



Press release - FINAL

A Mural of 10 Things to Do at Solo Studios 2024 - Riebeek Valley's Art Weekend (9-11 August)

Eat at a long table, drink wine from some of South Africa's best producers, listen to classical music or poetry, or take a hike above the valley – there's so much to cover your canvas, in addition to art gallery and studio hopping at Solo Studios 2024 this Women's Day weekend 9-11 August. This year's event in the quaint Swartland town of Riebeek Kasteel offers abundant ways to fill your cultural, culinary and even adventure dance card.

We've rounded up ten things to experience in the Riebeek Valley during Solo Studios 2024, in association with Geddes and 1 Royal Street Guesthouse:

1. Take a Seat at The Long Table

Isabella Niehaus, the well-known Riebeek Kasteel resident chef, stylist and internationally renowned cookbook author, will bring her edible art to the table with Solo Studios' series of Long Table dining events. Niehaus was recognised by the World Gourmand Book Awards with both first place for her book *Duinhuis* in the category of entertainment and best vegan cookbook for her collaboration with artist Louis Janse van Vuuren entitled *There's a Vegan on My Stoep*.

Enhanced with wine pairings from Swartland producers including Jolize van Wyk of Great Heart Wines (the staff-owned label of Mullineux Wines and Leeu Passant), the intimate dinners on Friday 09 August and Saturday 10 August – which will seat 14 guests only per night – will be a gastronomic celebration, marrying the wealth of local farm-fresh produce, the beauty of an exquisitely laid table, and the convivial act of community-building that takes place when sharing food over a long table. The table will be set at the Potager Kitchen of Jan Seidel, at The Valley Potager, overlooking his vast and magnificent fruit, vegetable and plant garden.

2. The Curtain Rises

This year, Solo Studios is going way beyond the canvas to showcase a variety of performing arts, taking place day and night including poetry and music ensembles. Fresh off the heels of a successful run on the London stage, Winner of The Special Jury award at the Bitesize Theatre Festival in London, multidisciplinary artist, writer and performer Aldo Brincat will give two performances of his solo theatre smash hit *The Moon Looks Delicious From Here*, which recently garnered a Special Jury Award at the Bitesize Theatre Festival in London. The one-man show is a dynamic semi-biographical retelling of a relationship between a loving father and son, against the backdrop of South Africa's ever-changing political landscape.

Along with his participation as an exhibiting artist at Pictorex, observational photographer, poet and producer Rudolph Willemse will bring his production of *Swartland* to Solo Studios, featuring Afrikaans poetry from his third volume of poetry. *Swartland* is about the Swartland region, but it is also symbolic of the country, the world at large and the poet's own state of mind. It is a rather dark place, characterised by load shedding, crime and corruption.... but it also speaks of love,



vulnerability and coming to terms with change, old age and an imperfect world. The show is underpinned by humour, irony and satire. Willemse's previous volume of poetry received acclaim when performed in past Solo Studio events, and Swartland promises to be a continuation of this artistic journey, in collaboration with seasoned talents such as well-known actor Marcel van Heerden and Schalk Joubert, internationally acclaimed bassist, composer, and producer.

The Winelands Philharmonic Orchestra will perform a concert featuring internationally renowned South African violinist Eriel Huang. Works to be performed include Saint-Saëns' Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso in A minor, with Huang as guest soloist; Copeland's Appalachian Spring, originally composed for the Martha Graham ballet in 1945; and Arturo Márquez's "Danzón No. 2," a piece that diverges from modernist tendencies and draws inspiration from the composer's painter and dancer friends. With the orchestra also collaborating with the Riebeek Valley Steelband, the concert aims to celebrate the richness of our local talent and the vibrant landscape of the Riebeek Valley.

Also hitting the stage will be singer songwriter Wren Hinds, a Cape Town-based artist who recently signed a full record deal with the iconic UK-based record label Bella Union.

3.Studio Strolls: Intimate Encounters with local artists

One of the hallmarks of Solo Studios is the opportunity to get up close and personal with the talent. This year's participating studio solo artists include Sharon Bischoff, Wiehan de Jager, Ade Kipades, Solly Smook, André François van Vuuren, Riaan van Zyland, Emma Willemse, Lizette Visser, Kevan Moses, Paul Kristafor, Wiehan de Jager, Gordon Williams, Sharon Bischoff, Andries Dirks, Carin Dorrington, JP Meyer, Katja Abbott, Misha Hilier, Louis Nel, Julia Buss and Peter Steere.

Visiting an artist's solo studio can be at the least, a wonderful introduction to how they conceptualise and work and at the most, a connection and a relationship that compels an art lover to become an art buyer.

4.Collaborative Canvases

A number of local artists are opening their studios to artists outside the community in the spirit of collaboration, adding to the weekend's creative energy while also exposing visitors to more styles of artistic expression. These collaborations are a natural fit between artists whose styles and body of work are complementary. This year's collaborative artists are Paul Kristafor, Clayton Sutherland, Mare Louise Smit, Hannelie Strydom, Adele Sherlock, Elske Hendersen and Binky Newman of Design Afrika.

5.Fruits of the (Riebeek) Valley

Nestled at the foot of the Kasteelberg Mountains, the Riebeek Valley is one of South Africa's most picturesque valleys, and a fertile one at that, with its landscape of sweeping wheat fields, rustic olive trees and hearty grape vines. So naturally it's a deluxe destination for olive and wine lovers. Dip into samples of award-winning olives, olive oils, tapenades and other olive products at the Olive Boutique, Het Vlock Casteel and at Kloovenberg (which produces both olives and wine) and sip your



way through Chenins, Cabernet Sauvignons and Shirazes at local wine estates Allesverloren and Riebeek Cellars.

For a birds-eye view of the Valley, along with a glass or two of Kloovenberg wine, head up to Eight Feet Village, at the top of Bothmanskloof Pass. Part of Kloovenberg, it is owned by the du Toit Family (two of the 'eight feet' of the du Toit children belong to Springbok rugby great Pieter Steph), and boasts panoramic views of the valley below. It's also great for pizzas and Eight Feet's own blend of coffee.

6. Gallery-Studded Streets

Riebeek Kasteel is a tiny town with a huge creative heart. Its 6 square kilometres of beautiful fields, mountain views and quaint country roads are home to many artists, and the community's love and reverence for art is reflected in its thriving gallery scene. This year's list of participating galleries includes RK Contemporary Gallery, Gallery 7, Pictorex, 1 Royal Guesthouse (a lovely local guesthouse and co-sponsor of Solo Studios) and Die Kunshuis. Take the opportunity to stroll through the galleries in this walkable town, and view the collections of local artists along with those who wish they could call this town home.

Nothing whips up an appetite quite like gallery shuffling, and Riebeek Kasteel offers many restaurants and cafes where visitors can fuel up, for breakfast, lunch, dinner and in-between. Pop into the Valley Deli for gourmet sandwiches and salads, La Parilla for Latin-inspired fare or enjoy a more leisurely meal at French brasserie Au Bouchon Rouge, a touch of Paris in the Riebeek Valley. Open from breakfast through dinner, The Barn is known for its relaxed outdoor seating with epic mountain views, friendly service and Mediterranean and grilled specialties. And for scenic G&T's, the veranda at the historic Royal Hotel, the oldest hotel in the Western Cape, is the best local spot.

Just down the road near sister town Riebeek West is Marras, which has a wood-fired pizza oven and a menu of hearty Italian dishes.

7. Art for Good

Visit a hub of creativity and community at Gallery 7 in Riebeek Kasteel while investing in future artmakers. In association with Riebeek Valley and Swartland Tourism, the gallery will exhibit a collection of small portraits contributed by participating Solo Studios artists over the festival weekend. Each artist was given a 210mm x 210mm canvas and asked to provide an artwork. The resulting miniature works will be auctioned at the One Shot Auction, with bidding taking place from Friday morning throughout the weekend. Winners will be announced on Sunday 11 August at 3pm, with proceeds going back into the community. The funds cover art materials used in a programme, in which local youth have a safe place to go after school and the opportunity to develop more confidence and expand their horizons creatively, producing works of art for which they are



remunerated after they are sold by the gallery. These include Andries Dirks' Klipkind workshops for which the gallery supplies clay, glaze and firing of works and a year-end local community school art competition. Other auction beneficiaries include For Life Centre which runs Youth on the Move dance groups, Riebeek West and Riebeek Kasteel knitting groups for which the gallery supplies wool, fabric, patterns and designs, as well as RAW (Riebeek Animal Welfare). Also on show will be a collection of works by new, young and upcoming artists around the theme of Women in Art, curated by Verné Jordaan, Gallery 7 curator.

8.Walk the talk

Nothing enhances the experience of viewing art more than a guided walkabout, where you can go a bit deeper into the understanding of a work, an artist and even a creative movement. At this year's Solo Studios, ticket holders can sign up for several guided walkabouts throughout the course of the weekend, with knowledgeable guides who will walk them through a range of studios for a curated experience. To keep the groups intimate, limited space is available, so be sure to book well in advance.

9.For the adventurous

A picturesque valley surrounded by mountains means a call to hikers, big and small, and there are a number of nearby hikes that range from family friendly to challenging. Kloovenberg has several hiking trails, from an easy meander past olive groves to an 8 km mountain walk at the top of the farm, where wild fynbos and shady trees await.

If two wheels are more your style, there are plenty of country lanes to explore, along with a network of gravel roads that traverse the valley, from flat to 160 metres in elevation.

10. Kid Stuff

If the littlies' interest in gallery gawking starts to wane, there's putt-putt for the win. Panera Bakery and Bistro has a 9-hole putt-putt course that is open to all, and is a fun and active destination for families, especially as the bakery is known for its cake and Melktert.

Nearby Kringe Inni Bos is an outdoor restaurant with a well-stocked and safe kiddies' play park at Kloovenburg, where parents can graze on pizza and have their coffee fix, while kids play under shady trees. They can even bring their bikes (if they're between ages 2 - 13) and pedal the new Pump Track.

The details:

- Solo Studios 2024 is taking place in Riebeek Valley on Women's Day weekend, from Friday 9 to Sunday 11 August.
- Tickets are available and can be purchased via Solo Studios website at www.solostudios.co.za and Webtickets.
- Accommodation options can be found on www.solostudios.co.za/accomodations.



More information:

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