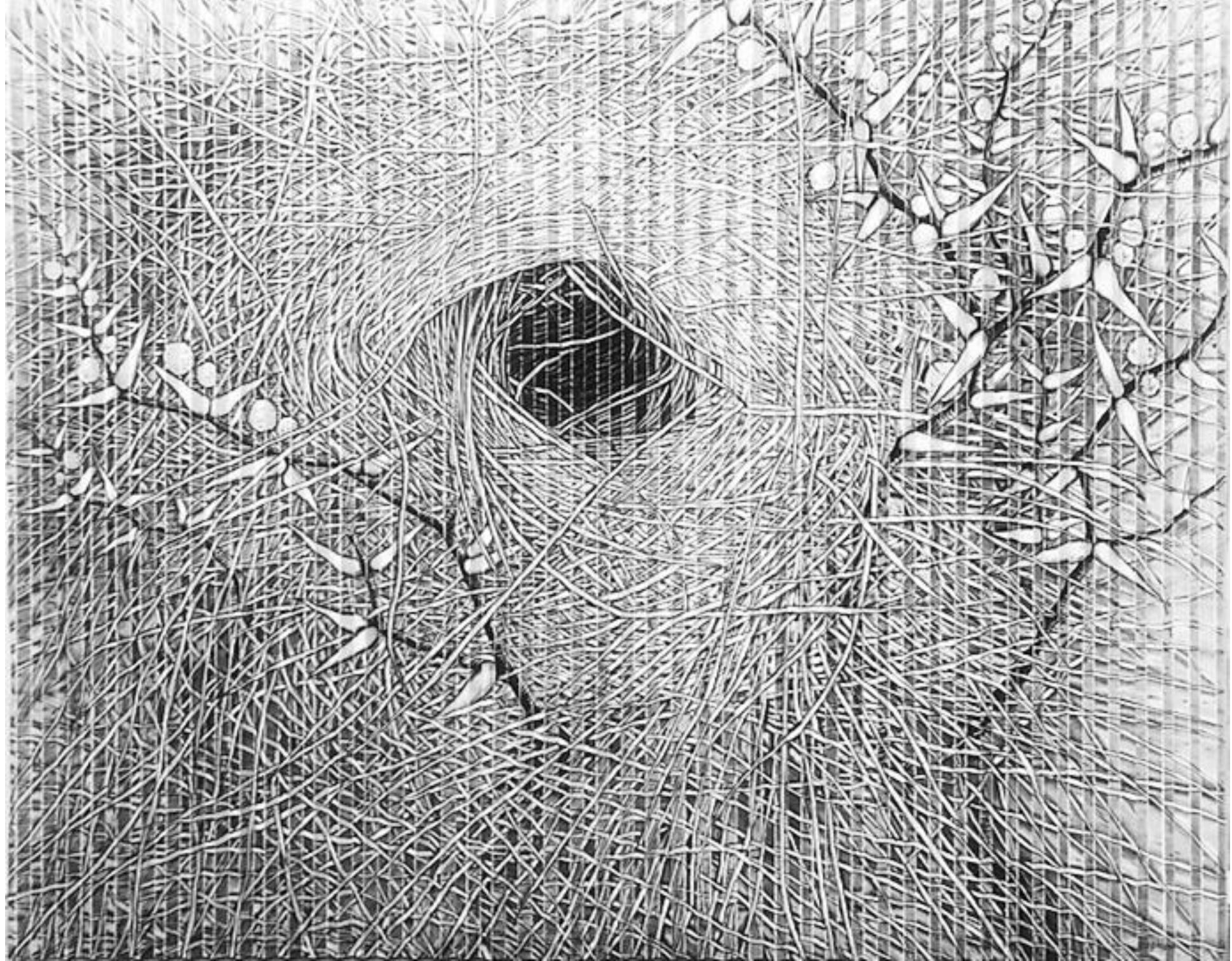
Stephens' focus on paint is something he's relishing. As he says, "when I was painting in the States years ago, I made Fauve-like bright pieces, but then I ended up working with black and white work for years. I think it's bubbling up in me again to return to that brilliant, colourful world".

And that after all, is the point of a residency. The exposure to new environments and having both the physical and headspace to forge new creative pathways is what is most exciting.

*PLEATED WEAVERS NEST WITH RED & BLUE STRIPES, 2024*  
CHARCOAL AND CHALK PASTEL ON PLEATED PAPER  
114 x 149 CM  
R160 000



*KALAHARI SUNRISE ACACIA WITH SWALLOW PATTERN, 2023*  
MIXED MEDIA ON FOLDED PAPER  
122 x 177 CM  
R180 000



*WHITE BROWED SPARROW WEAVERS NEST, 2024*  
CHARCOAL ON FOLDED PAPER  
151 x 190 cm  
R190 000



*LARGE DAWN NEST, 2024*  
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS  
158 X 218 CM  
R175 000 (unframed)





*YELLOW WEAVER NEST WITH BLUE ACACIA THORNS, 2024*  
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS  
146 x 201 cm  
R160 000 (unframed)



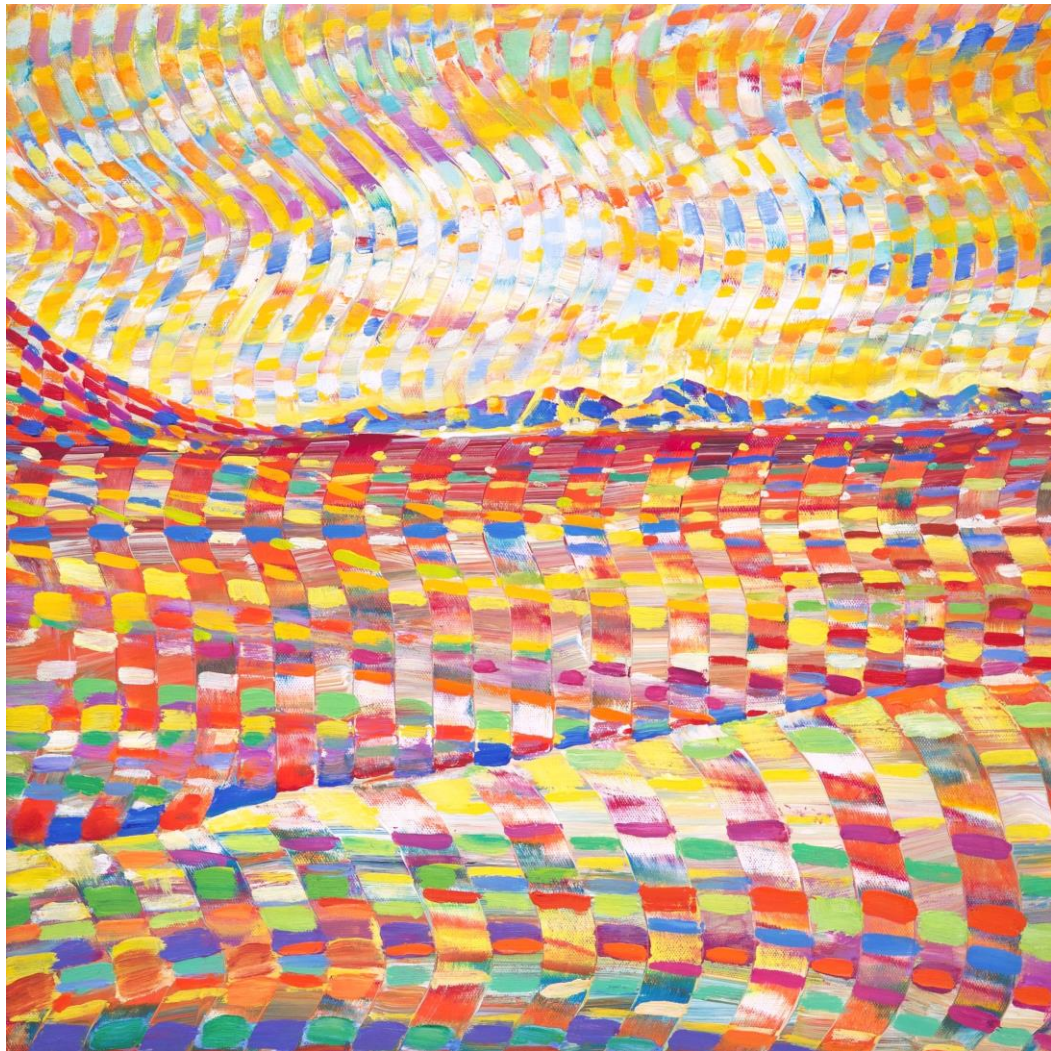


*DAWN ACACIA AT DEDEBEN SPRING, 2024*  
OIL ON CANVAS  
94 x 122 cm  
R90 000

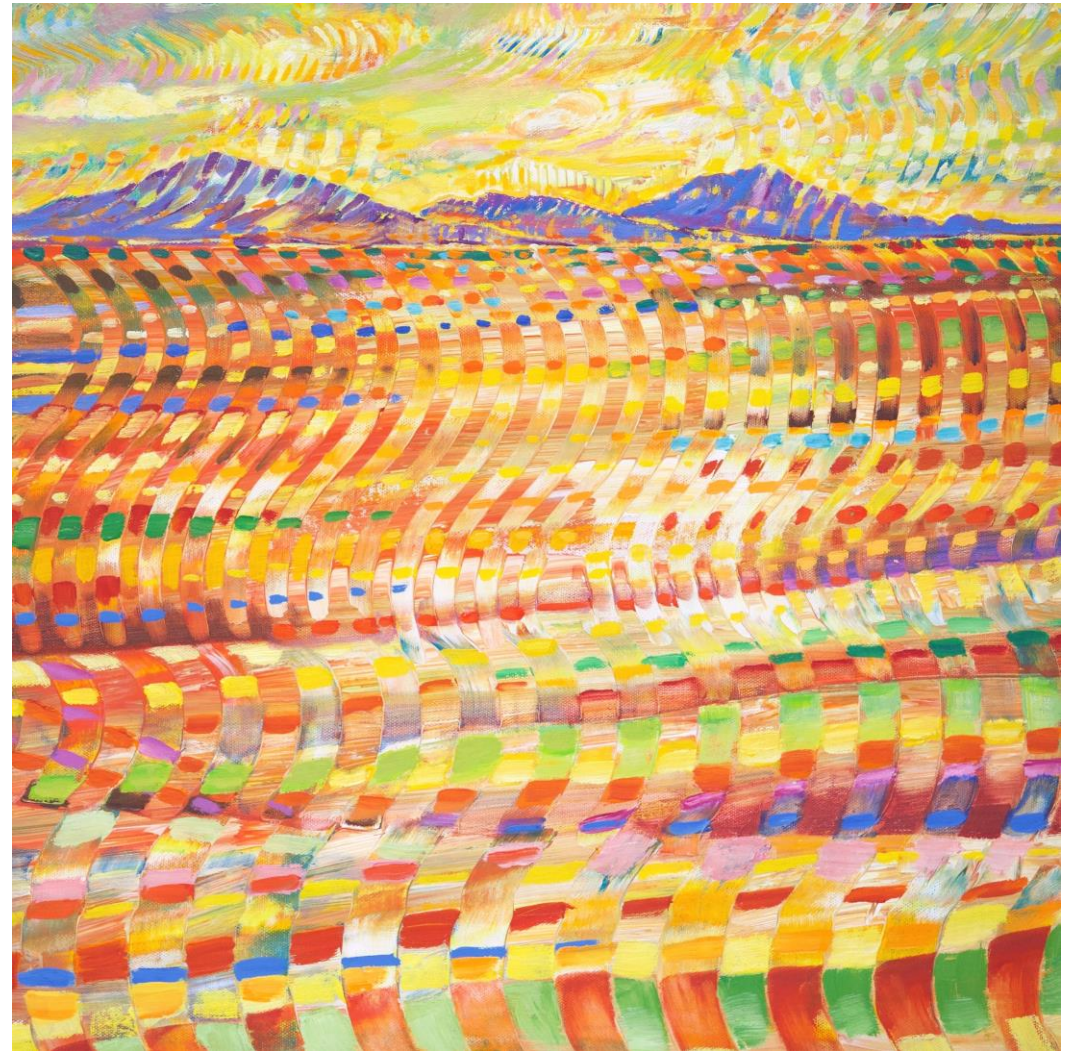


*SHEPHERD'S TREE AT VERWATER MEADOW, 2024*  
OIL ON CANVAS  
88 X 119 cm  
R90 000



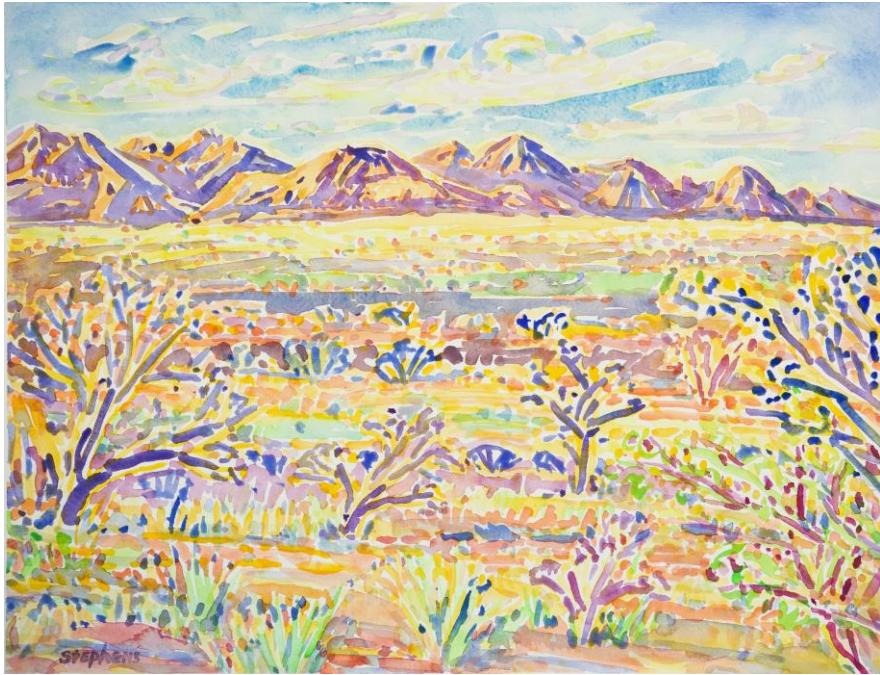


*TSWALU FROM ABOVE DEDEBEN, LATE AFTERNOON, 2024*  
 OIL ON CANVAS  
 50 x 50 CM  
 R50 000



*PICNIC VALLEY DAWN FROM THE DUNES, 2024*  
 OIL ON CANVAS  
 50 x 50 CM  
 R50 000

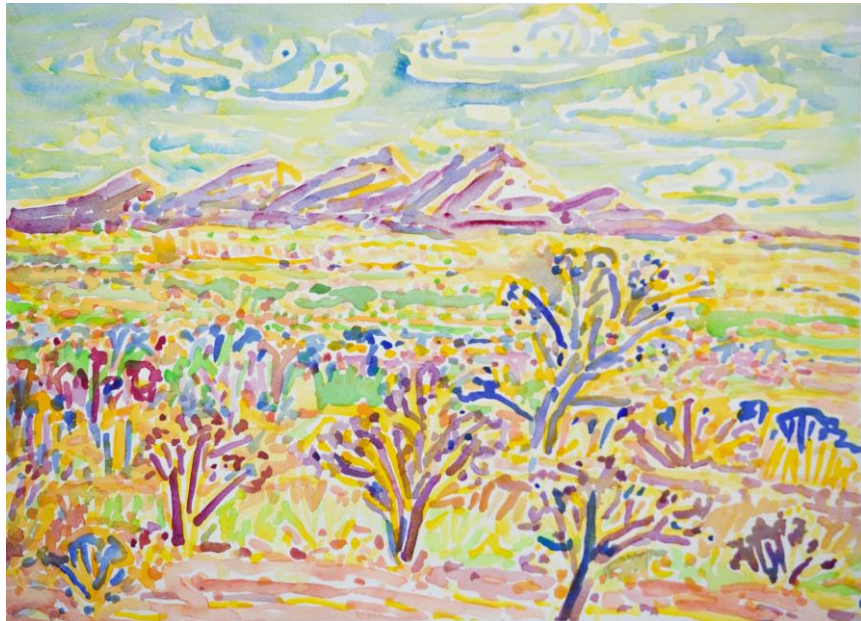




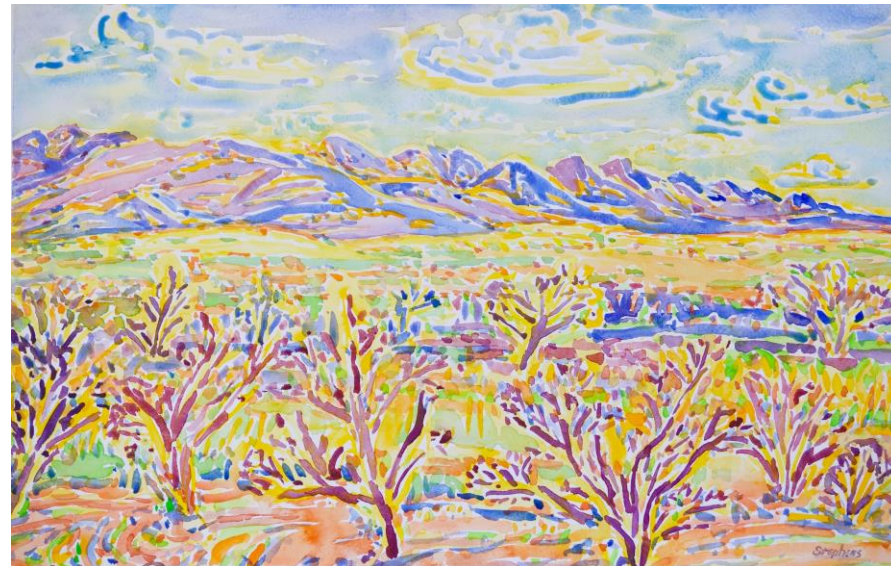
*MORNING LIGHT FROM LOAPI,  
ACACIAS AND CLOUDS*  
2023  
WATERCOLOR ON PAPER  
28 x 37 CM  
**SOLD**



*BLUE AFTERNOON ACACIAS,  
SURPRISE PAN*  
2023  
WATERCOLOR ON PAPER  
28 x 43 CM  
R28 000



*MIDDAY LOAPI HILLS*  
2023  
WATERCOLOUR ON PAPER  
28 x 37 CM  
R26 000



*MORNING ACACIAS, HILLS AND  
CLOUDS, 2023*  
WATERCOLOUR ON PAPER  
28 x 43 CM  
R28 000



*HORNBILL ON BRANCH AT DEDEBEN OVERLOOK, 2023*  
 MIXED MEDIA AND CHALK PASTEL ON FOLDED PAPER  
 38 x 49 CM  
 R35 000



*DEDEBEN HORNBILL WITH PLAID LANDSCAPE, 2023*  
 MIXED MEDIA AND CHALK PASTEL ON FOLDED PAPER  
 38 x 50 CM  
 R35 000

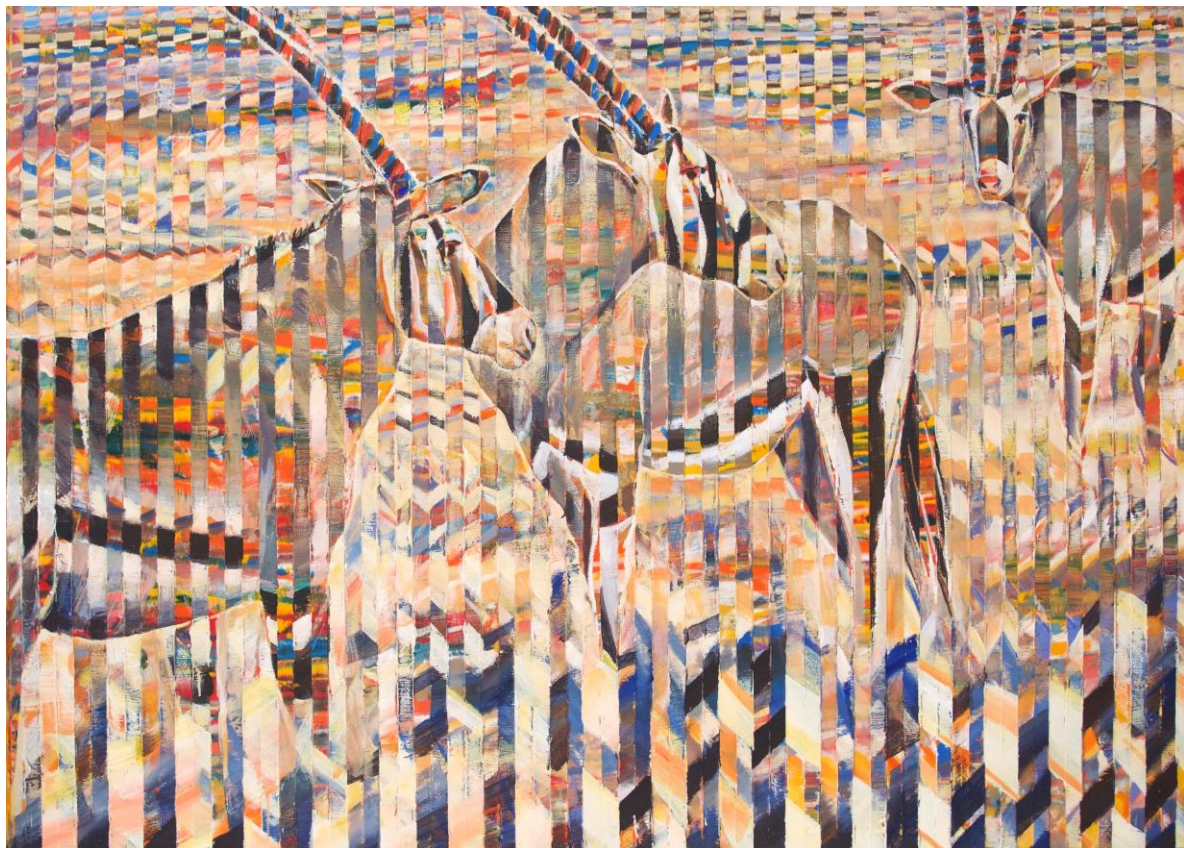


*LARGE TWO SUNSET ZEBRA*, 2006 – 2024  
CHALK PASTEL ON FOLDED PAPER  
132 x 176 CM  
R175 000



*TWO SUNSET ZEBRA SQUARE*, 2006 – 2024  
CHALK PASTEL ON FOLDED PAPER  
107 x 107 CM  
R125 000



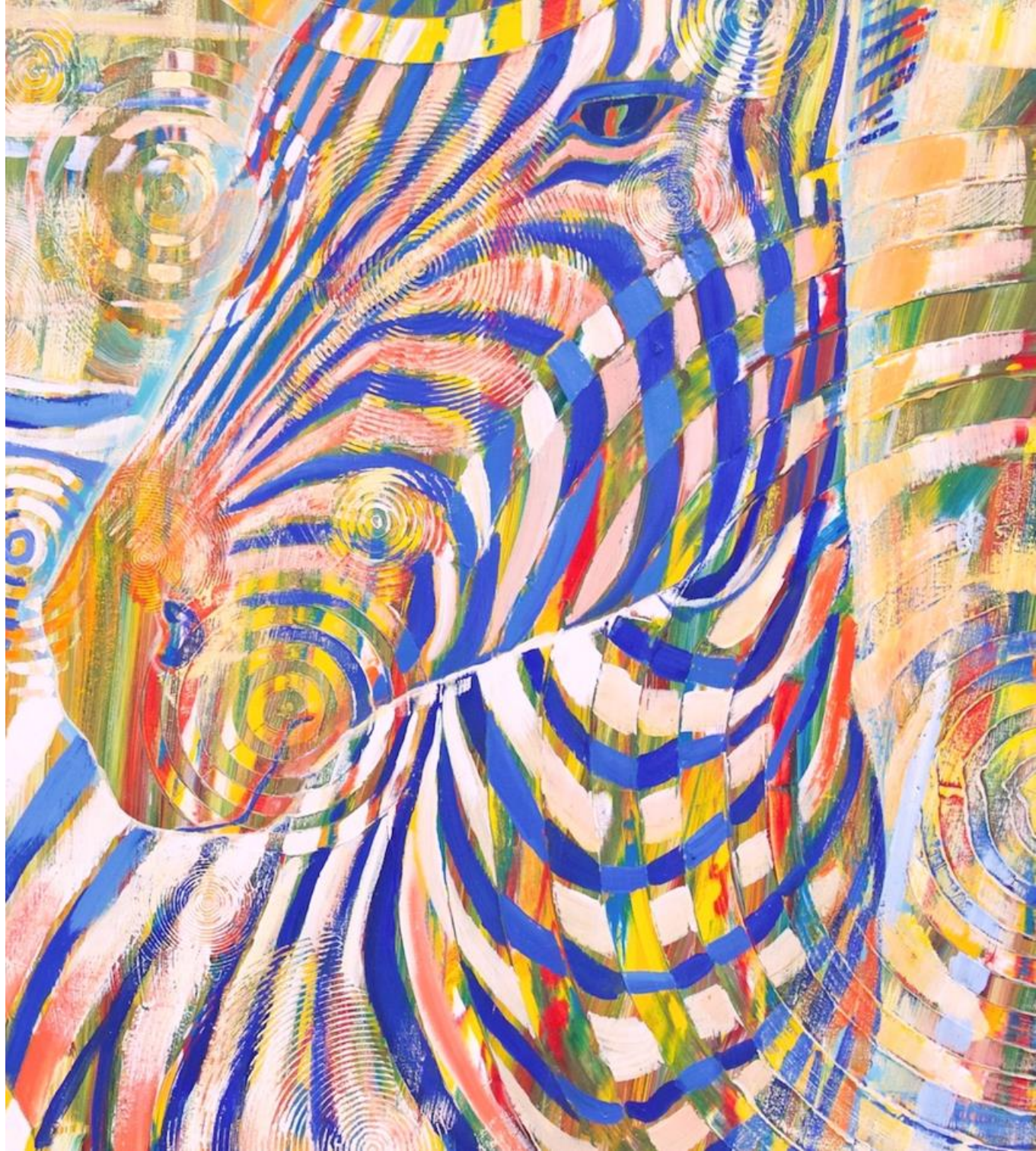


*THREE ORYX IN SHIMMERING LIGHT*, 2013 - 2024  
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS  
130 x 180 CM  
R160 000 – ON RESERVE





*YELLOW LIGHT ZEBRA*, 2007-2024  
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS  
140 x 224 CM  
R175 000





## GARY STEPHENS

(b. 1962 Yuma, AZ, USA)

From detailed images rendered in charcoal to landscapes captured in swathes of oil paint and dynamic portraits made from chalk pastel and folded newsprint, Gary Stephen's art vibrates with an energy and depth.

Stephens was born on the Mexican border town of Yuma, Arizona in the United States, and studied painting and drawing at the University of Arizona and the San Francisco Art Institute. He has travelled extensively in Latin America, Asia, Europe and Africa, and lived and worked in Florence, Italy for a decade. Stephens has been living in South Africa home since 2008, and in 2009, he did a year-long residency at Greatmore Studios in Cape Town.

He is especially acclaimed for the monumental portraits he has made of artist friends and their African sense of aesthetic and dress. These works allowed him to develop his interests in optical effects, geometric repetitions, textiles and fractured images. He has subsequently translated this unique style into images depicting the land and fauna and flora – subjects that that have always been close to Stephens' heart. His work can be found in public and private collections in the US, South Africa, Europe and Middle East.



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