

Art's impact on public spaces and developments

By [Anton Smit](#)

18 Mar 2024

Renowned for his captivating sculptures showcased worldwide, Anton Smit shares his perspective in one of Rainmaker Marketing's latest podcasts on the profound role of art in communal environments and the impact it has on property development and open public spaces.



Source: Supplied.

My favourite exhibition in a public space is a more recent one in Century City, Cape Town, namely Landscape of the Soul, spanning 33m. It can be found underneath a bridge under the main road in the precinct, named the Subway.

This installation was unveiled in September 2023 and consists of 500 mask-like faces. I have also done public exhibitions at Menlyn Maine in Pretoria, Nelson Mandela Square in Johannesburg, Leonardslee Lakes & Gardens in England, and Genk in Belgium. Most of these places have sculpture parks.

My artistic philosophy and creative inspiration is centred around the human form, which I believe is the crown of God's creation. It really is just the most beautiful form on earth for me. From exploring the complexities of the human psyche reflected in a series called "Facets of Personality", to celebrating the pure essence of humanity - my latest works titled "In-Moment" use sculptures as reflections of life's beauty and intricacies.

I'm also passionate about making art accessible to all, and I prefer to showcase sculptures in public spaces rather than confining them to gallery walls. Art brings life to spaces. It gives people something to look at, to come back to.

The pity is that usually when people undertake a big property development, the art budget is the last consideration. So we've come up with an idea of putting up a lot of sculptures and renting them out for a small amount per month, and it's worked brilliantly.

Apart from sculptures though, I also like to use mixed mediums and different art forms to enhance my work. For instance - during the planning of "Landscape of the Soul", I thought it would be great to have all these faces lit up with proper lighting and to add music.

In addition to the visionary delight that Landscape of the Soul brings to the viewer, original music has also been composed to accompany the artwork. Triggered by a motion sensor, every person who passes, will simultaneously listen to one of five music scores, each a minute long.



Source: Supplied.

These loop in sequence, stopping and starting as people move past the artwork. Composed by Graeme Lees and performed by various local artists sponsored by the Cape Town Music Academy, visual and auditory art is celebrated.

The sounds are African classical, modern, funky - all kinds of music! In another exhibition in Sandton Square, my sculptures were painted by graffiti artists. This entailed making eight monolithic Easter island type heads, which begged to be painted. So, I worked with graffiti artist, George Mars and came up with the idea of doing a cityscape.

Artistic visions

Looking ahead in 2024, I am really excited about sharing my passion for art with the world through the exhibitions at Sandton Square and Grand-Provence in Franschhoek, which opened on 17 February.

I take great joy in integrating art into urban landscapes, which hopefully offers a glimpse into a future where cities evolve into vibrant cultural hubs and enriching environments.

At Menlyn Maine in Pretoria I have had sculptures for many years now. It has enhanced the space and it brings art to the

people and people to the art. I think that's the way it should be. It's like part of everyday life.

Within the Rainmaker Marketing podcast series, various topics are covered by experts in different fields on trends and insights that impact development and the property sector in general. In this instance, Anton's perspective reinforces that of Rainmaker Marketing on how art can truly transform or differentiate living spaces.

Click [here](#) to listen to the full Rainmaker Marketing podcast episode and visit www.antonsmit.co.za to read more about his fascinating work.

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