



Les Cohn

Visual Arts Project & Management Consultant

Art Source South Africa was established in 2001 by Les Cohn, a qualified artist and an experienced arts administrator. She holds a BAFA(Hons) from Michaelis School of Art, University of Cape Town and a H. Dip. in Fine Art from the Technikon Witwatersrand (now University of Johannesburg). She was awarded the Technikon Merit Medal.

Les Cohn obtained a Diploma in Arts and Culture Management from the PD & M School, University of Witwatersrand. Her unique combination of qualifications, extensive experience in art development, and management positions, board seats and expertise position her ideally to take a leading role in industry initiatives. Cohn has curated exhibitions in most South African museums and has taken exhibitions to Germany, Mozambique, museums in Washington and Baltimore in the US.

Art Source South Africa consults in visual and fine art marketing and strategy, cultural development, Corporate Social Investment and project management at community, corporate, and individual levels. Clients include Artspace Gallery, the Development Bank of South Africa, Keiskamma Art Project, ABSA, Sasol Ltd, the Sylt Foundation (Germany), Central University of Technology and jozi:art Lab, amongst others.

It has undertaken projects as diverse as touring contemporary art museum exhibitions and rural craft development projects, as well as initiated local and international artist exchanges, many of which include community outreach programmes.

A key focus area Les undertakes is strategic career development for contemporary South African artists. Long-term clients include Paul Emmanuel whose *Transitions* exhibition was exhibited at the Smithsonian Museum of African Art in Washington. Emmanuel's The Lost Men Project has been selected for the WW1 centenary commemorations in 2014 in France. Recent and ongoing artist's projects managed by Cohn include Mbongeni Buthelezi's *IMIZWA YAMI*, Usha Seejarim's *Venus At Home*, Wilma Cruise's *Will You, Won't You, Join the Dance?* and Rosemarie Marriott's *relaas...*

Her earlier art career experience was as gallery administrator of Die Kunsamer in Cape Town during the 1970s – a highly respected gallery and leading player in the South African 'Old Masters' art market. Later in Johannesburg she managed Quadri a contemporary commercial gallery.

In 1996 she was appointed the first Administrator of the Fordsburg Artist's Studios (aka Bag Factory). Cohn served as the Creative Director and Curator of the Sasol Wax Art Award. Sponsored by Sasol for three years, this Award was unique in recognising the contribution to the arts of senior, established visual artists in South Africa.

Collectively, this experience laid the groundwork for a thorough understanding of the technical and curatorial aspects of the art business, including the commercial aspect; namely the selling and marketing of art, negotiating with the serious collector and the buying public. These key insights have served her well as she has gone on to work in the business of building the profile and careers of contemporary visual artists. She has been an invited guest lecturer at several academic institutions on professional practice and fundraising and is a supervisor on the University of Johannesburg Fine Art Department's Workplace Integrated Learning programme.

Les Cohn brings professionalism, experience, enthusiasm and energy to any project she undertakes and is, above all, passionate about developing the sector and enhancing its professional image.

