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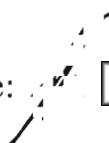
“The Advancement of Art”  
Policy and Practice at the South African National Gallery  
1940-1962

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A dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for  
the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Art History  
Faculty of the Humanities  
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2004

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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3 May 2004

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## Abstract

This thesis is an enquiry into the policies and practices that shaped the South African National Gallery in the 1940s and 1950s. Drawing on newspaper reports, the South African National Gallery's exhibition catalogues, pamphlets and annual reports, records of parliamentary debate and the crucial report of the Stratford Commission of 1948 the study has reconstructed a detailed history of the South African National Gallery. Established in 1871 as a colonial museum catering for a small part of the settler population of British descent, the museum came under pressure to accommodate the Afrikaner community after 1948. This did not mean that the liberal ethos at the museum disappeared, however. The South African National Gallery was strongly influenced by public pressure in this period. Public outrage over controversial art sales in 1947 led to the appointment of a commission of enquiry into the workings of the museum. At the same time, the head of the Board of Trustees, Cecil Sibbett, engaged the public on matters of Modern art. The museum's conservative and controversial Director, Edward Roworth was replaced in 1949 by John Paris who ushered in a new phase of development and management, encouraged the reconceptualization of South African art and reorganized the permanent collection. This initiative took place despite decreased autonomy for the Director and increased government imposition of Afrikaner Nationalist ideology. Nevertheless, the South African National Gallery avoided becoming a political instrument of the Apartheid regime.

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## Introduction

In 1992, in my final year at school, I visited the South African National Gallery. A small but powerful installation of a riot scene caught my eye (Fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> The piece was part of the museum's display of 'Recent Acquisitions 1990-1991.' Wooden tomato packing cases were strewn across the gallery floor. Attached to the cases were paintings of the faces of fleeing black youths. The effect was one of raw energy, highlighting the contorted faces, mouths agape, eyes burning at an unseen danger. Their forms were so inconsequential that they could easily be crushed underfoot but their flashing white eyes and their burning red mouths leapt out and refused to be silenced, even in the sanctuary of the art museum. The installation was a poignant reminder of the masses of township protestors who could easily be overpowered by State force but whose anger and energy were resonant and enduring. In that quiet museum space, so racially dominated and alien to me, I heard the whisper of a new age. Popular experience and contemporary South African art had found a way in, amongst the British portraits and hunting scenes that my class passed by in a glazed hurry. We were told by our art teacher that the new Director, Marilyn Martin was 'transforming' the institution by her inclusion of Black and Resistance art. The exhibition was indeed progressive, showing the work of youthful, forward looking artists in a highly politicized South Africa. 'Recent Acquisitions' took place on the eve of the first Democratic elections in 1994 and was a signal to the Cape Town art community that things were changing. Nevertheless, white curators wove an air of mystery and inaccessibility around the institution. Old canvases with a dull patina still took up most of the wall space. An air of silence and solitude permeated most rooms. The South African National Gallery was a place of tension. The impetus to move forward with the 'Recent Acquisitions' exhibition was held back by the museum's history and its permanent collections served as strong anchors to its past, a past it could not escape.

The museum is part of a broader social reality. It is a public space, shaped by its social, political and historical context. It was no coincidence that the 'Recent Acquisitions' exhibition was mounted in 1992 nor was it accidental that my

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<sup>1</sup> The work was '19 boys running' by Kevin Brand (Fig. 1).

classmates and I experienced the museum as cold and unwelcoming. Rather, it reflected the now commonplace understanding that the museum experience is at once personal and collective with its various contexts allowing it to operate in particular ways. Over the past decade, a body of literature has emerged that focuses on these issues. This work has employed an interdisciplinary approach to scrutinize the relations that structure and are structured by museums. Conceptual ideas drawn from the humanities and social sciences have been used to analyze the workings of museums. Bennett, Duncan, Fyfe, Karp and Lavine, McClellan, Pearce, Prior, Sheehan, and Barringer and Flynn, amongst others, have shown that a new set of questions can be posed in relation to museums.<sup>2</sup> In this literature the museum is not seen as a neutral display cabinet or store room situated out of time and space. Instead it is a vital institution operating in and through powerful ideologies, categories and identities. The museum is a powerful place which can perpetuate dominant national myths and provide 'cultural cement' for socio-political order.<sup>3</sup> In some cases it can also subvert dominant ideologies. The museum space is therefore seen both as a process and as an institutional structure.

Tony Bennett is perhaps the most significant writer on the way museums work in society. Bennett argues that museums should be understood not only as places of instruction but also as places dedicated to reforming social manners. He employs Foucaultian analysis to illuminate theories of social regulation and extends them to ideas of discipline and surveillance. Museums in 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain were used as a means of taking 'culture' and 'civilisation' to working classes, providing an alternative space of congregation to the pub. Bennett examines other fields of public

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<sup>2</sup> Tony Bennett, *The birth of the museum: history, theory, politics* (London: Routledge, 1995).

Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: inside public art museums* (London: Routledge, 1995).

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Nick Prior, *Museums and modernity: art galleries and the making of Modern culture* (Oxford: Berg, 2002).

James J. Sheehan, *Museums in the German art world* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn, *Colonialism and the object: empire, material culture and the museum* (London: Routledge, 1998).

<sup>3</sup> Prior, *Museums and modernity*, 4.

display such as the fair and the international exhibition in order to show that the museum developed in relation to a range of collateral cultural institutions. The museum, he argues, needs to be understood in relation to places of 'popular assembly' such as pubs, libraries and public parks.<sup>4</sup>

With specific reference to art museums, the work of Duncan, McClellan and Sheehan has been seminal. All three writers investigate European art museums in their social, political and historical contexts. Duncan explores the art museum as a ritual setting where museums encourage their audiences to engage in scenarios which communicate ideas, values and social identities. Art museums, according to Duncan, are arenas of political power that relay social identities. She sees the museum as setting a stage that prompts visitors to act in certain ways. She contends that the museum offers up values and beliefs about social, sexual and political identity through exhibitions but also through the broader museum experience.<sup>5</sup>

McClellan argues that art museums 'carry a heavy symbolic load' on behalf of governments and the factions that support them. He shows how fundamental ideas concerning art museums and the classification, display and conservation of objects were first articulated at the end of the eighteenth century in France. Emphasizing political imperatives and focusing on the Louvre, McClellan argues that, instead of being aesthetic in nature, these ideas are best understood as a product of revolutionary events.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, Sheehan shows that the German art world was, and is, embedded in its historical context and its institutions are inseparable from its larger social, economic and political realms.<sup>7</sup> Like that of the Louvre, the story of German art institutions is also the story of political institutions and the rise of public culture, of national aspirations and social upheaval, of academic disciplines and bureaucratic ambition.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Bennett, *The birth of the museum*, 6.

<sup>5</sup> Duncan, *Civilizing rituals*, 2.

<sup>6</sup> McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre*, 2.

<sup>7</sup> Sheehan, *Museums in the German art world*, XII.

<sup>8</sup> Sheehan, *Museums in the German art world*, XII.

Similar debates have occurred in the 'new art history'.<sup>9</sup> The 'new art history' analyzes the impact of gender, race, language and power on the production and display of art. The social history of art, as a part of the 'new art history', expresses the view that art is imbedded in social activity. These modes of analysis attempt to dismantle the old boundaries of art history in an attempt to make art history more interdisciplinary and analytically rigorous. These art historians deconstruct certain dominant ideas in art history, including the idea that art historians can produce objective scholarship, the idea that art is a value-free expression of an artist's personality and that art contains truths that are free from social realities. Instead, they consider the realities of the social world that generate artistic production. The 'new art history' also undertakes an analysis of art institutions, which are seen as places that define what art is, and, with regard to national art museums, further particular ideas about the State. The 'new art history' emphasizes theory, and draws on ideas from Marxism, literary theory and feminism to deconstruct traditional ideas about art. The 'new art history' and the social history of art therefore question art history's conservative boundaries and introduce new approaches.<sup>10</sup>

With the insights of the 'new art history' as a framework, we can probe more deeply the root assumptions of the colonial museum. The South African National Gallery was a British Imperial museum form transplanted into colonial Cape Town. Much has been written on the display of non-western artifacts from previous colonies in European and American museums, but very little has been documented about the workings of settler institutions such as the South African National Gallery whose de-centered status away from the metropolis sets up particular challenges. Karp and Lavine, for example, explore the often politically charged business of displaying other cultures through objects in the American museum setting. Karp contends that museum exhibitions use the principles of difference (exoticizing) and similarity (assimilating) to produce the imagery of the 'other'.<sup>11</sup> The display of difference inverts the familiar, while displaying similarity is more subtle. In art museums, for example, African art

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<sup>9</sup> Term coined by A.L. Rees and Frances Borzello in their book 'The new art history' A.L. Rees and Frances Borzello, eds. *The new art history* (London: Camden Press, 1986).

<sup>10</sup> A.L. Rees and Frances Borzello, "Introduction," in A.L. Rees and Frances Borzello, eds., *The new art history* (London: Camden Press, 1986), 2-10.

<sup>11</sup> Ivan Karp, "Other cultures in museum perspective," in Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine, eds. *Exhibiting Cultures: the poetics and politics of museum display*. (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 376.

objects are often starkly displayed, isolated from one another, with little interpretative text provided. This practice emphasizes the aesthetic involved in appreciating the object in the museum setting.<sup>12</sup>

Barringer and Flynn look specifically at the influences of colonialism on the display and interpretation of art objects in British museums. They describe how the former Imperial museum in the post colonial context has had to negotiate the display of colonial objects. They interrogate how objects imported from colonies are displayed, what the impact of colonialism is on the interpretation of objects and what the possibilities are for displaying colonial objects in the present day.<sup>13</sup> Karp and Lavine and Barringer and Flynn focus on American and British museums. An investigation into the colonial form of the National Art Gallery in the South African context is still needed. This study attempts to contribute to such a project.

In post Apartheid South Africa, there is a movement toward demystifying the museum experience and showing visitors how meaning is constructed through displays. Museums are currently seen as public spaces which need to be made inclusive, accessible and multicultural. State funded museums such as the South African National Gallery and the South African Museum have had to respond to new political and social imperatives. Meanwhile, community based initiatives such as the District Six Museum have emerged to engage with public culture in new ways. State funded museums were called upon by the Ministry of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology to 'redress past inequities' as part of a national reconstruction and development plan. It was made clear that funding would be provided to those institutions that contributed to 'transforming national consciousness.'<sup>14</sup> In this way, museum practices have changed in relation to 'the politics of the present.'<sup>15</sup>

The South African Museum is the oldest museum on the subcontinent and is associated with the natural history of the 'Bushman, Whale and Dinosaur.'<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Karp, "Other cultures in museum perspective." 376.

<sup>13</sup> Barringer and Flynn. *Colonialism and the object*. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Patricia Davison, "Museums and the reshaping of memory" in Sarah Nutall and Carli Coetzee, eds., *Negotiating the past: the making of memory in South Africa*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1998), 148.

<sup>15</sup> Davison, "Museums and the reshaping of memory." 160.

<sup>16</sup> Davison, "Museums and the reshaping of memory." 143.

According to Davison,<sup>17</sup> official institutions of public display such as these take ‘cues from political transformation’ and thereby make the revision of heritage practices overt.<sup>18</sup> In the post Apartheid context the South African Museum has attempted to give visitors a sense of the shifting nature of representation at the museum. Displays have made increasing use of contextualizing labels and information boards.

As a state funded institution, the South African National Gallery had to negotiate a post Apartheid environment. In 1997, Marilyn Martin, Director of the museum wrote an introduction to the catalogue for an exhibition of ‘contemporary South African art 1985-1995 from the South African National Gallery permanent collection’<sup>19</sup> in which she maintained that by 1980 it was becoming difficult to purchase modern western art and older European collections, due to inadequate government funding and the low value of the currency. Meanwhile, the vitality of contemporary South African art was increasing. This scenario gave the museum the impetus to start collecting contemporary South African art. According to Martin, South African art was no longer a ‘mindless imitation of imported styles’ but was now imbued with ‘local content, context and specific cultural references.’<sup>20</sup> She decried the fact that many white South Africans had associated themselves with Europe and Britain for too long, emulating ‘civilized values’, ‘standards’ and ‘ways of life’ while ‘ignoring, neglecting or destroying existing cultural manifestations and the struggle for political freedom.’<sup>21</sup> Martin celebrated the then Deputy President Thabo Mbeki’s definition of ‘Africanness’ as overriding race, colour, gender or historical origins. This perspective helped the museum to position itself within the continent of Africa. The South African National Gallery was moving away from the idea of a museum as a ‘repository for objects’ and emphasizing its social and political responsibilities.<sup>22</sup>

The District Six Museum was also affected by the ‘politics of the present’, but in a vastly different way. Its aim was to reconstruct the social history of a community

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<sup>17</sup> Davison, “Museums and the reshaping of memory.” 143-160.

<sup>18</sup> Davison, “Museums and the reshaping of memory.” 147.

<sup>19</sup> Marilyn Martin, “Introduction” in Author unknown, *Contemporary South African art 1985-1995 from the South African National Gallery permanent collection*. Exhibition catalogue (Cape Town: South African National Gallery, 1997), 20.

<sup>20</sup> Martin, “Introduction,” 20.

<sup>21</sup> Martin, “Introduction,” 20.

<sup>22</sup> Martin, “Introduction,” 18.

displaced by forced removals during Apartheid. It was established by ex-residents, academics and social activists in 1994, a time when the challenges of heritage transformation in South Africa were first being identified. As a non-governmental organization it could operate independently, without the baggage of old classificatory systems and collections seen at the South African Museum and the South African National Gallery.<sup>23</sup> Visitors to the museum play an active role in creating and developing the exhibitions. The museum is a space of 'regenerative memory,'<sup>24</sup> for the 'recovery and reconstruction of the social and historical' existence of the district rather than a site of traditional museum displays where meanings are fixed.<sup>25</sup> The surfaces of the museum, such as the central floor map of the district and the calico banners, are continually inscribed by visitors with comments and memories. Ex-residents narrate their experiences in a sound archive and voluntarily bring photographs and personal mementoes into the museum. The record of life in District Six grows from personal accounts that are dynamic, sometimes conflicting and ephemeral.

This is the environment in which South African museums and spaces of public culture are currently positioned. They are strongly shaped by the debates issuing from a post Apartheid context but are also products of their pasts, specifically with regard to their collection and display practices. A visit to the South African National Gallery recently exposed the struggles the museum has with one of its collections. Perched amongst the fox hunting and sporting pictures of the Bailey collection, the eerie figures of Jane Alexander's 'Butcher Boys' (Fig. 2) are seated. These three sculptures, glancing into the distance through obsidian eyes, have become icons of Resistance art, introduced into the museum in the early nineties. They embody the bestiality and the nightmarish oppressiveness of the Apartheid years. The placement of the cadaver-toned sculptures in the Bailey room suggests a frustrated attempt by the museum to grapple with that collection. The sculptures give an effect of stark incongruity and displacement,

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<sup>23</sup> Ciraj Rassool, "Introduction: recalling community in Cape Town" in Ciraj Rassool and Sandra Prosalendis, eds., *Recalling community in Cape Town*. (Cape Town: District Six Museum, 2001), VIII.

<sup>24</sup> Ingrid De Kok, "Cracked heirlooms: memory on exhibition" in Sarah Nutall and Carli Coetzee, eds., *Negotiating the past: the making of memory in South Africa*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 65.

<sup>25</sup> Peggy Delpont, "Museum or place for working with memory?" in Ciraj Rassool and Sandra Prosalendis, eds., *Recalling community in Cape Town*. (Cape Town: District Six Museum, 2001), 11.

serving to emphasize these elements in the Bailey collection itself. They do, however, signal the institution's attempt to interrogate its past.

A current exhibition held in celebration of South Africa's ten years of democracy reiterates this endeavor at the museum. 'A decade of democracy' showcases the museum's acquisitions from 1994-2004.<sup>26</sup> The exhibition has been described in the *Mail and Guardian* as attempting to come to grips with a post Apartheid South African identity.<sup>27</sup> Some of the works will 'make you hate the fact that you're a South African', others will make you realize that 'you have no idea what the hell a South African is.'<sup>28</sup> Never the less, viewers will see that South African art is 'powerful, intelligent and unabashedly of its place.'<sup>29</sup> What the presence of the new exhibition and the sculptures in the Bailey space demonstrate is that boundaries are shifting and will continue to shift at the South African National Gallery. The South African National Gallery is a product of its history as well as internal and external forces impacting on it. It is my intention that this study illuminates a core part of its history and brings about a clearer understanding of the working of the institution.

### **Structure**

This study has been influenced by the literature of current museum theory and practice. It has made use of ideas on the art museum developed in the 'new art history.' It is not only an institutional analysis which situates the museum in its social, political and historical contexts, but also one that examines the texts, the pictures, the exhibitions and the type of art at the museum at various times. Sources include the museum's Annual Reports, exhibition catalogues, pamphlets, articles written by the public and by museum Directors and public responses in newspaper articles and letters to the editor. Access to the minutes of meetings held at the museum was regrettably denied (see letter as Appendix A).<sup>30</sup> Until researchers gain access to these records the story of the South African National Gallery will remain incomplete.

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<sup>26</sup> Emma Bedford, *A decade of democracy: South African art 1994-2004 from the permanent collection of Iziko: South African National Gallery*, Exhibition catalogue ( Cape Town: Double Storey, 2004).

<sup>27</sup> Chris Roper, "Decade of contradiction," *Mail and Guardian*, Friday ( 8-15 April 2004): 1.

<sup>28</sup> Chris Roper, "Decade of contradiction," *Mail and Guardian*, Friday ( 8-15 April 2004): 1.

<sup>29</sup> Chris Roper, "Decade of contradiction," *Mail and Guardian*, Friday ( 8-15 April 2004): 1.

<sup>30</sup> Letter to Prof. Anne Mager by Ms Adri Minaar on 12 December 2003 Appendix A.

This thesis spans the period from 1871 to 1962 at the South African National Gallery. It focuses on the 1940s and 1950s, a period of great dynamism, activity and change at the institution. Research questions have centered on uncovering the dynamics behind this change. I contend that changes in the political and social contexts impacted on the institution in profound ways. I have found that the museum related to its environment in a far more complex way than simply responding to a new political dispensation. The thesis highlights links between the South African National Gallery and metropolitan art museums, the preeminence and power of academic elites, the negotiation of settler identities, the increasing ties between culture and nationalism and increased government intervention.

The first chapter of this study investigates the colonial establishment of the museum and covers the period 1871-1940. It shows that in its early years, the institution catered for a small British elite. Later it became part of a broader heritage project in Cape Town which sought to unify disparate identities. It also drew on important European art museums which served implicitly as precedents for the South African National Gallery. Both the local and the European museums illustrate that institutions such as these operated within a broader social, political and historical context.

The second chapter focuses on the period 1940-1947. It looks at the conservative, metropolitan mindset of the museum's Director, Edward Roworth (Fig. 3). Over this period the museum was relatively free from government intervention and under the sway of its Director. The Director expressed strong views that were highly contentious and generated much debate, particularly on the merits of Modern art.

The third chapter examines conflict and contestation over the meaning of art in South Africa in 1947. This year was marked by a large art sale from the permanent collections under dubious circumstances. The sale generated great public concern and resulted in a Commission of Enquiry. Soon after the commission's report was submitted to Parliament, another debate on Modern art was started by the head of the Board of Trustees (Fig. 4).

The fourth chapter illustrates the formation of a national settler identity in South African art by investigating the 'Exhibition of contemporary South African paintings,

drawings and sculpture', organized by the Union government in 1948. Billed as an ambassadorial exercise, the exhibition toured the world but ran out of funds before touring South Africa. The exhibition sparked considerable controversy in the local art community.

The fifth chapter looks at the South African National Gallery during the tenure of a new Director (Fig. 5) from 1949-1962. John Paris' directorship was marked by a more professional approach to managing the museum and much greater public interest. Tighter government control meant the Director had less autonomy and was overshadowed by but not entirely subsumed into an Afrikaner Nationalist ideology.

#### **Note on terminology**

In South Africa the term 'art gallery' follows from the British usage. In Britain there is a distinct difference between an art gallery and a museum.<sup>31</sup> An art gallery is for displaying art works while a museum is for displaying objects relating to Natural History or Anthropology. In the American usage art galleries and museums are used interchangeably with art galleries sometimes referring to commercial spaces where art works are sold.<sup>32</sup> In this thesis I follow the American usage for two reasons: firstly, it reflects current literature on the topic. Secondly, following from the literature, the term 'museum' connotes a space of display where various factors interact and situate the institution in a broader context.

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<sup>31</sup> Carol Duncan, *Civilizing rituals*, 1.

<sup>32</sup> Nick Prior, *Museums and modernity*, 10.

## Chapter One

### The South African National Gallery: the establishment of a colonial museum 1871-1940

#### Introduction

This chapter sets out the early years of the establishment of the South African National Gallery. It looks at the museum's origins as part of a broader colonial cultural project in Cape Town. Libraries and museums had a close affinity in the colonial city of Cape Town. They represented learning, class and social status.<sup>1</sup> The Dutch government had kept a collection of stuffed animals in the government guest house while the British colonial literary society opened a museum to replace the 'menagerie' in the old company gardens, 'which by 1800 was nearly without inhabitants.'<sup>2</sup> The museum was described as being a much more orderly affair, organised according to the classificatory principles of early nineteenth century scientific thought, complete with collections from the animal, mineral and vegetable world.<sup>3</sup>

By the 1850s libraries and scientific bodies were emerging as 'the main centres of high culture in the town.'<sup>4</sup> In the 1860s the South African Museum was housed in the South African Library. It had an eclectic collection, 'intending to provide something for everyone.' These institutions were dependent on each other for space and were closely located around the parliament buildings, within easy walking distance of each other. The South African Library, the South African Museum and the South African National Gallery were at one time housed together, reflecting the way the government connected their purposes.

The South African National Gallery originated with the formation of the South African Fine Arts Association in 1871.<sup>5</sup> Abraham de Smit, Surveyor General of the Cape (1872-1889), mooted the idea of a gallery in an essay 'An art Gallery for South Africa' in the same year. De Smit was a leading member of the group that

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<sup>1</sup> Nigel Worden, Elizabeth van Heyningen and Vivian Bickford-Smith. *Cape Town: the making of a city* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1998), 153-156.

<sup>2</sup> Worden et al. *Cape Town*, 131.

<sup>3</sup> Worden et al. *Cape Town*, 131.

<sup>4</sup> Worden et al, *Cape Town*, 155.

<sup>5</sup> John Fairbairn, "The South African Art Gallery," *The State*, (Apr 1910): 550.

campaigned for a permanent Cape Town art gallery in the years before its establishment. In this article he sketched out the benefits of an aesthetic education.<sup>6</sup> The association's main aim was to promote fine art as well as 'encourage and foster colonial art' in the Cape Colony and many of its members were wealthy industrialists in the city.<sup>7</sup> The South African Fine Arts Association's chief activity was to collect funds and eventually establish a national collection of art in a permanent art gallery. By 1895, The South African Gallery was formally established with the passing of the The South African Gallery Act (No.20 of 1895).<sup>8</sup>

The South African National Gallery had its genesis as a colonial educational institution. During its early years, the South African Fine Arts Association secured what was deemed suitable material for students. Included were copies of paintings, books, a few casts, and a small collection of original paintings.<sup>9</sup> The first efforts to form a national collection were inspired by the bequest of Thomas Butterworth Bayley in 1871.<sup>10</sup> This bequest was made up of 45 paintings, mostly by European artists.<sup>11</sup> After the Bayley bequest, other notable bequests followed which helped to establish a national collection.<sup>12</sup>

Under the auspices of the South African Fine Arts Association, a building was acquired in New Street for the display of paintings in 1875. In 1895, the government undertook to provide a suitable art museum for the collection, but this was not forthcoming. In 1900 the collection was transferred to an annex gallery, described as

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<sup>6</sup> Anna Tietze, "Classical casts and colonial galleries: the life and after life of the 1908 Beit gift to the National Gallery of Cape Town," *South African Historical Journal*, 39 (Nov 1998): 70-71.

<sup>7</sup> Author unknown, "The new art gallery," *Cape Monthly Magazine*, Vol X (1900): 366.

<sup>8</sup> 'The collection of paintings and drawings, and other works of art, including art literature to the value of about £3000 and the immovable property in New Street belonging to the South African Fine Arts Association, were transferred to the government by voluntary gift of the Association in 1895.' Author unknown, "The South African Art Gallery," *The Cape Town Guide* (1910): 148.

<sup>9</sup> Author unknown, "The new art gallery," *Cape Monthly Magazine*, Vol X (1900): 366.

<sup>10</sup> Bayley 'bequeathed to the trustees the amount of £500, and the greater part of his excellent collection of Paintings to be made over to the South African Fine Art Association, *if* within eighteen months a further sum of £1,500 should have been raised for the erection of a suitable building, and should the Association still merit the confidence of the public.' Author unknown, "The new art gallery," *Cape Monthly Magazine*, Vol X (1900): 366.

<sup>11</sup> Joe Dolby, "A short history of the South African National Gallery," *The Lantern*, (Dec 1981): 38.

<sup>12</sup> 'From 1880 the collection grew rapidly due to grants received from the government as well as bequests made by wealthy colonials.' South African National Gallery Library. Author unknown. *Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings* (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958), 13.

‘two rooms at the back of the South African Museum.’<sup>13</sup> There was great dissatisfaction concerning this arrangement. The South African Fine Arts Association and the Trustees of the art museum felt that this arrangement was ‘too restricted and unsuitable for the proper display of pictures.’<sup>14</sup>

While opening this annex in 1900, Sir Henry Barkly, the governor of the Colony and the president of the South African Fine Arts Association, reiterated that the Association would ‘not rest satisfied until it founded a permanent picture gallery of its own.’<sup>15</sup> Barkly had helped to establish an art museum in the colonial city of Melbourne, Australia and now hoped to ‘usher into existence (another) project of this sort.’<sup>16</sup> He felt confident that there existed ‘quite as strong a taste for art among the inhabitants of the Cape Colony, and (was) sanguine therefore, as to the success that (would) ultimately crown the labours of the South African Fine Arts Association.’<sup>17</sup> The success of the Melbourne project, which started as a small collection but had grown into a ‘really valuable collection of paintings’ was only possible due to the ‘the judicious investment in Europe of annual subscriptions and grants from the Legislature.’<sup>18</sup> The South African National Gallery lacked this government support.

Barkly’s reference to the art museum in Melbourne illustrated that this kind of space signaled ‘progress’, the development of taste and civility in other colonies. Together with libraries and the natural history museum, spaces such as national art galleries were important in the government’s concept of an ‘imagined’ British colonial city.<sup>19</sup> The South African National Gallery was part of a conscious movement toward the realization of a city as envisioned by the influential and wealthy colonial classes. Once established, the South African National Gallery would help to shape Cape Town into a city where British ideologies concerning culture and learning were made concrete.

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<sup>13</sup> John Fairbairn, “The South African Art Gallery,” *The State*, (Apr 1910): 550. and Author unknown, *Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings* (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958), 13.

<sup>14</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): Annexure C.

<sup>15</sup> Author unknown, “The new art gallery,” *Cape Monthly Magazine*, Vol X (1900): 368.

<sup>16</sup> Author unknown, “The new art gallery,” *Cape Monthly Magazine*, Vol X (1900): 368.

<sup>17</sup> Author unknown, “The new art gallery,” *Cape Monthly Magazine*, Vol X (1900): 366.

<sup>18</sup> Author unknown, “The new art gallery,” *Cape Monthly Magazine*, Vol X (1900): 366.

<sup>19</sup> Worden et al. *Cape Town*, 155.

The place of museums in colonial society was derived from metropolitan experiences. In the South African context, museums forged a local British colonial identity and their presence had the potential to encourage desirable behavior. Colonial in their construction, they had the potential to teach lessons of self-regulation and civility, similar to their European counterparts. In nineteenth century Europe, according to Bennett, exhibitionary architecture formed part of civic self regulation.<sup>20</sup> Relations of space and vision were not only organized to allow inspection of objects but also to allow visitors to inspect each other, which encouraged self discipline.<sup>21</sup> This was a conscious attempt to regulate citizenry. Where collections were reserved for royal inspection or were assembled in cabinets of curiosities where only the privileged were admitted, the need for architectural regulation did not arise.<sup>22</sup> Bennett argues that warren-like layouts were not considered appropriate as they provided no mechanism for inhibiting visitors' conduct and therefore did not encourage civility.

It is my contention that this was one of the reasons the South African National Gallery housed as an annex at the South African Museum was considered inappropriate. Besides being small and arranged haphazardly, it did not enable visitors to view each other while viewing the collections and so prevented this space from fulfilling its self regulatory role. The annex at the South African Museum contained the collections of the South African National Gallery for thirty years. Works were crowded together going up the staircase with pictures of all sorts indiscriminately mixed up with plaster casts.<sup>23</sup> Only a few of the exhibits could be seen properly, whilst many others had to be packed away 'in grim darkness.'<sup>24</sup> The Board felt that, 'no other city in the British Empire of the importance of Cape Town could have been so neglected in the manner of an Art Gallery!'<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Tony Bennett, *The birth of the museum* (London: Routledge, 1995), 48-58.

<sup>21</sup> Bennett, *The birth of the museum*, 48.

<sup>22</sup> Bennett, *The birth of the museum*, 52.

<sup>23</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): Annexure C.

<sup>24</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): Annexure C.

<sup>25</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): Annexure C.

In 1910 the Union government came into power.<sup>26</sup> The provinces of South Africa formally ruled either by the British or Afrikaner republics were now governed by a sovereign central 'unified' parliament located in Cape Town. Roworth (Director of the South African National Gallery from 1940 to 1949) was optimistic at the time that one of the first acts of 'sweetness and light' of the new government of the United South Africa would be the building of a 'suitable and dignified home for our national collection of pictures.'<sup>27</sup>

### **Heritage, settler identity and the establishment of the South African National Gallery (1910-1940)**

Given that the art museum was not an important priority for the colonial government it is striking that, after Union in 1910, money was finally allotted for the building of the new art museum.<sup>28</sup> Particularly when, according to artists such as Maggie Laubser, there was a 'veiled hostility to art' in the city.<sup>29</sup> Post 1910 was a period of memorialization for the fledgling nation. Bickford Smith et al. suggest that key memorials in Cape Town were a symbolic tribute to the city's imperial heritage. One example was the newly erected monument on the slopes of Table Mountain to Cecil John Rhodes, which opened in 1912.<sup>30</sup> Rhodes was a politician, British Imperialist and mining magnate. After his death he was hailed by South Africans of British descent as a 'hero' although to others he was 'a symbol of British Imperialist jingoism.'<sup>31</sup> Rhodes commissioned the statue of Jan van Riebeeck which was conceived as 'a statement about Europe's conquest of savage Africa.'<sup>32</sup> It also served to shape a collective settler identity which was being forged through heritage practices of various kinds.<sup>33</sup> For many white South Africans, English and Afrikaans, national identity was interwoven with a pride in their Cape heritage.<sup>34</sup> The preservation of

<sup>26</sup> Nigel Worden, *A concise dictionary of South African history* (Cape Town: Francolin, 1998), 157.

<sup>27</sup> Edward Roworth, "The South African Art Gallery," *Cape Times Annual* (1910): 9.

<sup>28</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): Annexure C.

<sup>29</sup> Laubser, a practising artist in Cape Town noted in 1910 that 'it was a time, unless you were very rich, what you learned had to produce money, or it was not thought worth spending time on.' Elizabeth Cheryl Delmont, *Catalogue Raisonné of Maggie Laubser's work 1900-1924*, (University of the Witwatersrand: Unpublished M.A thesis, 1979), 22.

<sup>30</sup> Worden, *A concise dictionary*, 128.

<sup>31</sup> Worden, *A concise dictionary*, 128.

<sup>32</sup> Vivian Bickford-Smith, Elizabeth van Heyningen and Nigel Worden. *Cape Town in the Twentieth Century*. (Cape Town, David Philip, 1999), 164.

<sup>33</sup> Bickford-Smith et al. *Cape Town in the Twentieth Century*, 76.

<sup>34</sup> Bickford-Smith et al. *Cape Town in the Twentieth Century*, 76.

Cape Town heritage took many forms. It included the erection of monuments, the publication of historical documents and the restoration of buildings.<sup>35</sup>

The South African National Society as well as the Van Riebeeck Society worked at preserving a local Cape Town heritage within the context of a new South African settler identity. Founded in 1905, the South African National Society was established to protect historical artefacts.<sup>36</sup> Dorothea Fairbridge, founder of the society, saw the Western Cape as Mediterranean in aspiration rather than African, while, for her, Cape Dutch architecture represented European settlement. She saw the potential of this mixed heritage to act as a bridge between the British and the Afrikaner, creating a 'new ameliorative South African identity.'<sup>37</sup> The Van Riebeeck Society, established in 1918, also attempted to create a South African identity out of local Cape heritage through the publishing of historically significant South African manuscripts.<sup>38</sup> Most of its early publications were associated with Dutch heritage in the Western Cape.<sup>39</sup>

These developments show that there was a need to recognise and build a local Cape Town heritage project. This would reinforce the British colonial legacy but also showed an inclination to start to shape a new collective white identity. This identity, spurred on by Union rule, included both the Afrikaners and the British. As part of a broader network of cultural institutions the South African National Gallery had the potential to become an arena for these efforts.

In 1912 the South African National Gallery's Board of Trustees held a meeting with the South African Society of Artists, the South African Drawing Club, the Institute of Architects, the National Society, the Photographic Society and the Mountain Club of South Africa to lobby for the new museum.<sup>40</sup> In 1913, government gave money for plans to be drawn up by the Public Works Department.<sup>41</sup> A contract was entered into

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<sup>35</sup> Bickford-Smith et al. *Cape Town in the Twentieth Century*, 76.

<sup>36</sup> Bickford-Smith et al. *Cape Town in the Twentieth Century*, 76.

<sup>37</sup> Bickford-Smith et al. *Cape Town in the Twentieth Century*, 76.

<sup>38</sup> Bickford-Smith et al. *Cape Town in the Twentieth Century*, 77.

<sup>39</sup> Bickford-Smith et al. *Cape Town in the Twentieth Century*, 77.

<sup>40</sup> Joe Dolby, "A short history of the South African National Gallery," *The Lantern*, (Dec 1981): 42.

<sup>41</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): Annexure C.

in 1914 for building the foundations of the museum.<sup>42</sup> Building began that same year but due to the commencement of the First World War (1914-1918) had to be stopped. Construction was only resumed in 1924, when the Minister of Public Works, Mr Boydell, gave a 'sympathetic ear to a deputation headed by the Mayor of Cape Town' who hoped to get the building completed. Boydell, 'gave an encouraging undertaking' to do all he could in the interests of the museum.<sup>43</sup> In 1925, the government undertook to contribute £24 000 to the building of the museum, together with the City Council who contributed £6 000. An additional sum of £10 000 was later received from the government together with the Liberman Bequest of £10 000. With another contribution from the City Council of £6 000 the building could commence. The museum was completed in 1930 (Figs. 6 & 7) and was opened by the Earl of Athlone, Governor General of the Union of South Africa.<sup>44</sup>

The South African National Gallery was heralded in the *Cape Times* as South Africa's 'Royal Academy.'<sup>45</sup> The building was described as a monumental artwork, essentially South African with European traces.<sup>46</sup> Emphasis was placed on its scale and beautiful finishes. The 'broad steps and platforms on either side, with massive fluted columns framing the opening' were enhanced by the colour of the walls and the 'gold and silver of the mouldings.'<sup>47</sup> 'Ladybrand stone' was used in the entrance and 'Free State stone' was used as paving and the courtyard. The 'feature' fountain was carved from 'Warmbath stone.'<sup>48</sup> The museum's South African tenor was enriched by its European elements, highlighted in the museum's architectural features. South African stone was combined with the Italian tiles of the cornices and the covered promenade. The Department of Public Works searched for the 'best in Modern gallery construction'

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<sup>42</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): Annexure C.

<sup>43</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): Annexure C.

<sup>44</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): Annexure C.

<sup>45</sup> Author unknown. "South Africa's Royal Academy: the new art gallery to be opened on Monday," *Cape Times*, (1 Nov 1930).

<sup>46</sup> Author unknown. "South Africa's Royal Academy: the new art gallery to be opened on Monday," *Cape Times*, (1 Nov 1930).

<sup>47</sup> Author unknown. "South Africa's Royal Academy: the new art gallery to be opened on Monday," *Cape Times*, (1 Nov 1930).

<sup>48</sup> Author unknown. "South Africa's Royal Academy: the new art gallery to be opened on Monday," *Cape Times*, (1 Nov 1930).

and features of leading European museums were 'studied and adapted.'<sup>49</sup> Its windowless walls and top lighting were similar to the Tate. The Liberman Gallery, intended to exhibit South African art, would 'one day be the South African equivalent of the Royal Academy in London.'<sup>50</sup>

The new South African National Gallery building was aligned with other architectural displays of government in Cape Town. Although smaller in scale than European national art museums, it was positioned in the Public Gardens within close proximity to the Parliament buildings, the South African Museum and the South African Library. The relationship of these buildings helped to create visual unity between the institutions. It also helped them become spaces of regulated public behaviour.

In 1932 the museum was incorporated as the South African National Gallery, a state aided institution with a Board of Trustees of nine members.<sup>51</sup> The Directors of Michaelis, University of Cape Town's school of Fine Art, were appointed as part time honorary Directors. From 1930-1940 Professor John Wheatley, held the position of Director in this capacity.<sup>52</sup> The Depression years saw little development at the museum. Dolby notes that 'the government did not see its way to appoint a full time Director.'<sup>53</sup> In 1940 Professor Edward Roworth took over from Wheatley.<sup>54</sup> Both men held the post in an honorary capacity.

### **The impact of the Louvre and French provincial art museums on the theory and practice of museums**

Museum developments at the Cape drew directly and indirectly on European precedents. The Louvre was the prototype art museum founded on explicit political objectives. It was the product of a revolution in which the citizenry seized the king's collection and claimed ownership over it. Its founding commemorates the French

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<sup>49</sup> Author unknown. "South Africa's Royal Academy: the new art gallery to be opened on Monday," *Cape Times*, (1 Nov 1930).

<sup>50</sup> Author unknown. "South Africa's Royal Academy: the new art gallery to be opened on Monday," *Cape Times*, (1 Nov 1930).

<sup>51</sup> Joe Dolby, "A short history of the South African National Gallery," *The Lantern*, (Dec 1981): 42.

<sup>52</sup> Joe Dolby, "A short history of the South African National Gallery," *The Lantern*, (Dec 1981): 42.

<sup>53</sup> Joe Dolby, "A short history of the South African National Gallery," *The Lantern*, (Dec 1981): 42.

<sup>54</sup> UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1948/1949, 1.

revolution, and its very site, a royal palace, is saturated with political meaning.<sup>55</sup> The museum's opening coincided with the first anniversary of the founding of the republic, and celebrated the revolutionary triumph. Past property of the crown, the church and émigrés, art works collectively designated as 'biens nationaux' were assembled in the former palace and opened to public viewing. The art work previously enjoyed only by a privileged few would now 'give pleasure to all.'<sup>56</sup>

In the Louvre, French painting showed that the 'future belonged to France' and it provided an endless selection of contemporary French painting. It thereby attempted to forge nationalism, where all French art could be glossed as patriotic. The Louvre collection represented a thriving native tradition, superseding that of France's former artistic rivals. For the first time an attempt was made to hang works chronologically and all works by the same artist were hung together.<sup>57</sup> Less dramatic but not dissimilar processes of revising art history took place at the South African National Gallery in the 1950s.

The Louvre, with its overtly political origins, shaped art museum practices across Europe. But a study of provincial art museums in post revolutionary France by Sherman shows that more subtle social and political forces, beyond the nationalist and revolutionary rhetoric around the Louvre, shaped art museums in France after the fall of Napoleon. In particular, new elites managed public access to museums in such a way that certain segments of society were excluded from them, maintaining class divisions.

According to McClellan the true museum age corresponds directly with the emergence of nationalism after 1820.<sup>58</sup> Typically located close to government buildings, national museums became the 'ornaments' of modern states. Accordingly, they served the state in two ways, by fostering feelings of collective belonging, and by identifying the nation state as heir to western civilization and non-western visual cultures. Speaking of a concern for 'higher values' while reifying the status of the

<sup>55</sup> Carol Duncan, "Putting the nation in London's National Gallery", in G. Wright, ed., *The formation of national collections of art and archaeology*, (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1996), 101.

<sup>56</sup> Andrew McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre: art politics, and the origins of the Modern museum in Eighteenth Century Paris* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 92.

<sup>57</sup> McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre*, 3.

<sup>58</sup> McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre*, 91.

ruling bourgeoisie, French art museums became monuments to past achievements and the ruling classes' current aspirations. The realisation of the museum's symbolic potential came from a concrete process of institution building that centred on acquiring new art works. The large scale buying of art works occurred through art societies run by a prosperous bourgeoisie who had connections to municipal leaders. These museums were monumental places and these large works assumed the aura of murals. The purchase of paintings for municipal museums became a symbolic act of appropriation, where an identity was reinforced through the legitimising force of grand art collections.<sup>59</sup>

Importantly though, these museums were more than trophies to a new class, intent on reifying their identity. The bourgeoisie codified the museum experience to exclude behaviour which they considered to be 'lowly.' Attempts were made to 'shape' the museum visit through clearly defined rules of conduct. The Ministry of War, which supplied the guards for the Louvre, circulated a set of rules for dealing with the public, stipulating that the public 'moves along.' These rules sought to control the 'unruliness' of the crowd who were unfamiliar with the notion of an art museum. Sherman notes that museums sought to control crowds who treated art as another spectacle, like street theatre or other 'shows.' Guards were told not to allow visitors to touch the works, to prevent anyone in a drunken state from entering, and to deny pets even on leads.<sup>60</sup> Half a century later, regulations became a way of privileging certain kinds of visitors. 'Visitors' were distinguished from the casual tourist and were those people knowledgeable in art, schooled in the canon and who had no need for 'lowly' explanatory notes. Curators stopped providing labels and catalogues as they felt that the museum's 'true' constituency had no need for them. Regulations further established norms of behaviour. For example, silence had to be observed and anyone whose appearance was not decent would be turned away. While McClellan shows that a new nationalism rooted in patriotism was spreading over France, Sherman illustrates that identities are constructed out of various interest groups, and that waves of nationalism would be confined to those who found it most politically expedient.

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<sup>59</sup> Daniel Sherman, "The bourgeoisie, cultural appropriation, and the art museum in nineteenth-century France," *Radical History Review*, 38, (1987): 39.

<sup>60</sup> Daniel Sherman, "The bourgeoisie, cultural appropriation, and the art museum in nineteenth-century France," 52.

As a colonial endeavour, the South African National Gallery, in contrast to the Louvre, did not become an 'ornament' of the state. Nor was it a site which fostered collective belonging amongst the citizens of the country. The relationship between the state and the museum was tempered by factors relating to its colonial environment. In South Africa the political environment reflected a need to accommodate two settler identities. Starting as a British colonial institution, the political context shifted with Union. During Apartheid the South African National Gallery had to accommodate a changed colonial and Nationalist ideology. As will be seen in subsequent chapters, these transitions were gradual and the South African National Gallery was fundamentally influenced by the local political context and its Director's individual personalities.

### **The National Gallery, London and class**

The National Gallery in London emerged in 1824 out of a tension that existed between two distinct forms of national identity.<sup>61</sup> The former was type-based on old models of prestige and heredity while the emergent identity was one based on mercantilism and a free market. The changing function of art as something which could be used in design for commercial purposes opened up the field to new possibilities. The idea that art could be uplifting and enlightening to the public encouraged efforts to pry the people away from 'debauchery' and into the halls of enlightenment.<sup>62</sup>

Duncan suggests that art galleries in 18<sup>th</sup> century Britain were more than signifiers of social distinction, wealth and power and were sources of valuable moral and spiritual experience. It was prominent Royal Academicians, like Joshua Reynolds, who first called for the creation of a national gallery which was established in 1824.<sup>63</sup> Criticism of 'high culture' became more vocal in Britain. Groups of merchants, middle class professionals, disgruntled gentry and industrialists joined together and verbally challenged aristocratic culture. A wedge was being driven between the landed gentry and the middle classes. Interestingly, the collection of the National Gallery in London

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<sup>61</sup> Carol Duncan, *Civilizing rituals: inside public art museums* (London: Routledge, 1995), 38.

<sup>62</sup> Duncan, "Putting the nation in London's National Gallery," 101.

<sup>63</sup> Duncan, *Civilising rituals*, 21.

originated from the art collection of John Julius Angerstein, a collector who lacked formal education and who sought through his art collection to gain position and status in the higher realms of society. He amassed his 'princely' art collection with the help of artist friends like Thomas Lawrence. Unlike the aristocracy, he allowed this 'highly prestigious collection' to be viewed by artists and writers. After Angerstein's death in 1823 his art collection was sold to the state and so became the nucleus of the national collection.<sup>64</sup>

Art was increasingly used for commercial purposes. In 1839 a select committee was created by 'radical' reforming members in parliament. The committee's main aim was to find ways to improve the 'taste of British artisans and designers' in order to improve the design competitiveness of British manufactured goods.<sup>65</sup> Interestingly, the management of the national gallery was a matter of political importance to the committee. Beyond these commercial uses, art was seen as having a moral function. Many members of parliament believed that art galleries could become instruments of social change and there was a belief that the sight of art could improve the morals of even the lowest social rank. Art was therefore not seen as a luxury but as a necessity for a civilised life. The founding of the National Gallery in London did not change the distribution of real political power but it did remove a portion of prestigious symbolism from the aristocracy and placed it within the public sphere.<sup>66</sup>

Edward Roworth, the Director of the South African National Gallery between 1940 and 1949, had strong ideological ties with the National Gallery in London. His positive impressions of British art museums influenced his perceptions of an ideal art museum. In 1910 he recalled his first visit 'vividly' and discussed the 'great joy' he received from 'the sight of masterpiece after masterpiece at the National Gallery.'<sup>67</sup> Thirty six years later, he wrote that, 'I had gazed with such avidity at the living creations of Rembrand, Titian, Rubens, Hogarth, Reynolds, Gainsborough, Constable and they became real and concrete facts of my life and have never ceased to delight me.'<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Duncan, "Putting the nation in London's National Gallery," 101.

<sup>65</sup> Duncan, "Putting the nation in London's National Gallery," 103.

<sup>66</sup> Duncan, "Putting the nation in London's National Gallery," 108.

<sup>67</sup> Edward Roworth, "The South African Art Gallery," *Cape Times Annual*, (1910): 13.

<sup>68</sup> Edward Roworth, "Student Days in England," *The Monitor*, (8 Nov 1946): 14.

### German art museums and art theory

The museum age in Germany began after 1830, with art museums built both by the aristocracy and by wealthy merchants who were patrons of the arts.<sup>69</sup> This combination of interests speaks of the tension existing in a new emergent class. Much of the boom in the construction of art museums in every German capital was attributed to ‘cultural competition’ between these two classes. It was also at this time that princes, the government and the public came to regard art museums as indispensable sources of prestige and essential instruments for the spread of ‘culture and enlightenment.’ By the mid-nineteenth century in Germany there was therefore a consensus about the importance of art museums.<sup>70</sup>

Influenced by the philosopher Hegel, there was a growing emphasis at the time on understanding the German art world historically, and this was reflected in the art theory of the time. Hegel’s aesthetics in the 1820s was grounded in the belief that art could be understood historically. He regarded the Classical period as being the high point of visual art. The gods of Greece, for example were the perfect source of art, in them Greek art and religion were fused. In the post-Classical period however, spirit and art had moved in different directions and art had lost its spiritual primacy. Due to this separation, art had to be mediated through history and theory. Proclaiming that ‘art in its highest determination is and will remain for us a bygone thing’, Hegel considered historical knowledge to be essential in the German art world.<sup>71</sup> It was the source of inspiration, value and information. History therefore came to shape art, it became the frame within which art was perceived and interpreted. This view shaped German museums decisions about what to display, what belonged in the German art world and what did not. Art historians articulated the ‘master plot’ around which collections were organized.<sup>72</sup>

In the mid-nineteenth century, no-one doubted that the German museum should be a ‘visible’ history of art.<sup>73</sup> In 1830, Wilhelm von Humbolt, referring to the Berlin art

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<sup>69</sup> James, J. Sheehan, *Museums in the German art world* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 82.

<sup>70</sup> Sheehan, *Museums in the German art world*, 83-84.

<sup>71</sup> Sheehan, *Museums in the German art world*, 88.

<sup>72</sup> Sheehan, *Museums in the German art world*, 90-92.

<sup>73</sup> Sheehan, *Museums in the German art world*, 91.

museum, believed that its collection should represent a 'unified' historical narrative. The museum's acquisition policy should be designed to fill 'significant gaps.'<sup>74</sup> In 1838, with reference to the same collection, Kugler wrote that because the museum's collections followed the 'laws of the historical development of painting', visitors would be able to 'experience the development of art in stages.'<sup>75</sup> The purpose of the art museum was the same as the purpose of art history, 'to impart information about the past and to convey values valid for all time.'<sup>76</sup>

These ideas strongly influenced the writing of a South African art history at the time of the 'Exhibition the contemporary South African paintings, drawings and sculpture' in 1948, as we shall see in chapter four.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter located the establishment of South African National Gallery in the context of colonial, metropolitan and European developments. The South African National Gallery, together with other institutions of culture and learning, was part of the colonial project of constructing a city. By the time of Unification in 1910 the South African National Gallery became part of a broader Cape Town heritage project and government support increased. The Union government hoped that the museum would serve both to memorialize the British legacy and foster a unified South African settler identity.

What distinguished the South African National Gallery from its European counterparts was that it was a colonial institution that had to help forge a collective identity for its settler community. British art museums impacted directly on the South African National Gallery through its early collection practices. The example of the National Gallery, London showed that it was not a site that was free of contention but had to negotiate various class interests. The French example showed that as the prototype art museum, the Louvre was used for political ends but that bourgeois interests predominated, there and at provincial art museums. The German example

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<sup>74</sup> Sheehan, *Museums in the German art world*, 91.

<sup>75</sup> Sheehan, *Museums in the German art world*, 92.

<sup>76</sup> Sheehan, *Museums in the German art world*, 92.

showed how art museums came to shape their displays as a history of art, showing development and progress.

In the following chapter I will investigate the ideological underpinnings of the South African National Gallery in the 1940s, show how the Director, Roworth, shaped it and illustrate how this period was instrumental in the way the institution later envisioned a South African art history.

University of Cape Town

## Chapter Two

### Roworth's Directorship: Art and rhetoric at the South African National Gallery: 1940-1947

#### Introduction

The period before and during the Second World War (1939-1945) was a time when art was increasingly used as a political tool in Europe, and particularly in Germany.<sup>1</sup> It was a period of great preoccupation with nationalism, when the state and political power were propagated through the visual arts. These included painting, sculpture, architecture and various forms of mass media.<sup>2</sup> Unlike Germany, there was no single political ideology that influenced the way art was used at the South African National Gallery, but rather a number of social and political factors. However, during the Second World War, the Director of the museum Edward Roworth was the strongest influence at the institution.

Roworth was an academic and an artist. He was simultaneously Director of the South African National Gallery (1940-1949) and Dean of the University of Cape Town's art school, Michaelis (1937-1953).<sup>3</sup> Never officially appointed by the government to the South African National Gallery, he held the post in an honorary capacity.<sup>4</sup> His tenure at the museum was marked by two critical issues. Firstly, his conservative views on Modern art caused a rift in the art-loving public of Cape Town and generated a heated debate in the newspapers. Secondly, the art sales from the permanent collection instigated by Roworth were met with public outrage. Although it was not Modern art that was sold, in the public mind the sales recalled the recent art purges in Germany. Roworth's critics argued that his personal tastes were being wrongfully imposed on the institution. His views were vigorously contested by artists and others in Cape Town. His critics did not see the relevance of his categories and were troubled by his conservative tendencies. One

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<sup>1</sup> Dawn Ades, Tim Benton, David Elliot, Ian Boyd Whyte, "Selectors introduction," in Dawn Ades Ed., *Art and power: Europe under the Dictators 1930-1945*. (London: SBC Hayward Gallery, 1995), 16.

<sup>2</sup> Ades et al. "Selectors introduction," 16.

<sup>3</sup> Joe Dolby, "A short history of the South African National Gallery," *The Lantern*, (Dec 1981): 42.

<sup>4</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): Annexure C.

artist complained that the museum appeared to be under the autocratic ‘dictatorship’ of Roworth.<sup>5</sup>

As South Africa went into the Second World War amidst great tension between the Afrikaner and English-speaking sectors of white Cape Town, Roworth used Nazi-like political rhetoric to condemn Modern art but simultaneously lauded more conservative tendencies in British art and British art institutions. While calling Modern art ‘degenerate’, he had aspirations to create a national school of painting at Michaelis, reminiscent of the Royal Academy in London.<sup>6</sup> In 1940 he applauded Michaelis’ efforts in establishing a ‘new school of South African painting’ which avoided the negative influence of Modern art.<sup>7</sup> The responses to his views point to the heightened tension in Cape Town regarding the war and its associated rhetoric.

Roworth took no interest in artists favoured by Afrikaner Nationalists at a time of strengthening Afrikaner Nationalism in South Africa. In contrast, the management of the Johannesburg Art Gallery responded more pro-actively to issues of strengthening Afrikaner Nationalism. While Roworth was attempting to forge a kind of national art which was strongly influenced by British painting, the Johannesburg Art Gallery was increasingly accessioning art favoured by Afrikaner Nationalists.

Roworth was a public figure who often delivered public lectures and published articles in daily newspapers. Analyzing these articles and the public responses to them illustrates Roworth’s stance and shows the impact he had. This chapter starts by looking at Roworth’s early ideas on art. I contextualize his ideas by sketching the political context in Cape Town during the early 1940s to show how this context influenced him as

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<sup>5</sup> Lippy Lipshitz, “A considered reply to Prof. Roworth,” *Trek*, (7 Nov 1940): 20-24.

Prebble Rayner, “Our irrational Gallery,” *Trek*, (27 Jul 1945): 12.

<sup>6</sup> Author unknown. “Prof. Roworth attacks Modern art: work of Michaelis school praised,” *Cape Times*, (25 Sep 1940).

<sup>7</sup> Author unknown. “Prof. Roworth attacks Modern art: work of Michaelis school praised,” *Cape Times*, (25 Sep 1940).

Director of the South African National Gallery. I show how Roworth utilized political rhetoric to express ideas about Modern art, and then I look at the public responses to his ideas. I discuss Roworth's overwhelming influence on the South African National Gallery and the absence of visible opposition to his views at the institution. From the Cape Town context, the chapter moves to the Johannesburg Art Gallery to show the different way that that institution negotiated political pressures. This chapter positions the South African National Gallery within the broader South African context and illustrates the regionalism of Roworth's ideas.

### **Roworth's views on art**

Roworth was born in 1880 in the English village of Heaton Mersey, Lancashire, and studied art at the Manchester Art Academy. He came to South Africa in 1902.<sup>8</sup> He acknowledged the formative influence of his art training and the exhibitions he saw as a youth in England.<sup>9</sup> As early as 1910 he published an article on the national collection at the South African National Gallery.<sup>10</sup> From 1940, after taking up the position as Director of the South African National Gallery, he published various articles on his background, influences and ideological perspective on art.<sup>11</sup>

In 1910, Roworth wrote about what constituted 'good' art. In his view, art had to subscribe to certain limitations. Firstly, art had to be beautiful and based on 'truth.'<sup>12</sup> This aspect allowed it to give rise to 'pleasurable emotions.'<sup>13</sup> Secondly, art had to have formal qualities such as line, colour and perspective by which the viewer could ascertain its worth. 'Good art' utilized these formal qualities effectively. Safely grounded in 'tradition' it should be built on the legacy of 'the great masters.'<sup>14</sup> Formal qualities were to be skillfully 'mastered' in order to produce 'overpoweringly beautiful' works. He

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<sup>8</sup> Edward Roworth, "Student Days in England," *The Monitor*, (8 Nov 1946): 12.

<sup>9</sup> Edward Roworth, "Student Days in England," *The Monitor*, (8 Nov 1946): 14.

<sup>10</sup> Edward Roworth, "The South African Art Gallery," *Cape Times Annual*, (1910): 8-13.

<sup>11</sup> Edward Roworth, "Student Days in England," *The Monitor*, (8 Nov 1946): 12-14.

<sup>12</sup> Edward Roworth, "The South African Art Gallery," *Cape Times Annual*, (1910): 8.

<sup>13</sup> Edward Roworth, "The South African Art Gallery," *Cape Times Annual*, (1910): 8.

<sup>14</sup> Edward Roworth, "The South African Art Gallery," *Cape Times Annual*, (1910): 9.

stressed that the emotive in art could be experienced by ‘an ordinary human being with a real desire to gain a knowledge of art.’ One simply had to have eyes and ears and the opportunity to become familiar with beautiful objects in order to experience the ‘charm of good work and the pleasurable emotions which arise from its study.’<sup>15</sup> Roworth had a great admiration for large collections containing ‘treasures’ especially those containing the works of ‘masters.’ He was greatly influenced by three museum experiences of his youth. After taking up the position as Director at the South African National Gallery he wrote about these experiences to frame his ideas on art.

The first was an important exhibition that formed part of Queen Victoria’s Jubilee celebrations in 1887 at Trarford Park, England. He was seven or eight at the time of visiting this exhibition and here he saw the ‘immense collection of art treasures gathered from all parts of the United Kingdom, those marvels of poignant feeling and superb craftsmanship.’<sup>16</sup> A far greater impression was made on him at ‘Vernon Park (where) there was a small collection of paintings, the work of the greatest of all landscape painters,’ J M W Turner. Roworth recalled the *Visit to the tomb* as though ‘it were yesterday- its iridescence, its glow of colour and light confirmed in me even at the early age, in my adoration of the great master.’<sup>17</sup>

The most influential experience, however, was the one of the National Gallery of London, which he remembered ‘vividly’ and with great fondness. ‘I need not dilate upon the great joy I received from the first sight of masterpiece after masterpiece at the National Gallery.’<sup>18</sup> He returned from his visit to the National Gallery with ‘life long memories of the masterpieces I had gazed at with such avidity, the living creations of Rembrandt, Titian, Rubens, Hogarth, Reynolds, Gainsborough, Constable became real and concrete facts in my life, and have never ceased to delight me.’<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Edward Roworth, “The South African Art Gallery,” *Cape Times Annual*, (1910): 13.

<sup>16</sup> Edward Roworth, “Student Days in England,” *The Monitor*, (8 Nov 1946): 12.

<sup>17</sup> Edward Roworth, “Student Days in England,” *The Monitor*, (8 Nov 1946): 12.

<sup>18</sup> Note that Roworth’s concept of ‘modern art’ is analogous to ‘contemporary art.’

<sup>19</sup> Edward Roworth, “Student Days in England,” *The Monitor*, (8 Nov 1946): 12.

The most distinguished work in the collection at the South African National Gallery, according to Roworth, was 'The blue gown' (date unknown) by the early twentieth century British painter George Henry (Fig. 8).<sup>20</sup> This is a painting of a wealthy woman standing in a rich blue Victorian gown. She is the light in the darkened room and she looks over her left shoulder, hand on hip. She looks away from the viewer as if caught in a reverie. The room in which she stands is set in heavy wooden paneling, emphasizing her paleness and that of the expensive porcelain vase to her left. For Roworth, this example of traditional Academy painting perpetuated all that was good in the 'masterpieces' of the past. 'The blue gown' dominated the South African collection, he believed with its 'mastery and beauty.' There was not to be found in any of the companion pictures in the collection such 'fluent craftsmanship, such sonorous lovely chords of colour, or such a finished realization of life and movement.'<sup>21</sup>

#### **Roworth's views on Modern art**

The academic painting favored by Roworth was easy on the eye, was representational and required little intellectual engagement on the part of the viewer. Modern art however was marked by a departure from these traditional styles and values. Roworth expressed disdain for Modern art early in his career. According to Roworth 'art for art's sake' was self indulgent and backward and could be seen 'only in the earliest ages of mankind.'<sup>22</sup> While reminiscing about his English student days he emphasized his 'good fortune', as a 'student of the great art of painting before all the semi or even entirely crazy 'isms' of the twentieth century had sapped the vitality of the student's aims and outlook.'<sup>23</sup> At the time of his training, a student 'could appeal to the great masters and to truth to nature, therefore students were solidly based upon the firm ground of Truth and Beauty.' In current times however, 'the era of degeneracy, the cult of distortion, the admitted admiration for lunatic art' was making its presence felt, 'so also was the grotesque horror

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<sup>20</sup> Edward Roworth, "The South African Art Gallery," *Cape Times Annual*, (1910): 8.

<sup>21</sup> Edward Roworth, "The South African Art Gallery," *Cape Times Annual*, (1910): 9.

<sup>22</sup> Edward Roworth, "The South African Art Gallery," *Cape Times Annual*, (1910): 8.

<sup>23</sup> Edward Roworth, "Student Days in England," *The Monitor*, (8 Nov 1946): 13.

of 'Modernismus' art.'<sup>24</sup> The art of the Expressionists was 'touched by the modern fever and fret, the strange disease of modern life, with its sick hurry and its divided aims.'<sup>25</sup>

Roworth declared that Modern art was a calamitous development that bore similarities to the Second World War. He claimed that as a student he 'did not realize that the portents of vast and calamitous changes were soon to be seen', and 'took no heed of the fact that that the world was leaving its old faiths and the guidance of its wisest men.'<sup>26</sup> He had no idea that 'humanity was about to enter a new century of unimaginable degradations.' The 'destruction of the world war was hidden' from him as was the 'horror' of 'Modernismus art.'<sup>27</sup> His disdain for Modern art was again expressed when he likened it to the 'primitive' art of the 'Bushman.' 'Art for art's sake, the art which is practised purely and solely for the satisfaction of the artist' was met with in the art of 'our Bushmen' who were probably 'the last men in this land to practise their art according to the latest theories of the aesthetes.'<sup>28</sup>

A similar view on Rock art was expressed by the editor of *The Monitor*.<sup>29</sup> The editor responded to the painter Pierneef's assertions that South African landscape painters should 'remove their European spectacles' and look toward the art of the 'Bushmen.'<sup>30</sup> Pierneef encouraged South African artists to follow the Bushmen even if it took thirty years for them to unlearn their European tendencies. The editor said that Pierneef's sentiments were 'exaggerated.' 'No matter how admirable "Bushman" art may be, it remained 'primitive art.' Had an 'old Bushman' artist studied under 'Michelangelo or Rembrandt he might possibly have become a great artist.'<sup>31</sup> However, 'Bushman' art was 'merely a branch of primitive art which was practised over a great part of the world in a

<sup>24</sup> Edward Roworth, "Student Days in England," *The Monitor*, (8 Nov 1946): 13.

<sup>25</sup> Edward Roworth, "Student Days in England," *The Monitor*, (8 Nov 1946): 13.

<sup>26</sup> Edward Roworth, "Student Days in England," *The Monitor*, (8 Nov 1946): 13.

<sup>27</sup> Roworth speaks here of the impending world war and parallels it with the emergence of Modern Art. Edward Roworth, "Student Days in England," *The Monitor*, (8 Nov 1946): 13.

<sup>28</sup> Edward Roworth, "The South African Art Gallery," *Cape Times Annual*, (1910): 8.

<sup>29</sup> The Editor. "Balance in art", *The Monitor*, (17 Jan 1947): 7-8.

<sup>30</sup> The Editor. "Balance in art", *The Monitor*, (17 Jan 1947): 7.

<sup>31</sup> The Editor. "Balance in art", *The Monitor*, (17 Jan 1947): 7.

bygone age.<sup>32</sup> According to the editor, South African white artists had a 'traditional spiritual kinship' to Europe 'our mode of living, our art, our philosophy and our outlook is European.' He asserts that 'in short, we are Europeans and not Africans!'<sup>33</sup>

Similarly, Roworth held that rock art definitely did not form part of the story of art and it was ridiculous to suggest that there was any comparison between it and western art. Roworth aligned painting with the western tradition of art. In the tradition of western art, students drew from casts of the 'antique', which he considered a much 'sounder' method than drawing from nature.<sup>34</sup> By remaining in the western tradition the unsteady 'flight from standards and traditions of art' would never go unchecked.<sup>35</sup>

### **The South African context and the 1940 lecture on Modern art**

The period of Roworth's tenure at the South African National Gallery was greatly influenced by the Second World War. The Second World War highlighted the political divisions existing in Cape Town. South Africa was not obliged to enter the War in 1939 and fight on the side of Britain.<sup>36</sup> The debate over entry split the Fusion government, with Hertzog calling for neutrality and Smuts supporting intervention. Smuts had a particular concern for Europe, 'this glorious mother continent of Western civilization' which was in danger of destruction by Hitler.<sup>37</sup> The Fusion government was a coalition of the South African Party (Smuts) and the National Party (Hertzog).<sup>38</sup> The South African Party's main concern was to reconcile English and Afrikaans speaking whites while the National party represented Afrikaner interests and policies.<sup>39</sup> Hertzog lost the War debate and resigned. This division emphasized the tension caused by a growing Afrikaner Nationalism. Many Afrikaners opposed South Africa's support of Allied forces, while for

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<sup>32</sup> The Editor. 'Balance in art', *The Monitor*, (17 Jan 1947): 7.

<sup>33</sup> The Editor. 'Balance in art', *The Monitor*, (17 Jan 1947): 8.

<sup>34</sup> Edward Roworth, "Student Days in England," *The Monitor*, (8 Nov 1946): 12.

<sup>35</sup> Edward Roworth, "Student Days in England," *The Monitor*, (8 Nov 1946): 13.

<sup>36</sup> Nigel Worden, *A concise dictionary of South African history* (Cape Town: Francolin, 1998), 164.

<sup>37</sup> T.R.H. Davenport, *South Africa: a modern history* (Johannesburg: Macmillan, 1985), 346.

<sup>38</sup> Worden, *A concise dictionary*, 63.

<sup>39</sup> Worden, *A concise dictionary*, 144.

English-speaking Capetonians the war positively reinforced imperial ties.<sup>40</sup> This conflict cut deeply into South African public opinion.<sup>41</sup> Davenport notes that those who were emotionally attached to Britain and who opposed racial fanaticism supported the Allies but that those who were emotionally drawn to the Germans or who were excited by the doctrines of Nazism supported the Axis. Others who wanted South Africa to control its own destiny opted for neutrality.<sup>42</sup>

Malan's 'purified' National party, released from the Fusion government, now became a home of Afrikaner Nationalism. Pro-Nazi sympathies were expressed in this arena by several Afrikaner Nationalists and by Afrikaner intellectuals.<sup>43</sup> The militant 'Ossewabrandwag' (Oxwaggon sentinels) which became a fascist paramilitary organization also had Nazi sympathies and actively sabotaged the South African war effort.<sup>44</sup> A few Afrikaners supported such developments but the National Party's main support came from voters who saw their position threatened by economic and social changes, particularly with the breakdown of segregation, in South Africa during the war period.<sup>45</sup> As a result the National Party mobilized political victory for Afrikaner Nationalism through the promise of reinvigorated segregation under the slogan of Apartheid.<sup>46</sup>

In this conflicted environment, where South African identities were polarized, Roworth delivered a public lecture in 1940 which positioned national art as uniquely important. The ideas he presented drew strongly on the political context of the war. In his lecture, Roworth stated that national art was 'the most vital manifestation of the life of a

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<sup>40</sup> Vivian Bickford-Smith, Elizabeth van Heyningen and Nigel Worden. *Cape Town in the Twentieth Century*. (Cape Town: David Philip, 1999), 92.

<sup>41</sup> Davenport, *South Africa*, 234.

<sup>42</sup> Davenport, *South Africa*, 346.

<sup>43</sup> Worden, *A concise dictionary*, 164.

<sup>44</sup> Worden, *A concise dictionary*, 118.

<sup>45</sup> Nigel Worden, *The making of modern South Africa* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 92.

<sup>46</sup> Worden, *A concise dictionary*, 15.

nation.’<sup>47</sup> He also said that the Michaelis school had successfully started such a national school of art, ‘a new movement in art, a revolution.’<sup>48</sup>

According to Roworth, a national art should be kept pure and ‘free from the alien and disintegrating influences’ spread by Modern art.<sup>49</sup> The Michaelis school ‘refused to be led by second and third rate minds.’ After only three years, signs of ‘definite progress’ could be seen in their work which showed that national art was not merely something that was amusing. It was not ‘copies of degenerate artists’ and their ‘decadent art’ but was instead a manifestation of ‘the future- of freedom, truth and beauty.’<sup>50</sup>

At the lecture, Roworth screened a dozen ‘horrifying samples of French art’ to illustrate his argument. France had allowed an ‘infection’ to occur and French art had ‘sabotaged beauty.’ In France, the ‘wells of national art had been poisoned’ and this pointed to the ‘degeneracy of the life of the nation.’<sup>51</sup> The French did not have the moral courage to ‘cleanse their art and their country from this vile corruption.’ They were ‘ripe for national downfall.’ Roworth lamented the fortune of France which had the ‘terrible fate of allowing its beautiful national art to be sabotaged by a mixed crew of clever rascals and lunatics.’<sup>52</sup> As a result of Modern ‘mad men’ there was no longer a ‘standard by which a work of art might be measured.’ These artists reduced art criticism to ‘mental anarchy’ with all intelligent direction in art reduced to ‘impotency.’ This intellectual chaos in the

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<sup>47</sup> Author unknown. “Prof. Roworth attacks Modern art: work of Michaelis praised,” *Cape Times*, (25 Sep 1940).

<sup>48</sup> Author unknown. “Prof. Roworth attacks Modern art: work of Michaelis praised,” *Cape Times*, (25 Sep 1940).

<sup>49</sup> Author unknown. “Prof. Roworth attacks Modern art: work of Michaelis praised,” *Cape Times*, (25 Sep 1940).

<sup>50</sup> Author unknown. “Prof. Roworth attacks Modern art: work of Michaelis praised,” *Cape Times*, (25 Sep 1940).

<sup>51</sup> Author unknown. “Prof. Roworth attacks Modern art: work of Michaelis praised,” *Cape Times*, (25 Sep 1940).

<sup>52</sup> Author unknown. “Prof. Roworth attacks Modern art: work of Michaelis praised,” *Cape Times*, (25 Sep 1940).

arts was the direct result of the lack of recognized standards of arts induced by these 'mountebanks and madmen.'<sup>53</sup>

According to Roworth, France would only rise again once 'she cleansed her art and her national life.' Then 'she' could be restored to her place as leader in the world of art, a place which she so 'basely surrendered when she opened wide the gates of Paris to every degenerate who impudently called himself an artist.'<sup>54</sup> Roworth spoke favorably of the 'cleansing' Europe experienced during the war, referring specifically to the art of Cubism, Dadaism and Surrealism. Roworth hoped that 'the fires of war scorched, shriveled and swept them from the soil they polluted, let us trust that the infection is finally burnt out' so that art might once more take its place as the 'greatest manifestation of human glory and not ever again be the past time of obscene half wits.'<sup>55</sup>

Roworth's sentiments had precedents in Nazi Germany, where Modern artists were similarly described as pathological and lunatic. As early as 1928, the Nazi party set up a Combat League for German Culture and Modern art was declared synonymous with all manifestations of social 'degeneracy.' With the birth of the Nazi state in 1933, a national art policy was inaugurated and 'degenerate art' was either confiscated, publicly abused or liquidated.<sup>56</sup> Spectacular contrasts were made at exhibitions between valued and unvalued art, between German and 'degenerate art.' In 1937 two such exhibitions were mounted. These were the 'Degenerate Exhibition' and the first 'Great German Art Exhibition.' At these events the classical leanings of German Nazi propaganda art were contrasted with the distortions of Modern art.

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<sup>53</sup> Author unknown. "Prof. Roworth attacks Modern art: work of Michaelis praised," *Cape Times*, (25 Sep 1940).

<sup>54</sup> Author unknown. "Prof. Roworth attacks Modern art: work of Michaelis praised," *Cape Times*, (25 Sep 1940).

<sup>55</sup> Author unknown. "Prof. Roworth attacks Modern art: work of Michaelis praised," *Cape Times*, (25 Sep 1940).

<sup>56</sup> Berthold Hinz, "Degenerate and authentic: aspects of art and power in the Third Reich," in Dawn Ades, Ed, *Art and power: Europe under the Dictators 1930-1945*. (London: SBC Hayward Gallery, 1995), 330.

Another way Modern art was aligned with insanity was by juxtaposing clinical photographs of the deformed and mentally ill with recent works by Emil Nolde, Ernst Barlach, Erich Heckel and Ernst Kirchner among others. Paul Scultze-Naumburg, taking his cue from treatises on ethnology was the most consistent exponent of this technique. His book 'Art and race' (1928) helped to define Modern art as pathological.<sup>57</sup> The works of art were not condemned as art but were deemed to be mirrors of reality. The accusation of 'degeneracy' and 'pathology' was directed early on at the subjects of the paintings and sculpture with a passing mention of the mental state of the artists themselves. According to Hinz, the enemy with regard to 'degenerate' art was not the artwork itself but was instead the 'degenerate' human being. Third Reich art, in contrast, visualized the human being in terms of its 'biological optimum forms' and so presented an alternative to degenerate art.<sup>58</sup> The Nazi's saw Third Reich art as needing to present a form that could provide a counter point to degeneracy. The imagery of National Socialism aimed to ensure that members of the volk would belong to an imagined Germany. Once the 'degenerate' (artworks and people) were excluded the 'pure bred' (artworks and people) could be dominant.

Although Roworth's sentiments did not make the link between 'degenerate' art and race, he did see the new national movement as visionary and exclusive. He believed that the Michaelis school had started a new movement in art which was free from the 'degenerating' influences of modernism. As artists they 'took their stand and declared for national art and the future, for freedom, truth and beauty.'<sup>59</sup> Quoting from Roworth's preface to an exhibition catalogue,<sup>60</sup> artist and critic Lippy Lipshitz paralleled Roworth's stance to that of Hitler, who was himself once an aspirant artist. He showed that Roworth's vision of acceptable art was founded on a political outlook which was

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<sup>57</sup> Hinz, "Degenerate and authentic: aspects of art and power in the Third Reich," 331.

<sup>58</sup> Hinz, "Degenerate and authentic: aspects of art and power in the Third Reich," 330.

<sup>59</sup> Author unknown. "Prof. Roworth attacks Modern art: work of Michaelis praised," *Cape Times*, (25 Sep 1940).

<sup>60</sup> The exhibition was the 'non-expurgated edition of 'Famous works of art' issued by the United Tobacco Co.' Lippy Lipshitz, "A considered reply to Prof. Roworth," *Trek*, (7 Nov 1940): 20.

unquestionably extreme. Roworth had written that Germany had adopted some of the most degrading forms of art of the Modernist movement but 'quite recently this flood of degenerate "art" has been stemmed by Herr Hitler who has given the exponents of modernism their choice between the lunatic asylum and the concentration camp.'<sup>61</sup> Lipshitz wrote that Roworth 'looks gratefully toward Hitler', who 'purged' German art of Max Liebermann, Lovis Corinth, Oskar Kokoschka and Käthe Kollwitz, who 'degraded' revolutionary artists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century such as Van Gogh, Cézanne and Gauguin and who 'did not even spare' Rembrandt, for 'having lived in the Amsterdam Ghetto.'<sup>62</sup> Lipshitz appealed to 'the people of South Africa to take direct action against Prof. Roworth, or we may see in the near future an exhibition of "degenerate art", while every significant artist in this country will be given the choice between the lunatic asylum and the camp.'<sup>63</sup>

### **Response to Roworth: detractors and supporters**

Although Roworth's ideas reflected those held by the South African art establishment at the time, the public were by no means unanimous. Spurred on by the emotionalism surrounding the war, the public either took issue with Roworth's stance or supported him. For artists such as Lipshitz, supporting Modern art was seen as a liberal political allegiance which expressed an anti-German sentiment. For him Modern art was 'tolerant and progressive' whereas the art Roworth and the Nazis advocated was 'shallow and unimaginative.'<sup>64</sup> To critics such as Brander, however, Roworth's art was 'safe' and 'rooted in tradition and all to the good!'<sup>65</sup>

Lippy Lipshitz was a member of the New Group. The New Group were a group of artists who were active in Cape Town from 1938 to 1954, and although they did not adhere to a specific style, many of the members either worked in a 'romantic realist' style similar to

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<sup>61</sup> Lippy Lipshitz, "A considered reply to Prof. Roworth," *Trek*, (7 Nov 1940): 20.

<sup>62</sup> Lippy Lipshitz, "A considered reply to Prof. Roworth," *Trek*, (7 Nov 1940): 20.

<sup>63</sup> Lippy Lipshitz, "A considered reply to Prof. Roworth," *Trek*, (7 Nov 1940): 20.

<sup>64</sup> Lippy Lipshitz, "A considered reply to Prof. Roworth," *Trek*, (7 Nov 1940): 24.

<sup>65</sup> Brander, "Successfully following tradition," *Suiderstem*, (18 Apr 1941).

movements such as Expressionism and Cubism. They aimed to raise the standard of South African art, and by organizing exhibitions and sales hoped to increase public awareness of art, and gain public approval for Modern art.<sup>66</sup> They claimed to foster and encourage a uniquely South African art, and were at odds with the art establishment.

In 'A considered reply to Prof. Roworth', published in response to Roworth's 1940 public lecture on Modern art, Lipshitz assessed Roworth's views and gave an analysis of his main concerns.<sup>67</sup> According to Lipshitz, the most worrying aspects of Roworth's views were: his arrogant disregard for popularly held views on art, the manner in which he implemented his beliefs by removing work from the walls of the National Gallery and his reliance on an outmoded European Royal Academy-type tradition for his 'national art.'

Lipshitz accused Roworth of being 'opposed to the interests of progressive artists, intellectuals and the people of South Africa.'<sup>68</sup> Roworth advocated the suppression of freedom of the Modern artist by confining himself to the narrow clique of 'bourgeois art-academies.' Lipshitz addressed the broader South African public, the 'high and low brow', the 'toiling masses' the 'poor, the hungry.'<sup>69</sup> He argued that Roworth's taste had little public support from these sectors. He declared that the 'interest of the South African public in this mouldy type of art' was 'falling off.'<sup>70</sup> Instead, the 'toiling masses' who cannot afford to buy originals, preferred to 'buy...very inexpensive and excellently printed reproductions of one of the impressionists, a vigorous Van Gogh or a rhythmical Frans Marc' rather than a reproduction of the 'Royal Academy painting of the Year representing Lady Godiva with manicured nails sailing on the back of a dolphin to the Island of Dreams.'<sup>71</sup> Most people, notes Lipshitz, 'prefer pictures to be part of their

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<sup>66</sup> Julia Kukard, *A critical history of the New Group*, (Unpublished M.A thesis, University of Cape Town, 1993), 8.

<sup>67</sup> Lippy Lipshitz, "A considered reply to Prof. Roworth," *Trek*, (7 Nov 1940): 20-24.

<sup>68</sup> Lippy Lipshitz, "A considered reply to Prof. Roworth," *Trek*, (7 Nov 1940): 24.

<sup>69</sup> Lippy Lipshitz, "A considered reply to Prof. Roworth," *Trek*, (7 Nov 1940): 20.

<sup>70</sup> Lippy Lipshitz, "A considered reply to Prof. Roworth," *Trek*, (7 Nov 1940): 20.

<sup>71</sup> Lippy Lipshitz, "A considered reply to Prof. Roworth," *Trek*, (7 Nov 1940): 20.

Island of Dreams.’<sup>71</sup> Most people, notes Lipshitz, ‘prefer pictures to be part of their scheme for decoration and do not collect them merely because of their romantic or sentimental associations.’<sup>72</sup>

According to Lipshitz, the highest aim of ‘Bourgeois academites’ such as Roworth was to paint on commission for ‘prices calculated to command respect of the common folk.’ Since Roworth had been able to achieve this aim he had ‘become the Official Pontiff of Bourgeois Academic art in the country.’<sup>73</sup> In the capacity as Director of the South African National Gallery, Roworth removed art he considered to ‘embody alien and disintegrating influences.’ Lipshitz contested the removal of Wolf Kibel’s work from the museum’s walls and stated that it was politically motivated.<sup>74</sup> Kibel was a local artist who was influenced by the Post Impressionism and the Formalism of Cézanne. His works were highly colourful as he ‘wished to make his own emotion visible in the dynamic distortions and burning colour.’ Kibel showed his ‘contempt’ for a smooth and finished technique by employing thick painterly surfaces.<sup>75</sup>

Lipshitz was incensed that ‘evidently Kibel’s work was removed because, in the words of Goebbels, it expressed “the experimental mania of elements alien to our race”.’ He defended Kibel’s choice of subject. Kibel often painted ‘the poor, the hungry, the sick and the outcasts. He painted their hovels in preference to painting the ‘Twelve Apostles, Groot Constantia or the Union Buildings in Jacaranda season.’ According to Lipshitz, Kibel’s paintings were ‘a bitter indictment against society.’ He did not look at his subjects through the ‘tinted spectacles of pseudo Romanticism or Classicism.’ Kibel was the ‘true type of modern artist and therefore as such has no place in the Nationalist Collection.’<sup>76</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Lippy Lipshitz, “A considered reply to Prof. Roworth,” *Trek*, (7 Nov 1940): 20.

<sup>72</sup> Lippy Lipshitz, “A considered reply to Prof. Roworth,” *Trek*, (7 Nov 1940): 20.

<sup>73</sup> Lippy Lipshitz, “A considered reply to Prof. Roworth,” *Trek*, (7 Nov 1940): 24.

<sup>74</sup> Lippy Lipshitz, “A considered reply to Prof. Roworth,” *Trek*, (7 Nov 1940): 24.

<sup>75</sup> F.L. Alexander, *Art in South Africa since 1900: Kuns in Suid Afrika sedert 1900* (Cape Town, A.A. Balkema, 1962), 48-49.

<sup>76</sup> Lippy Lipshitz, “A considered reply to Prof. Roworth,” *Trek*, (7 Nov 1940): 20.

Another of Lipshitz's concerns was that the 'new National art movement' was rooted in an outdated sentimental tradition and was 'hardly an indigenous product.' Roworth's 'new movement' was 'imported from England in the early years of this century as several dull portraits of neglected South African worthies in the Houses of Parliament, in the City Hall, and board rooms of local insurance companies.' His art relied for its appeal on 'slick technique, unimaginative interpretation of reality and shallow sentimentality.' This type of art had its heyday 'before the invention of photography and since then it has been striving to compete with the accurate art of the camera.' Lipshitz concluded that although Roworth prided himself on being the prophet of this 'revolutionary movement' he had merely made 'a pact with the lens.'<sup>77</sup>

The critic Prebble Rayner reiterated Lipshitz' concerns about Roworth and expressed dissatisfaction with the state of the museum. Rayner suggested that the debate that started in 1940, with Roworth and his 'fulminations' against Modern art, was merely a ruse to distract from the poor state of the museum and the 'great dissatisfaction amongst the art loving public.'<sup>78</sup> Rayner stated that 'if we had a National Gallery worth talking about, worth going to, Roworth might learn to be more tolerant, more understanding' instead of 'blurbing in disparagement of what he doesn't understand.'<sup>79</sup> There was a 'large consensus of opinion' amongst the public that there was a 'great deal of room for improvement in that much maligned art gallery.' Rayner wrote that the 'South African National Gallery has been suffering a long and insidious period of ossification as one finds hardly anything representative of the best of our Modern artists.' Instead one finds 'rows upon rows of dehydrated duds by living and past practitioners.'<sup>80</sup>

On a lighter note, Deane Anderson, 'The Art Critic' for *The Argus* wrote in 1947:

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<sup>77</sup> Lippy Lipshitz, "A considered reply to Prof. Roworth," *Trek*, (7 Nov 1940): 20.

<sup>78</sup> Prebble Rayner, "Our irrational Gallery," *Trek*, (27 Jul 1945): 12.

<sup>79</sup> Prebble Rayner, "Our irrational Gallery," *Trek*, (27 Jul 1945): 12.

<sup>80</sup> Prebble Rayner, "Our irrational Gallery," *Trek*, (27 Jul 1945): 12.

‘once again, as I walked round the National Gallery, I wondered why all visitors to the art gallery should find it necessary to look so very downcast.’<sup>81</sup> Their gloom was, I think, due to the same reason as my own—namely that racehorses as a subject for painting becomes rather tedious after the first fifty pictures.’<sup>82</sup>

According to Anderson, another reason for the gloomy disposition of visitors to the museum was that there the ‘world of art’ was treated as sacred, lacking ‘humor and common sense.’ Art viewing was ‘reverential’, akin to church-going. Anderson argued that the ‘world of art’ should be a ‘manifestation of human activity, much nearer than we realize to the cinema, the bar and the shop window than it is to the world of religion.’<sup>83</sup> According to Anderson, the less visitors to the museum assumed a ‘dutiful attitude of mind’, the more they would be able to ‘enjoy the pleasures that painting can give.’<sup>84</sup>

Roworth’s response to Anderson was understandably defensive. At the time Roworth was coming under a lot of criticism. The Stratford commission of enquiry into the sales at the museum was underway (see chapter 3).<sup>85</sup> Although Anderson’s statements were a ‘light hearted attempt to fill the column of the newspaper’ Roworth wrote, they were ‘irresponsible’, and might have ‘possible repercussions for the future of the National Gallery.’<sup>86</sup> While Roworth, was trying to motivate for better government funding, and trying to impress on them the value of the institution in the interests of ‘national culture and prestige’, Anderson was telling the public that the world of art was nearer to the ‘cinema, bar and shop window’! According to Roworth, art was a reaction to this

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<sup>81</sup> Dean Anderson, “Too many long faces in art galleries,” *The Argus*, (19 Jun 1947).

<sup>82</sup> Anderson refers to the Bailey bequest made to the museum in that year. The bequest contained four hundred works whose subject was hunting, sporting and racing. UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1946/1947, 4.

<sup>83</sup> Dean Anderson, “Too many long faces in art galleries,” *The Argus*, (19 Jun 1947).

<sup>84</sup> Dean Anderson, “Too many long faces in art galleries,” *The Argus*, (19 Jun 1947).

<sup>85</sup> See, Chapter Three

<sup>86</sup> Edward Roworth, “Too many long faces in art galleries,” *The Argus*, (23 Jun 1947).

everyday 'facile frivolity.' The world of religion was closer to art than Anderson realized and according to Roworth, 'all supreme art has been religious art.'<sup>87</sup>

Lesser-known art critics also approved of Roworth's stance. 'Brander', for example wrote favorably of his ideas and agreed with his views concerning Modern art. Writing in *Die Suidersstem*, in an article on an exhibition of painting by Roworth and his daughter, he asserted that 'their art is rooted in tradition, and all to a good end, we welcome this "safe" work of father and daughter.'<sup>88</sup> Modern art, Brander claimed, was merely a 'trend' which would have little impact on the future art of South Africa. Monet, Cézanne, van Gogh, Matisse and Picasso had inspired young South African 'rebels against the art of earlier times.' The public could see these works 'at our own exhibitions.' Their work was 'so unconvincing that one need not expect a lasting change in art from them.' 'When tradition is broken by degrees, what appears in place of it?' Brander asked. 'Fashion!' was his answer, and 'as long as 'tradition dominates, we copy our predecessors, if fashion dominates then we copy our contemporaries.' According to Brander, Roworth 'never followed the fashions of schools that call themselves modern' and was instead safely conservative.<sup>89</sup>

#### **The absence of institutional control over Roworth**

Questioning the role of the Director and Roworth's impact on the South African National Gallery, Lipshitz wrote:

'Roworth has a comfortable Dean's post in the Michaelis school of art and quarters in the South African National Gallery, where he can hang the Lady Godiva class of picture in the best of light, and remove from the walls any picture ancient or modern which he considers to embody alien and disintegrating influences. We may assume that his opinions are

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<sup>87</sup> Edward Roworth, "Too many long faces in art galleries," *The Argus*, (23 Jun 1947).

<sup>88</sup> Brander. "Successfully following tradition," *Suidersstem*, (18 Apr 1941).

<sup>89</sup> Brander. "Successfully following tradition," *Suidersstem*, (18 Apr 1941).

winked at or considered harmless by the University and the government authorities.’<sup>90</sup>

Was it possible for Roworth to have had the kind of influence on the museum that Lipshitz suggested? The only body which could have had any control over the Director was the Board of Trustees. According to official documentation,<sup>91</sup> the duties of the Board of Trustees centered on accumulating funds for the purchase of art works. Since no special grant had been received from either the Union government or the City Council since 1936, the real function of the Board of Trustees in the 1940s was an ambiguous one. It was suggested by Rayner that not many individuals on the Board of Trustees were authoritative in art matters and they were therefore allowing the museum to ‘suffer a long and insidious period of ossification’.<sup>92</sup> Rayner questioned the function of the Director in the museum, and asked

‘who decides what shall be purchased or accepted on loan? Who decides what shall be relegated to the basement storeroom while the work of the Michaelis School is prominently exhibited? If the decision rests solely with the Director what is the function of the Board of Trustees?’<sup>93</sup>

Rayner, like Lipshitz, felt that Roworth’s overwhelming influence on the South African National Gallery was indisputable. His personal tastes were imposed on the museum. Not only did his opponents accuse him of emphasizing work by the Michaelis art school at the museum, of employing friends to make purchases on behalf of the Board in the

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<sup>90</sup> Lippy Lipshitz, “A considered reply to Prof. Roworth,” *Trek*, (7 Nov 1940): 24.

<sup>91</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): Annexure C.

<sup>92</sup> Prebble Rayner, “Our irrational Gallery,” *Trek*, (27 Jul 1945): 12.

<sup>92</sup> Prebble Rayner, “Our irrational Gallery,” *Trek*, (27 Jul 1945): 12.

<sup>93</sup> Prebble Rayner, “Our irrational Gallery,” *Trek*, (27 Jul 1945): 12.

<sup>93</sup> Prebble Rayner, “Our irrational Gallery,” *Trek*, (27 Jul 1945): 12.

United Kingdom, but also of hanging work in the museum which he alone favoured. It is also clear that acquisitions which were his choice alone were made for the museum.<sup>94</sup>

In many ways Roworth was following an established tradition. As early as 1871, the South African National Gallery made use of British expertise in collection and exhibition practises. In that year the Royal Academician, Mr Lee, 'arrived in Table Bay as the exhibition of 1871 was to open' which 'enabled the (South African Fine Arts Association) to exhibit a valuable collection of works. Mr Lee himself took a kindly interest in its success and gave many valuable hints and suggestions.'<sup>95</sup> According to a report in a magazine at the time, the presence of Mr Lee at the exhibition 'attracted so much attention and admiration that the cause of the Association was most materially advanced.'<sup>96</sup>

In 1910, the Trustees of the South African National Gallery entrusted the task of purchasing artwork to George Clausen, who was a British painter and also a member of the Royal Academy. Roworth had supported Clausen and wrote that 'it has been proved by dearly-bought experience that a better result is achieved in the collection of pictures for a gallery when it is left to the trained intelligence of one man rather than the dismal or disastrous compromises of a committee.'<sup>97</sup> He stated that George Clausen was the ablest and 'most scholarly member of the Royal Academy, whose ripe and unerring taste are a guarantee that the future purchases for the gallery will be entirely representative of what is most vital, beautiful and permanent in Modern Art.'<sup>98</sup> During the 1940s, Maxwell Reekie, vice president of the Manchester Academy of Arts, a friend of Roworth's and a 'lover of good painting throughout his life', became the honorary representative of the

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<sup>94</sup> UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1942/1943. and UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1944/1945.

<sup>95</sup> Author unknown, "The new art gallery," *Cape Monthly Magazine*, Vol X (1900): 366.

<sup>96</sup> Author unknown, "The new art gallery," *Cape Monthly Magazine*, Vol X (1900): 366.

<sup>97</sup> Edward Roworth, "The South African Art Gallery," *Cape Times Annual*, (1910): 10.

<sup>98</sup> Edward Roworth, "The South African Art Gallery," *Cape Times Annual*, (1910): 10.

South African National Gallery in Great Britain.<sup>99</sup> This entitled him to make acquisitions on behalf of the museum in the United Kingdom, which he did in 1944 and 1945.<sup>100</sup>

The Johannesburg Art Gallery used similar methods to build up their acquisitions. Hugh Lane, the founder of Dublin Municipal Art Gallery (1908) and later the Director of the National Gallery of Ireland (1914) was requested by Florence Phillips, the wife of Lord Lionel Phillips, to assemble a collection for the museum.<sup>101</sup> It was Florence Phillip's idea to found an art museum for Johannesburg.<sup>102</sup> The British school predominated in the work acquired by Lane and there was no representation of South African artists with the exception of a few sculptures by Anton Van Wouw, an artist who was extensively patronized by the Afrikaner establishment. His inclusion in the collection could be because he was also patronized by the Phillips family. At the time it was believed that 'South Africa had not yet given birth to a great painter.'<sup>103</sup> Although I agree with Carman that Van Wouw's inclusion in the collection was an exception in the early years of Union, it is interesting to note that he had strong Afrikaner Nationalist sympathies.

In contrast to the South African National Gallery in Cape Town in the 1940s, the Johannesburg Art Gallery had to accommodate the interests of both English-speaking and Afrikaner audiences early in its history. Carman notes that the Afrikaners perceived the Johannesburg Art Gallery in a negative light. An article published in 1910 in the *Civil and Military Gazette*, advocated the establishment of institutions such as the Johannesburg Art Gallery to 'extend the same ideals of enlightenment and the same

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<sup>99</sup> Edward Roworth, "Student Days in England," *The Monitor*, (8 Nov 1946): 12

<sup>100</sup> UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1944/1945.

<sup>101</sup> Jillian Carman, "Acquisition policy of the Johannesburg Art Gallery with regard to the South African collection, 1909-1987," *South African Journal of Cultural History*, 2,3 (1988): 209.

<sup>102</sup> Jillian Carman, "Acquisition policy of the Johannesburg Art Gallery with regard to the South African collection, 1909-1987," *South African Journal of Cultural History*, 2,3 (1988): 205.

<sup>103</sup> Jillian Carman, "Acquisition policy of the Johannesburg Art Gallery with regard to the South African collection, 1909-1987," *South African Journal of Cultural History*, 2,3 (1988): 204.

standards of taste as the imperial originators.<sup>104</sup> This was 'anathema' to Afrikaner artists.<sup>105</sup> Quite soon after its foundation in 1910 the controlling body of the museum realized that in order to obtain much needed funds from the City Council the museum needed to be made relevant to Afrikaners. They adjusted their policy to make themselves 'relevant to the disadvantaged community of the time- the Afrikaans speaking community of Dutch heritage.'<sup>106</sup> The museum Board attempted to enhance its relevance to Afrikaners by incorporating portraits of Boer leaders into the collection. When the museum opened in 1910 the collection contained no Boer leaders, but in that same year it acquired portraits of von Brandis, Louis Botha and Jan Smuts, while sculptures of Van Riebeeck and busts of Jan Smuts, Louis Botha, J.H. De la Rey and C.R. De Wet also entered the collection.

In the 1940s, under the Directorship of P. Anton Henriks, the number of works by Afrikaner artists grew steadily until the South African collection of paintings, sculpture, water colours and drawings became the 'most representative collection in the Johannesburg Art Gallery.'<sup>107</sup> By the 1940s, however, the expansion of this portion of the collection was still not seen as adequate by Afrikaner Nationalists. In 1946, a number of articles were published in *Die Transvaler*, by artists and the Afrikaans public alleging that the Johannesburg Art Gallery was still 'not interested in South African and

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<sup>104</sup> Jillian Carman, "Acquisition policy of the Johannesburg Art Gallery with regard to the South African collection, 1909-1987," *South African Journal of Cultural History*, 2,3 (1988): 205.

<sup>105</sup> Jillian Carman, "Acquisition policy of the Johannesburg Art Gallery with regard to the South African collection, 1909-1987," *South African Journal of Cultural History*, 2,3 (1988): 209.

<sup>106</sup> Jillian Carman, "Acquisition policy of the Johannesburg Art Gallery with regard to the South African collection, 1909-1987," *South African Journal of Cultural History*, 2,3 (1988): 206.

<sup>107</sup> Jillian Carman, "Acquisition policy of the Johannesburg Art Gallery with regard to the South African collection, 1909-1987," *South African Journal of Cultural History*, 2,3 (1988): 206.

Although the Afrikaner public seemed dissatisfied, the museum continued to engage with that sector of the population. In contrast and perhaps due to its geographic isolation from the Transvaal as well as its British historical roots, the South African National Gallery firmly positioned itself as a British Imperialist institution. The difference between the Johannesburg Art Gallery and the South African National Gallery highlights the limitations of Roworth's influence. Roworth's ideas about art and the newly established national school were entirely a Cape Town phenomenon. Despite the heated debate his views generated, his influence was local and limited.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the ideas of Edward Roworth, who had a critical impact on the running of the South African National Gallery during the 1940s. His ideas on art centred on three main issues. Art had to have clearly definable formal qualities, it had to be beautiful and it had to be socially useful. By the mid 1940s his ideology drew more strongly on the context of the Second World War. He drew on the rhetoric of the Nazis in advocating that Modern art was 'degenerate.' He also emphasized the preeminence of British Royal Academy style art and claimed to have started a National school of art at Michaelis along these lines.

This chapter has also examined public responses to Roworth's ideas, investigating the ideas of his detractors and supporters. The artist Lippy Lipshitz, his main opponent, believed that Roworth's tastes in art were outdated and that he implemented his ideas dangerously by removing art work from the walls of the museum. Rayner, like Lipshitz, criticized the lack of institutional opposition to Roworth's ideas at the South African National Gallery and complained that as Director he controlled the institution. While the South African National Gallery and the Johannesburg Art Gallery had strong British roots, the Johannesburg Art Gallery had to represent both portions of the settler population in the Transvaal in order to receive funding from the City Council. Consequently, the Johannesburg Art Gallery steadily incorporated works by Afrikaner artists into the collections.

In the following chapter, I will investigate the sale of art of the South African National Gallery under Roworth's Directorship,<sup>110</sup> the parliamentary debate this generated<sup>111</sup> and the support it received from Cecil Sibbett, Head of the Board of Trustees of the South African National Gallery.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 1-12.

<sup>111</sup> Parliament of South Africa, Hansard, 29 April 1947, cols. 5303-3511 (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1947).

<sup>112</sup> Cecil. J. Sibbett, "The Modern art controversy: Against the cult of the ugly," *Cape Times*, (27 Sep 1947).

## Chapter Three

### Debate and Debacle at the South African National Gallery (1947)

#### Introduction

The year 1947 marked a turning point in the history of the South African National Gallery. On 29 April a debate ensued in Parliament that revolved around the practices at the museum.<sup>1</sup> The recent sale of art from the museum and the general running of the museum were hotly debated. It was agreed that the sale of 140 paintings from the permanent collection was a 'great scandal' especially since the works were sold at a 'ridiculous price.'<sup>2</sup> The method of sale through private dealers and public auctions was questioned. The debate raised the broader question of the function of the museum and its British Imperial bias. A commission of enquiry was appointed under the chairmanship of auditor John Stratford. The commission would investigate the sales and the running of the museum. On 21 August, the Stratford Report was handed to Parliament.<sup>3</sup>

Hot on the heels of the Stratford Report, on 27 September, an article appeared in the *Cape Times* that again set the Cape Town art world ablaze. 'Against the cult of the ugly', written by Cecil Sibbett, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, set in motion a vociferous debate on Modern Art. As if echoing ideas from 1930s Nazi Germany, much like Roworth had done in his lecture of 1940, Sibbett wrote that all Modern art was 'degenerate' produced by mad men incited by lunacy.<sup>4</sup>

This chapter examines the year 1947 at the museum: the Parliamentary debate, the art sales and the subsequent commission of enquiry and the Modern art debate. The end of the Second World War was a low period for British Imperialism, marked by a sense of Imperial decline and an upsurge of Afrikaner Nationalism in South Africa. This

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<sup>1</sup> Parliament of South Africa, Hansard, 29 April 1947, cols. 5303-5311 (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1947).

<sup>2</sup> Parliament of South Africa, Hansard, 29 April 1947, col. 5303 (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1947).

<sup>3</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 1-40.

<sup>4</sup> Cecil. J. Sibbett, "Against the cult of the ugly," *Cape Times*, (27 Sep 1947).

political context and the crisis at the museum precipitated the physical and ideological restructuring of the museum and of South African art.

### **Purging the South African National Gallery's collections**

Following sales of artwork from the South African National Gallery between 1944 and 1947, a commission of inquiry was appointed to investigate the affairs of the museum. James Stratford, an auditor from London, was appointed to investigate the South African National Gallery. His was the first 'internal audit' undertaken by a private party unaffiliated to the museum.<sup>5</sup> The audit took the form of public inquiries. Stratford stated that since the museum was 'a national institution' he 'deemed it advisable to advertise as widely as possible on the forthcoming sittings of the commission.'<sup>6</sup> He arranged notices to be published in the leading English and Afrikaans daily newspapers. But these gatherings were not open to all and only if a witness desired it were the public and the press admitted.

The Stratford report looked at the details of the sales, the works sold, as well as the circumstances under which they were sold. It also looked at the future disposal of art works and made recommendations. Furthermore, it considered the role of the Director and the Trustees, the administration, management and contents of the museum, and the presentation of works. It ended off with financial statements of the South African National Gallery and an annexure containing the new government regulations. Importantly though, it illuminated the inner dynamics operating at the museum at the time and the role of the Trustees in relation to Roworth.

The government appointed Stratford in an attempt to bring an independent unbiased voice into the museum, but as Stratford had no training in art, was foreign to the South African context and had to rely greatly on the infrastructure of the museum he was at an obvious

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<sup>5</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 1.

<sup>6</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 1.

disadvantage. He noted in the report that he relied on Roworth's knowledge of art, and that he trusted him implicitly.<sup>7</sup> While investigating the matter of important works being sold, Stratford noted that although mistakes could be made on occasion, 'the possibility of the present Director having mistaken a Rubens for "rubbish", though impossible to dismiss categorically, appears to me to be a somewhat remote one.'<sup>8</sup> By the end of the report Stratford acknowledged his own incompetence by stating that he did 'not feel competent to express any definite opinion as to whether or not any of these works were worthy of retention in the gallery.'<sup>9</sup>

The principal reason for selling the art works, in Roworth's opinion, was that they were 'not of sufficient merit ever to be hung in the gallery.'<sup>10</sup> While writing about the early collection, in 1910, Roworth expressed the opinion that the collection contained 'many canvases bequeathed in the years gone by to the unfortunate trustees, which could with advantage be removed from the walls and be consigned to oblivion.'<sup>11</sup> It was Roworth's aim to build up a collection of 'beautiful', awe inspiring works similar to those he had seen in his youth, paintings which would move viewers.<sup>12</sup> While reiterating these views he stated that the visitor to the museum only noticed among the 'mass of inferior paintings a vision of one or two overpoweringly beautiful works' and left thinking that the museum was 'the happy possessor of only a couple of good pictures.'<sup>13</sup>

Starting in 1944, Roworth drew the attention of the Trustees to a number of artworks 'that were stored in the basement which were not, in his opinion, of sufficient merit ever

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<sup>7</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 2.

<sup>8</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 2.

<sup>9</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 4.

<sup>10</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 2.

<sup>11</sup> Edward Roworth, "The South African Art Gallery," *Cape Times Annual*, (1910).

<sup>12</sup> Edward Roworth, "The South African Art Gallery," *Cape Times Annual*, (1910).

<sup>13</sup> Edward Roworth, "The South African Art Gallery," *Cape Times Annual*, (1910).

to be hung in the gallery.’<sup>14</sup> He also pointed out that the Trustees were empowered by the Act (the State-Aided Institutions Act, No.23 of 1932) to sell any work of art provided that it had not been bequeathed to the museum subject to a prohibition against alienation.<sup>15</sup> Roworth suggested that these works be sold, with the agreement of the Trustees, and in 1945 negotiated the sale of 47 paintings to Mr. Monnickendam for £150.<sup>16</sup> According to C.J. Sibbett, then Chairman of the Board of Trustees, the Trustees had asked the Director to ‘make a careful selection of pictures which he considered quite unsuitable for exhibition and to arrange for their sale to a Johannesburg dealer.’<sup>17</sup>

In 1945, Roworth sold another 16 paintings from the collection to a Mr. Ter Beek for £80, but this time did not consult the Trustees because he apparently ‘considered that the resolution taken by the Board in the previous year gave him the necessary authority.’<sup>18</sup> This sale was not recorded in the Annual Reports (1944/1945) or (1945/1946), and the Trustees claimed to have been oblivious of its occurrence. Besides recording this transaction, no criticism was made in the Stratford Report of the blatant unscrupulousness of Roworth’s activities. Stratford acknowledged however, that there were paintings of considerable value included in the sale. For example one of the paintings bore the name ‘Reynolds’, while another was rumored to have been attributed to Rubens.<sup>19</sup> After the

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<sup>14</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 2.

<sup>15</sup> Many works subsequently sold were from collections like the Lady Michaelis collection as well as works from the South African Fine Arts Foundation. Roworth claimed that these facts could not be ascertained from the Gallery’s records at the time of the sale. Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 2.

<sup>16</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 5.

<sup>17</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 3.

<sup>18</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 2.

<sup>19</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 4.

sale it was difficult to trace the paintings as they were sold to auctioneers, so it was impossible to dispel the rumours or to prove that they were the 'rubbish' Roworth professed them to be.

Seven of the paintings sold to Monnickendam, in 1944, and two of those sold to Ter Beek, in 1945, had come from the Michaelis collection.<sup>20</sup> Also included in these sales were two works from the 1871 Bayley bequest and one work from the South African Fine Arts Association.<sup>21</sup> These sales were illegal under the Act and resulted in the break-up of the Michaelis and Bayley collections. In 1946, Roworth himself bought a painting which he had originally sold to the museum and this transaction was simply noted in the Annual report as 'Sale of work of art £100.'<sup>22</sup> The Trustees were not informed of this transaction either, and according to Stratford no mention of it was made in the minutes of meetings.<sup>23</sup>

The largest sale took place in 1947 when a collection of 86 oil paintings and 55 pastels and water colours were sold.<sup>24</sup> This sale had its genesis on September the 27<sup>th</sup> 1946, at a meeting of the Board of Trustees. Sibbett, the chairman of the Board, had stated that at various times the Trustees were obliged to 'accept works which they did not consider suitable for hanging in the gallery.' There were consequently always 'some pictures in the basement.'<sup>25</sup> C.J. Te Water, the vice chairman of the Board of Trustees, had

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<sup>20</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 3.

<sup>21</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 3.

<sup>22</sup> UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1946/1947, 4.

<sup>23</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 4.

<sup>24</sup> According to the report a subcommittee consisting of Roworth, Lewis and Boonzaier, looked through the pictures in the basement and unanimously agreed that they should be sold to the South African Library. Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 3.

See the listing of the works as an Appendix B.

<sup>25</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 3.

suggested that the Board might consider lending '(or) presenting some of the works to country municipalities who were trying to build up their (own) collections.'<sup>26</sup> Gregoire Boonzaier and Sibbett proposed that some works should be sold. As Roworth had previously conducted a sale, it was agreed that he and a committee consisting of Bernard Lewis and Boonzaier would look through the works and decide which should be sold and which donated to other institutions.<sup>27</sup>

On January 31<sup>st</sup> 1947, a report was made by Roworth to the Trustees stating that 86 oil paintings and 55 pastels and watercolours were to be sold.<sup>28</sup> Roworth invited dealers to inspect the works. Conditions of the sale were cash on delivery, and the requirement that 'the purchaser should not advertise pictures as emanating from the National Gallery.'<sup>29</sup> Roworth was aware that this sale might result in a public outcry. During negotiations, the art works' provenance from the South African National Gallery was used as a bargaining chip to prove authenticity and value. The 'authority' of the institution was therefore commodified.

Four Cape Town dealers originally inspected the collection but only one, Krook, made an offer of first £1000 and then £1050. These offers were rejected and an auctioneer (from Johannesburg), Lezard was contacted to value the works. After inspecting the works, Lezard valued the collection at £1400. Anticipating a public outcry at the sale, he advised sale by auction on condition that the works were advertised as 'being reluctantly disposed of under direct instructions from the Trustees of the National Gallery in order to

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<sup>26</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 3.

<sup>27</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 3.

<sup>28</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 4.

<sup>29</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 4.

make room for the huge collection of pictures bequeathed by the late Sir Abe Bailey.<sup>30</sup> He also requested that the Director sign slips and attach them to the back of unsigned works, to guarantee the works as originals. Alternatively, Lezard was prepared to buy the collection for £1100, provided that he could advertise that the collection emanated from the museum. The Trustees agreed that 'no useful purpose would be served in refusing to allow the purchaser to disclose that the pictures came from the National Gallery.'<sup>31</sup> On February 11<sup>th</sup> 1947 Krook placed an offer of £1 200 for the collection, which was accepted.

By the time Krook's sale took place, a public outcry had been raised. Members of the public feared that the pictures were 'being carelessly thrown upon the market and that many of them might be of far greater value than they imagined.'<sup>32</sup> The collection auctioned by Krook eventually fetched a sum of £5227, giving the dealer a handsome profit (see Fig. 9). The South African Fine Arts Association and the Cape Town City Council were outraged, since paintings which had been bequeathed by the South African Fine Arts Association had been amongst those sold. The Cape Town City Council suspended its annual grant due to the controversy.

Stratford also received evidence that a number of well-known South African painters were represented in the sale. These included Gwelo Goodman, Ronaldo, Frans Oerder and other works of a similar character to which Stratford refers as 'Africana.' When the Board was approached with this matter, they stated that the primary motivation for the sale was a lack of funds. The Selection Committee justified their action by arguing that

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<sup>30</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 5.

<sup>31</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 5.

<sup>32</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 6.

the works that they selected were from early periods in the artistic development of the artists, and, though they had historic value, they lacked 'artistic merit.'<sup>33</sup>

When the Trustees discovered that eight paintings from the Lady Michaelis gift were included in the sale,<sup>34</sup> they arranged to buy back the works from Krook, who agreed on the resale provided they paid him enough to cover his costs. The Trustees then decided that the museum should retrieve as many of the works as was possible. Only 25 works were recovered at a cost of £5681, which included lawyer's fees of £473.<sup>35</sup> This resulted in a net loss of £4481 and 116 works. Since the museum's total funding for 1947 was £4700 the institution was plunged into a financial crisis.<sup>36</sup>

It is unclear from the available documentation how many paintings from the Michaelis collection were eventually sold. According to the Stratford Report, a total of seventeen works from the Michaelis collection were sold by Roworth over the period 1944-1947, while the museum's Annual Report places this number at nineteen.<sup>37</sup> Another disparity between the two reports is that the Annual report states that 136 works were sold in 1947, while Stratford places this figure at 141.<sup>38</sup> These minor details do not detract from the fact that both legally and financially the sales had major ramifications for the museum. Not only did the museum now have to spend large sums of money attempting to retrieve sold works, but the City Council of Cape Town suspended their grant to the museum for the year 1947/1948.<sup>39</sup> While the government was its major source of funding, the South African National Gallery received roughly a quarter of its total funding from the City

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<sup>33</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 1-40.

<sup>34</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 6.

<sup>35</sup> UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1947/1948, 4.

<sup>36</sup> UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1946/1947, 3.

<sup>37</sup> UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1947/1948, 4.

<sup>38</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 6.

<sup>39</sup> UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1947/1948, 3.

Council, which was £1 000 in 1947/1948.<sup>40</sup> The Council stated that its financial support would only be reinstated after the successful completion of the commission of enquiry.<sup>41</sup>

### **The Parliamentary Debate (29 April 1947)**

The debate in Parliament concerning the South African National Gallery covered various issues. Of central importance was the art sale which the 'country as a whole' and 'especially the people in the Peninsula' were looking forward to seeing resolved.<sup>42</sup> Although members of Parliament clashed on minor issues, they were unanimous that the sale had been calamitous. Nationalist MP Naude<sup>43</sup> claimed that the sale was shrouded in secrecy. It could not be publicly interrogated because the press was not able to attend meetings at the museum.<sup>44</sup> Naude stated that the museum should have 'nothing to hide' and could not see why members of the public could not get the information they sought via the press.

According to Naude, public consternation was due to the rumor that works were sold for £8 each on average and that some had been sold privately.<sup>45</sup> According to Nationalist MP Solomons,<sup>46</sup> another matter causing public scandal was the sale of a 136 paintings to Rand art dealer by 'private treaty, without public notification or a public call for tenders.'<sup>47</sup> This, said Solomons, was a serious indictment as the collection was 'either donated to the South African National Gallery by members of the public or had been bought with public money.' The museum was therefore invoking the 'gravest public

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<sup>40</sup> UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1946/1947, 3.

<sup>41</sup> UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1946/1947, 3.

<sup>42</sup> Parliament of South Africa, Hansard 29 April 1947: col 3503 (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1947).

<sup>43</sup> Mr Naude was a MP from Pietersburg. Parliament of South Africa, Hansard 29 April 1947: col 3507 (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1947).

<sup>44</sup> Parliament of South Africa, Hansard 29 April 1947: col 3504 (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1947).

<sup>45</sup> Parliament of South Africa, Hansard 29 April 1947: col 3504 (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1947).

<sup>46</sup> Mrs Solomons was an MP from Jeppes. Parliament of South Africa, Hansard 29 April 1947: col 3507 (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1947).

<sup>47</sup> Parliament of South Africa, Hansard 29 April 1947: col 3506 (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1947).

criticism.<sup>48</sup> Solomons noted that the actions of the Board of Trustees were illegal since 'seven pictures from the Lady Michaelis Bequest were not supposed to be sold at all.'<sup>49</sup> It seemed that the museum could not handle the 'valuable material handed to it' and 'apparently did not know the true value of a good many of the pictures' in its care.<sup>50</sup> United Party MP Humphreys argued that attention should be on the *way* they were sold. He condoned the sales since 'the time comes when pictures fade, they crack and rejects are inevitable.'<sup>51</sup> But Humphreys conceded that it was 'very bad practice' to sell works by South African artists which now caused a 'gap in the collections.'<sup>52</sup> This was 'a bad policy and a great pity.'<sup>53</sup> The low prices put 'every private collector under a cloud' since the works 'were sold for under £10 a piece, not even the price of the frames.'<sup>54</sup>

MP Solomons questioned the purpose of the South African National Gallery. Since it did not propagate knowledge of art to the rest of the country and did not have traveling exhibitions to country towns, 'not fortunate to have galleries of their own,' the museum did 'not adequately fulfill the function of a national gallery.'<sup>55</sup> Added to this complaint was the 'Director's very strong opposition to Modern art' leading the museum to decline the Cassierer Loan Collection of French paintings.<sup>56</sup> This collection contained works by 'Daumier, Cézanne, Pissarro and Van Gogh' and was accepted instead by the Johannesburg Art Gallery. Solomons stated that whatever Roworth's 'views on art there was no reason for not accepting such an excellent collection of art' to put on view in the country. In Solomons' view, 'the National Gallery should serve all schools of painting and all schools of thought.' Roworth imposed his own ideas on the institution and the

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<sup>48</sup> Parliament of South Africa, Hansard 29 April 1947: col 3504 (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1947).

<sup>49</sup> Parliament of South Africa, Hansard 29 April 1947: col 3506 (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1947).

<sup>50</sup> Parliament of South Africa, Hansard 29 April 1947: col 3507 (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1947).

<sup>51</sup> Parliament of South Africa, Hansard 29 April 1947: col 3509 (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1947).

<sup>52</sup> Parliament of South Africa, Hansard 29 April 1947: col 3510 (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1947).

<sup>53</sup> Parliament of South Africa, Hansard 29 April 1947: col 3510 (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1947).

<sup>54</sup> Parliament of South Africa, Hansard 29 April 1947: col 3510 (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1947).

<sup>55</sup> Parliament of South Africa, Hansard 29 April 1947: cols 3504-3505 (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1947).

<sup>56</sup> Parliament of South Africa, Hansard 29 April 1947: col 3505 (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1947).

museum therefore catered for 'only one school' and denied the 'functions for which the National Gallery should exist.'<sup>57</sup> The main function of the museum was to 'actively propagate all art knowledge amongst the public and not of one school only.'<sup>58</sup>

Nationalist MP Brink levelled another criticism against the museum.<sup>59</sup> He claimed that the museum was not a 'National Gallery' but 'an Imperial gallery.'<sup>60</sup> There were few South African works and the bias was 'very strongly British.' Brink declared that the greatest scandal was that the purpose of the sale was to make room for the Bailey bequest, which was 'imported from abroad and which does not have any appeal at all to South Africans.' What was even more deplorable was that 'three rooms were being set aside for the bequest and South African works were being taken down' or sold. The museum's strategy was a 'studious de-nationalisation' with the 'object of promoting Anglicization.' As an Afrikaner, the museum offered 'very little attraction' for him and he did 'not feel at home there.' With the inclusion of the 300 paintings of the Bailey bequest the museum would be made 'even more foreign in character.'<sup>61</sup> It was unanimously tabled that a 'very urgent and very intensive government enquiry' be undertaken to investigate the sale and the running of the museum.<sup>62</sup>

#### **Stratford's findings and recommendations**

The recommendations of the Stratford report take into account the sentiments of Parliament. The report recommends that the museum adopt specific aims, different for example, from the 'National Gallery London and the Tate.' The South African

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<sup>57</sup> Parliament of South Africa, Hansard 29 April 1947: col 3505 (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1947).

<sup>58</sup> Parliament of South Africa, Hansard 29 April 1947: col 3505 (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1947).

<sup>59</sup> Mr Brink was MP for Christiana. Parliament of South Africa, Hansard 29 April 1947: col 3508 (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1947).

<sup>60</sup> Parliament of South Africa, Hansard 29 April 1947: col 3507 (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1947).

<sup>61</sup> Parliament of South Africa, Hansard 29 April 1947: col 3507 (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1947).

<sup>62</sup> Parliament of South Africa, Hansard 29 April 1947: col 3504 (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1947).

National Gallery 'must combine under one roof the functions of more than one gallery on the European model.'<sup>63</sup>

The museum's collections should encompass the old and the new, the local and the international. Stratford recommended that the South African collection needed to grow so that visitors could 'study the growth and development of artistic talent and expression in this country.'<sup>64</sup> Works by Old Masters, which were 'immune to periodic changes in taste' should be obtained on loan. The museum should also, however 'aim at displaying the works of contemporary overseas artists.'<sup>65</sup> He suggested the establishment of two funds, whose structure would be based on similar organizations in Britain. The first would be similar to the National Art Collection Fund in Britain (NACF), whose main function was purchasing 'antiques and works by old Masters.'<sup>66</sup> The other would be modeled after the Contemporary Art Society, whose funds were entirely devoted to the purchase of work by living artists. Stratford noted that the South African Association of Art had suggested that the two proposed organizations be combined into a single fund, and that the money it collected could be used to purchase works by both dead and living artists. The South African Association of Art would take a leading role in establishing a fund of this kind and it would then make donations to galleries throughout the Union. This fund would be independent of the museum but it would make regular donations, with their aim being to supplement the resources of the museum.<sup>67</sup> There was no evidence that such a fund was

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<sup>63</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 6.

<sup>64</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 6.

<sup>65</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 6.

<sup>66</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 6.

<sup>67</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 6.

indeed established and it may be that the Friends of the South African National Gallery established in 1953, was intended to fulfill a similar function.<sup>68</sup>

The primary reason for the sale was a lack of funds, in Stratford's view. The report proposed that the State increase the museum's annual allowance (by £1 000) as well as making provision for both a full-time paid Director (Roworth had not been employed as a full-time Director) and an Assistant Director.<sup>69</sup> Stratford recommended that the sale of art works should only take place under exceptional circumstances and that the selection of works should not be left entirely to the Director. Drawing attention to the haphazard cataloguing process at the museum he noted that 'in many cases it appears that neither the names of the artists nor the manner in which the various works have become State property are known.' Stratford suggested that a new cataloguing system be put in place.<sup>70</sup>

The greatest weakness of the museum's administration was 'the lack of a clearly defined policy with respect to the functions and aims of the Gallery and the best manner in which they can be promoted.'<sup>71</sup> Stratford proposed that the Trustees in conjunction with the State and other bodies formulate the future policy. The functions of the museum, once clarified and defined, should be as widely publicized as possible as 'public uncertainty in this regard has been a source of weakness in the past.'<sup>72</sup> This would help the Trustees to

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<sup>68</sup> UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1952/1953.

<sup>69</sup> UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1947/1948, 1.

<sup>70</sup> A revision of the catalogue cards was undertaken and a new stock book and loan register were bought and used. UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1948/1949, 1.

Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 10.

<sup>71</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 5.

<sup>72</sup> This led to the gallery publishing the 'Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings' in 1959, where its new practices and policies were published. Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 5.

refuse gifts which were unsuitable and which failed to promote the objectives of the museum.<sup>73</sup>

The full impact of the Stratford report on the South African National Gallery can only be fully understood in light of subsequent changes brought about at the museum. Some of the recommendations were carried out while others were not. It is important to note that, as Stratford used European art museums as a comparison to the South African National Gallery,<sup>74</sup> many of the recommendations he made were idealistic and ill suited to a South African context where funding had always been problematic. The establishment of two separate funds to be used exclusively for the purchasing of art works was never realized. His suggestion that South African art become the focus of the South African National Gallery was vigorously taken up by the new administration. Following Roworth's resignation, the museum decided that works were not to be sold from the collection under any circumstances. By the mid 1950s, this policy was refined to give the Trustees the right to refuse works not 'worthy' of having a place in the national collection.

As a result of the controversy and enquiry it was decided that a full time museum professional should take up the position of Director, rather than an artist and academic. The Director was brought under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and had to abide by new government legislation.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> These recommendations were undertaken by John Paris and the Board of Trustees during the early fifties. UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1949/1950, 1. UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1950/1951, 4. UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1951/1952, 4.

<sup>74</sup> 'I sought information and suggestions from the National gallery London, the Frans Hals Museum in Harlem and the Rijks Museum in Amsterdam' Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 1.

<sup>75</sup> The museum was brought under the control of the Union Department of Education whereas previously it fell under the Department of Interior. UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1959/1960, 1.

### **The Modern art debate revisited: Sibbett's 'Against the cult of the ugly' (27 September 1947- 6 October 1947)**

Soon after Parliament received the Stratford Report, an extraordinary debate erupted in the Cape Town press. Possibly started to deflect attention away from the museum, the debate was sparked by C.J. Sibbett, chairman of the Board of Trustees who published an article in the press. 'Modern art as I see it' or 'Against the cult of the ugly' was published in the *Cape Times* on 27 September 1947.<sup>76</sup> The article criticized Modern art as 'debased', 'degenerate' and 'debauched.' Sibbett supported Roworth's views, especially regarding the kind of art 'deserving' to be in the museum. The high handed style of the pair angered the art community, provoked criticism and often evoked highly emotive responses in the Cape Town press. Sibbett's article sought to express the South African National Gallery's view of Modern art and made public the reason for the lack of works by Modern artists in the museum. An art critic had noted that 'at the National Gallery one finds hardly anything representative of the best of our Modern artists.'<sup>77</sup> Sibbett's article echoed many of the sentiments of Roworth's controversial public lecture on Modern art of 1940 (see Chapter Two).<sup>78</sup>

Sibbett was part of Cape Town's elite, a successful businessman and actively involved in Cape Town civic life. He had strong British political affiliations having served under Rhodes after the First World War. Born in Belfast, he described himself as an 'Ulster Scot rather than an Irishman.'<sup>79</sup> He came to South Africa in 1897 and 'threw himself into the corporate life of his adopted country.'<sup>80</sup> During the First World War he was appointed war correspondent for five South African newspapers. After the war he was appointed assistant political secretary under Rhodes. Following Rhodes' death he became special correspondent for the London *Daily Express*. He started the South African Advertising Agency, which was the forerunner of 'the big chain of advertising contractor companies'

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<sup>76</sup> Cecil. J. Sibbett, "Against the cult of the ugly," *Cape Times*, (27 Sep 1947).

<sup>77</sup> Prebble Rayner, "Our irrational Gallery," *Trek*, (27 Jul 1945): 12.

<sup>78</sup> Author unknown, "Prof. Roworth attacks Modern art: work of Michaelis school praised," *Cape Times*, (25 Sep 1940).

<sup>79</sup> Author unknown, "Cecil James Sibbett," *The Monitor*, (17 Jan 1947):18.

<sup>80</sup> Author unknown, "Cecil James Sibbett," *The Monitor*, (17 Jan 1947):18.

which he subsequently founded throughout the Union and Rhodesia.<sup>81</sup> He named this conglomerate the 'African Associated Advertising Contractors Ltd.'

In 1927 he retired from this business and took up various positions in civic affairs. He served two periods on the Cape Town City Council as well as two terms on the Cape Provincial Council as Chief Whip. He was the Chairman of the National Thrift Organization, which he founded, Director of the Community Chest and Provincial Grand Master of The Irish Freemasonry. He was also chairman of the 1820s Settlers Association, a Trustee of the South African Museum and a Trustee of the South African Library. Sibbett was on the South African National Gallery's Board of Trustees throughout the 1940s.<sup>82</sup> In 1947 he succeeded Sir Carruthers Beattie and became Chairman.<sup>83</sup>

'Against the cult of the ugly' was first published in *The Outspan* in March 1947, then circulated privately among members of Parliament and artists, and republished in the *Cape Times* on 29 September 1947. Sibbett declared that all cultural forms had been debased by the 'cult of the ugly.' A Modernist ideology was sweeping the 'civilized' world. The basis of this ideology of ugliness was sickness in society. He claimed that 'the debasement and corruption of art, literature and music which we behold all around us today must have a pathological cause.'<sup>84</sup> Sibbett declared that all Modern art forms (not only fine art) are 'debauched' and 'decadent.' He set himself up in opposition to critics who promoted Modern art and offered advice to 'ordinary sane men' who wanted to

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<sup>81</sup> Author unknown, "Cecil James Sibbett," *The Monitor*, (17 Jan 1947):18.

<sup>82</sup> UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1941/1942, 1. UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1942/1943, 1. UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1943/1944, 1. UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1944/1945, 1. UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1945/1946, 1. UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1946/1947, 1.

<sup>83</sup> Author unknown, "Cecil James Sibbett," *The Monitor*, (17 Jan 1947):18.

UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1946/1947, 1.

<sup>84</sup> Cecil. J. Sibbett, "Against the cult of the ugly," *Cape Times*, (27 Sep 1947).

enjoy art and recognize what they see. He equated traditional values in art with the high ideals of religion, while Modern art was akin to 'primeval savagery.'<sup>85</sup> In Modern art, beauty and excellence gave way to base emotion, decadence and atheism. In literature, the language of Shakespeare, Milton and Keats was superseded by the debased and distorted language of James Joyce and Gertrude Stein. Music was also 'debased' by modernism. It had become 'horrible, discordant, ear splitting cacophonations which take us back to primeval savagery.'<sup>86</sup>

Sibbett's main concern was that ideas of Modern art were encouraged by self-appointed critics, a 'self styled intelligentsia.' Modernism embodied a 'morbid and decadent youth' for whom beauty meant 'the obscure, the obscene, the diseased, the decayed and the uncouth.'<sup>87</sup> Accordingly, Modern critics condemned a picture if it depicted a 'scene as God made.' To these critics it was 'a crime to paint anything that the ordinary, sane man' could recognize. 'Everything must be distorted. Prettiness is an unforgivable sin.'<sup>88</sup>

Sibbett declared that the South African National Gallery was an institution that upheld tradition amidst the tidal wave of Modernism. He urged 'sane men' to

'visit art galleries and see what the Great Masters of art have done, and thus cultivate your taste. In the National Gallery in Cape Town, there will soon be the Bailey collection. It contains some of the most beautiful pictures ever painted, as well as a huge collection of delightful sporting prints. This collection will probably make it the finest south of the Equator.'

Although there were no works by 'Great Masters' in the Bailey collection, Sibbett believed that the collection's British origins were enough to bring culture and taste to the

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<sup>85</sup> Cecil. J. Sibbett, "Against the cult of the ugly," *Cape Times*, (27 Sep 1947).

<sup>86</sup> Cecil. J. Sibbett, "Against the cult of the ugly," *Cape Times*, (27 Sep 1947).

<sup>87</sup> Cecil. J. Sibbett, "Against the cult of the ugly," *Cape Times*, (27 Sep 1947).

<sup>88</sup> Cecil. J. Sibbett, "Against the cult of the ugly," *Cape Times*, (27 Sep 1947).

South African public. At the end of his article he reiterates his plea: 'do not listen to the critics, visit art galleries and see what is the best in art through out the ages and thus educate your taste.'<sup>89</sup>

For Sibbett, 'the best in art' was the kind of art prescribed by Roworth. Art should be beautiful and uplifting, socially useful and inspire the viewer to greater humanist aspirations.<sup>90</sup> Like Roworth, Sibbett contrasted this 'sane' art, examples of which could be found in the Bailey collection, with 'socially destructive' Modern art. According to Sibbett, the Fauves were 'wild men from the Latin Quarter' who 'could not draw.'<sup>91</sup> Fauvism was the first of the major avant-garde developments in European art between the turn of the century and the First World War. It was a style of painting based on the use of intensely vivid colour. Although short lived, it was highly influential, particularly on the development of German Expressionism.<sup>92</sup> According to Sibbett, the Fauves had 'no knowledge of anatomy.' Their only aim was to distract from the 'beauty of the human form and of nature.' Due to the Fauves, humanity was 'plagued by all sorts of 'ists' in art.' They were responsible for the growth of movements such as the 'Gagaists, Neo-Depressionists, Neophytes, Sherists, Surrealists, Cubists, Abstractionists, Circumventors and Distractionists.'<sup>93</sup>

Like Roworth, Sibbett was sympathetic to the banning of Modern art in Nazi Germany, some of which he saw on exhibition in London. He confessed to sharing the Nazi antagonism to Modern art.

'I do not think that even my worst enemy would accuse me of being a Hitlerite. Well, I was one for a full hour one morning in London in 1938 at the 'Banned Art from Germany' exhibition. There was not a single picture

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<sup>89</sup> Cecil. J. Sibbett, "Against the cult of the ugly," *Cape Times*, (27 Sep 1947).

<sup>90</sup> Edward Roworth, "The South African Art Gallery," *Cape Times Annual*, (1910): 8-13.

<sup>91</sup> Cecil. J. Sibbett, "Against the cult of the ugly," *Cape Times*, (27 Sep 1947).

<sup>92</sup> Ian Chilvers, Ed. *The concise Oxford dictionary of art and artists*. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990), 157.

<sup>93</sup> Cecil. J. Sibbett, "Against the cult of the ugly," *Cape Times*, (27 Sep 1947).

that one could make head or tail of. It would not have made any difference how they were hung-upside down or sideways.'

Views of this kind led to the purging of nearly 16 000 works from German public collections after 1937. They were either sold to earn foreign currency for the Nazi government or publicly burned.<sup>94</sup> These works included a vast array of Modern artists such as Braque, Van Gogh, Picasso, Kokoschka, Klee and Matisse.<sup>95</sup>

In his article Sibbett was drawing on a long anti- Modern art tradition which found its extreme expression in the Nazi art purges. The term 'degeneracy' was used early on. In 1893, Max Nordau published *Entartung* (Degeneracy) which declared all Modern art to be pathological. New York newspapers picked up the phrase and described art exhibited at the Armory show in 1913 as degenerate. In the same year, art critics described the artist Kandisky as 'insane', someone who could not be held responsible for his actions. In the 1920s, Nordau's theories of degeneracy were built on by a group of German art 'philosophers' who produced the outlines of the future Nazi art creed. Hinz describes their work as confused fulminations about art that were highly radicalized.<sup>96</sup>

Their criticisms were not merely confined to Modern art. They also attacked Rembrandt, who was undeniably Nordic, for painting Jews. These ideas became more extreme as the Nazi movement gained momentum. In 1928, Schultze-Naumberg, a well-known architect published 'Art and race' which compared photographs of diseased and deformed people with examples of Modern paintings and sculpture. In 1930 this school of thought culminated in Alfred Rosenberg's 'Myth of the twentieth century' which characterized German expressionism as 'syphilitic, infantile and mestizo.'<sup>97</sup> Rosenberg claimed that the

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<sup>94</sup> Dawn Ades, Tim Benton, David Elliot, Ian Boyd Whyte, "Selectors introduction," in Dawn Ades Ed., *Art and power: Europe under the Dictators 1930-1945*. (London: SBC Hayward Gallery, 1995), 16.

<sup>95</sup> Ades et al, "Selectors introduction," 16.

<sup>96</sup> Berthold Hinz, "Degenerate and authentic: aspects of art and power in the Third Reich," in Dawn Ades, Ed., *Art and power: Europe under the Dictators 1930-1945*. (London: SBC Hayward Gallery, 1995), 331.

<sup>97</sup> Hinz, "Degenerate and authentic: aspects of art and power in the Third Reich." 331.

Aryan Nordic races had produced both the German cathedrals, Greek sculpture and the master pieces of the Italian Renaissance. Hitler agreed completely with Rosenberg's ideals and appointed him intellectual head of the party in 1933 with the title of 'Custodian of the entire intellectual and spiritual training and education of the party and of all coordinated associations.'<sup>98</sup>

It took four years after Hitler became Chancellor in 1933 to 'refine' the Nazi art criteria. Museum directors who had promoted Modern art were dismissed and artists known for their modernist tendencies were forbidden to sell their work or exhibit it. 'Degenerate' artists were even forbidden to buy art supplies. In 1937 Goebbels further tightened control by forbidding independent art criticism, declaring that 'only those art editors will be allowed to report on art who approach the task with an undefiled heart and National Socialist convictions.'<sup>99</sup> Goebbels ordered that examples of German degenerate art owned by provinces and municipalities be 'secured' for an exhibition. Soon thereafter a confiscation committee collected 68 paintings, 7 sculptures and 33 graphic works in the first purge from the Nationalgalerie. These works were never returned to the museum and were eventually either sold or burnt. Similar purges occurred in art museums all over Germany.<sup>100</sup>

In South Africa, the public was not taken in by Sibbett's views. Deane Anderson was Sibbett's most vocal opponent in the press.<sup>101</sup> He was a member of the Selection Board of Exhibitions at the South African Association of Arts and also wrote as the 'The Art Critic' for *The Argus*. According to Anderson, Sibbett's article was not only the 'expression of personal prejudice' but was 'an ex-cathedra pronouncement of the present official attitude to art in this country.'<sup>102</sup> He wrote that Sibbett's article was 'more

<sup>98</sup> Hinz, "Degenerate and authentic: aspects of art and power in the Third Reich," 332.

<sup>99</sup> Marko Daniel, "Chronology," in Dawn Ades Ed., *Art and power: Europe under the Dictators 1930-1945*. (London: SBC Hayward Gallery, 1995), 18.

<sup>100</sup> Daniel, "Chronology," 25.

<sup>101</sup> Author unknown. *Exhibition of contemporary South African paintings, drawings and sculpture*, Exhibition catalogue (Cape Town, The Cape Times Ltd., 1948), 4.

<sup>102</sup> Dean Anderson, "The dangers of prejudice in art," *The Argus*, (25 Sep 1947).

adapted to an advertising campaign than to art criticism', a caustic reference to Sibbett's previous profession. He noted that Sibbett's views were reductive and naïve and were based on simplistic binary polarities. For Sibbett, good art was entirely good and modern art was entirely bad. Anderson points out that Sibbett implied that the Bailey bequest would make the museum 'the finest south of the Equator.' The National Gallery would soon be in the 'good art' category. Rejecting Sibbett's assumptions, Anderson asserts that 'a true love of art is not expressed by hysterical partisanship of one 'school' or another, but in patient and open minded study of all art, whether old or new.'<sup>103</sup> Sibbett replied rather feebly that 'even Picasso could not distort nature more thoroughly than your art critic has distorted my article.'<sup>104</sup>

Letters published in *The Argus* generally expressed opposition to Sibbett's views.<sup>105</sup> An anonymous contributor wrote that Sibbett 'would never dream of imposing his personal tastes in food on his guests at a lunch party. Why then should we all share his personal tastes in art?'<sup>106</sup> On a more critical note, Maurice van Essche, artist and art teacher, wrote that Sibbett's argument lacked serious insight. He complained that Sibbett divided people into 'the snobs and the philistines', the former praising anything new and extraordinary, without discrimination, and the latter who only accepted a certain period of art history. Van Essche suggested a third camp of neither 'snobs' nor 'philistines' but people who appreciated the Old Masters while simultaneously acknowledging the work of living artists who tried to express their feelings in a unique style. Van Essche pointed to art history to show that 'distortion' was not a contemporary fad. 'The full face eye in an Egyptian profile, the religious distortions of early Christian art, the elongated figures of

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<sup>103</sup> Dean Anderson, "The dangers of prejudice in art," *The Argus*, (25 Sep 1947).

<sup>104</sup> Cecil J. Sibbett, "Against the cult of the ugly," *Cape Times*, (27 Sep 1947).

<sup>105</sup> Dean Anderson, "Modern art," *The Argus*, (4 Oct 1947).

Cecil J. Sibbett, "Modern art," *The Argus*, (5 Oct 1947).

Maurice van Essche, "Modern art," *The Argus*, (6 Oct 1947).

Dean Anderson, "The dangers of prejudice in art," *The Argus*, (25 Sep 1947).

Cecil J. Sibbett, "A reply to the art critic," *The Argus*, (27 Sep 1947).

Old Black Mamba, "Modern art," *The Argus*, (29 Sep 1947).

<sup>106</sup> Anonymous, "Modern art," *The Argus*, (4 Oct 1947).

the Italian Renaissance, the exaggerated muscular forms of the Flemish school' all proved this.<sup>107</sup>

Another writer, using the pseudonym 'Old Black Mamba' wrote that Modern artists, though 'still reeling from the effects' of Sibbett's article, should 'find diversion' in a quote from an 1850 review of a pre-Raphaelite exhibition, in which young artists of the time were said to 'defy the principles of beauty and the recognized axioms of taste.'<sup>108</sup> Clearly tensions between new modes of expression and established artistic genres were understood more clearly by some members of the public than by the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Neither Sibbett nor Roworth were Nazi supporters about to purge Modern art from the South African National Gallery's collections. However, their comments were not simply free floating conservative declarations. These views were expressed by men wielding power in the art community. They controlled the country's National art museum and they were determined to fix the nation's art standards. But they were also troubled men whose power and reputations were threatened by the Stratford Commission of Enquiry. It was highly likely that Sibbett's article was intended to define the purpose of the South African National Gallery in this context, to safeguard its image as a 'serious' institution, even to deflect attention away from the seriousness of the sales. Sibbett also clearly sought the support of friends in high places by handing over his article to members of Parliament.

### **The Bailey collection**

'Against the cult of the ugly' implored the public to 'cultivate' its taste, by going to the South African National Gallery and looking at the 'beautiful' paintings of the Bailey collection soon to be installed there.<sup>109</sup> An examination of the type of collection Sibbett favored will put his aversion to Modern art in context and highlight the type of collections held in high esteem by the museum under his chairmanship.

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<sup>107</sup> Maurice van Essche, "Modern art," *The Argus*, (6 Oct 1947).

<sup>108</sup> Old Black Mamba, "Modern art," *The Argus*, (29 Sep 1947).

<sup>109</sup> Cecil J. Sibbett, "Against the cult of the ugly," *Cape Times*, (27 Sep 1947).

The South African National Gallery's main collections in the 1940s were the Bailey collection, the Davis collection and the De Pass collection. Sir Abe Bailey bequeathed his collection of British sporting paintings and British portraits.<sup>110</sup> Sir Edmund and Lady Davis gave a collection of contemporary British paintings.<sup>111</sup> Mr Alfred de Pass donated a varied collection which contained nineteenth century French and English paintings, drawings, prints and sculptures.<sup>112</sup> Sibbett's eager support of the Bailey collection emphasized that British art was still being privileged at the South African National Gallery in 1947 when Afrikaner Nationalism was a rising political influence elsewhere.<sup>113</sup> Bequeathing a collection of art to the South African National Gallery was a way for civic-minded men of means to show gratitude to the country where they had made their fortunes.

Abe Bailey was one of the chief mining magnates of the Witwatersrand. He was active in politics and, like Sibbett, had sympathy for Rhodes' ideals. He was a Member of Parliament from 1902 to 1908 and represented Krugersdorp in the first elections of the Transvaal Parliament. Bailey held the political view that common ground should be found between British and Afrikaner. To this end, he sponsored the Union Club movement and its journal *The State*.<sup>114</sup> This political ideal did not manifest in his collections. Bailey was unequivocally British in his artistic taste. His collection revolves around subjects he had a particular passion for: horses (he became one of the major horse breeders in South African and was fond of gambling), fox hunting and pheasant shooting. As a collection the works speak to the leisure interests of a self-made mining magnate

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<sup>110</sup> Author unknown. Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958), 4.

<sup>111</sup> Author unknown. Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958), 4.

<sup>112</sup> Author unknown. Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958), 4.

<sup>113</sup> Compare this with the stance of the Johannesburg Art Gallery (see. Chapter Two)

<sup>114</sup> Anna Tietze, *The Sir Abe Bailey Bequest: A reappraisal*, Exhibition catalogue (Cape Town: Iziko Museums of Cape Town, 2001), 2.

with a desire to imitate the British aristocracy and express the social mobility his wealth afforded him.<sup>115</sup>

Art historian Anna Tietze has argued that Bailey thought his collection was suitable for South African audiences because ‘the Cape was still orientated culturally towards the “mother country” and was struggling to conceive of itself as part of a larger South Africa.’<sup>116</sup> This view was not shared by contemporary Afrikaner politicians. Although Bailey called for unity amongst British and Afrikaner, his large collection depicting British leisure activities accentuated the differences between them. While commenting on the collection in Parliament, Nationalist MP Brink stated that ‘as a Transvaal Republican it does not appeal to me at all.’ He said that ‘English racing and fox hunting has no meaning as far as we are concerned.’<sup>117</sup>

The Abe Bailey collection remains the largest collection received by the South African National Gallery.<sup>118</sup> It contains over 400 items which include paintings (sporting and portraits) and prints. The sporting paintings make up the bulk of the collection and celebrates the rural sports of hunting, game shooting, horse racing and horse drawn sport.<sup>119</sup> Bailey’s large collection of sporting paintings was one of the most extensive private collections of its kind. According to Tietze, its bequest to the South African National Gallery makes the museum one of the very few in the world to have major holdings in this area.<sup>120</sup>

Included in the collection were 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century British leisure scenes and portraits of race horses. According to Tietze, while George Stubbs (1724-1806) was a ‘highly trained and highly accomplished’ horse painter, his subject matter put him on the periphery of an

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<sup>115</sup> Tietze, *The Sir Abe Bailey Bequest*, 2.

<sup>116</sup> Tietze, *The Sir Abe Bailey Bequest*, 2.

<sup>117</sup> Parliament of South Africa, Hansard 29 April 1947: col 3507 (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1947).

<sup>118</sup> Hayden R. Proud, “Introduction,” in Anna Tietze, *The Sir Abe Bailey Bequest: A reappraisal*, Exhibition Catalogue (Cape Town: Iziko Museums of Cape Town, 2001), 1.

<sup>119</sup> Tietze, *The Sir Abe Bailey Bequest*, 6.

<sup>120</sup> Tietze, *The Sir Abe Bailey Bequest*, 6.

18<sup>th</sup> century British art world dedicated largely to portraiture.<sup>121</sup> But an eager buying public for horse portraits amongst the sporting fraternity was enough justification for their production. The work 'Firetail with his trainer by the rubbing-down house on Newmarket Heath' (1773) is an example of a horse portrait in the Bailey collection (Fig. 10). A comely racehorse, Firetail, stands in front of a vast English country landscape and has his rein held by his trainer. The horse is the central focus of the painting. Firetail is painted in highly graphic detail, each sinew glows with iridescence and the slickness of his dark body shines in the light. His body is taut and his mane and tail are glossy and clipped. He is an animal of dignified, muscular strength. In contrast his trainer is of no significance. He is a simple man, loosely painted; his facial features are rough and broad. Painted in the grey-greens and yellows of the landscape the trainer fades away into his surroundings while the horse takes centre stage. According to Tietze, works such as these were fond records of the racecourse and the hunt. They were commissioned by proud owners who prized a portrait of his favorite horse as he would a portrait of himself or his family.<sup>122</sup>

'The kill' (1797) by John Nott Sartorius records one such memorable fox hunt (Fig. 11). In a warm, afternoon country landscape the drama in the foreground unfolds. Set in a wooded glade, four English squires observe on horseback another holding up the dead fox and beating off a pack of hunting hounds yelping at his feet. In the distance is a quiet rural scene with thatched farm houses. Their inhabitants are unaffected by the activities in the foreground. The bright red jackets of the mounted hunters heighten the drama of the painting and also emphasize the russet dead fox and the straining horse in the foreground. According to Tietze, members of the rural fox hunting world felt that they 'cherished the country side' and that this activity 'promoted the best in human nature.'<sup>123</sup> Activities such as fox hunting were tied to wealth and social status. One's membership of a hunting

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<sup>121</sup> Tietze, *The Sir Abe Bailey Bequest*, 6.

<sup>122</sup> Tietze, *The Sir Abe Bailey Bequest*, 8.

<sup>123</sup> Tietze, *The Sir Abe Bailey Bequest*, 16.

group was by invitation only so it depended on membership of an appropriate social network.<sup>124</sup>

Another work in the collection is Dean Wolstenholme's 'Partridge shooting' (1832) (Fig. 12). Set in rural English farmlands, two gentlemen stand in the foreground with rifles and three hounds. One dog brings a partridge while another drinks from a stream. The mood is quiet and congenial, two friends out on an afternoon's hunt with their obedient hounds. In the far distance are haystacks and the rooftops of the nearest town. These elements show that although the friends are in a lonely spot they are safely within the radius of the rest of a provincial town.

Although the main focus of the collection is on sporting paintings, there are a number of English portraits. According to Tietze, sometimes the British portraitists would follow a Dutch precedent and produce portraits that were more 'down to earth.'<sup>125</sup> This can be seen in Henry Raeburn's 'William Ferguson and son' (Fig. 13), a portrait of a wealthy English country gentleman and his son. In this double portrait Ferguson senior sits on a tree stump and gazes into the distance while his son glances lovingly up toward him. The horizontal stripes on Ferguson's jacket emphasize his girth and robustness, and boldly fill the picture plane. With his gaze fixed to the earth and his hand resting on a tree stump this gentleman shows no other-worldly aspirations. He simply relaxes, stomach popping from his jacket, alongside his adoring son. These qualities account for the portrait being considered less 'refined' in the academic sense and more 'down to earth.'<sup>126</sup>

Sporting painting of the Bailey collection, concerned with leisure, was accorded less worth than portraiture, which in turn lagged behind history painting in the hierarchy of artistic themes. It was generally considered that pictures of animals 'could do no more than please', that they could not 'improve the mind and incite noble sentiments.'<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Tietze, *The Sir Abe Bailey Bequest*, 16.

<sup>125</sup> Tietze, *The Sir Abe Bailey Bequest*, 8.

<sup>126</sup> Tietze, *The Sir Abe Bailey Bequest*, 8.

<sup>127</sup> Tietze, *The Sir Abe Bailey Bequest*, 8.

Considered 'lowly', these works portrayed animals and down-to-earth rural subject matter. British portraiture unconcerned with arcane subjects was considered to be mere copying, while British sporting painting had an even lower status on the painting hierarchy.<sup>128</sup> Sibbett's view that these works were examples of 'great' art is therefore contentious and pro-British. By giving precedence to this body of art, Sibbett suggested that British art was of the highest order and that the English speaking South African public, far removed from the metropolis, would do better to 'cultivate their taste' on even modest forms of British painting, rather than on local works. As art critic Linda Nochlin said, the Abe Bailey collection is a 'memento of Colonialism's contribution to the great Western tradition in South Africa. This group of tenth-rate foxhunting scenes is just a reminder that the Western tradition is not always so great.'<sup>129</sup>

Curator of painting and sculpture at the South African National Gallery, Hayden Proud, wrote in 2001 that when the Bailey collection arrived in 1947 it was 'greatly welcomed' and the stipulation that it be 'hung in part or in its entirety' was then easily accommodated.<sup>130</sup> As was seen in the Parliamentary debate of April 1947, as well as newspaper reports<sup>131</sup> the arrival of the collection was not unanimously welcomed by the public in Cape Town. In a context of growing Afrikaner Nationalism it was considered 'Imperial' in the extreme, especially since its arrival was cited as a reason for the art sale of 1947.<sup>132</sup> Besides its British connection it was also considered dull and repetitive. The Art Critic for *The Argus* haughtily observed that visitors to the Bailey collection were 'gloomy.' This was probably due to the fact that 'racehorses as a subject for painting becomes rather tedious after the first 50-odd pictures.'<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Tietze, *The Sir Abe Bailey Bequest*, 6.

<sup>129</sup> Linda Nochlin in Proud, "Introduction," 1.

<sup>130</sup> Proud, "Introduction," 1.

<sup>131</sup> The Art Critic, "Too many long faces in art galleries," *The Argus*, (19 June 1947).

<sup>132</sup> Parliament of South Africa, Hansard 29 April 1947: col 3507 (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1947).

<sup>133</sup> The Art Critic, "Too many long faces in art galleries," *The Argus*, (19 June 1947).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter investigated the events of 1947- the Parliamentary debate that concerned the South African National Gallery, the sale of art works and the Modern art debate. The analysis suggests that the Modern art debate might have been a form of damage control in the light of the commission of enquiry and the Stratford Report. It shows that Sibbett and Roworth were aware of the debates in Germany while possibly being unaware of the long term repercussions of purging collections of Modern art works.

Both the debate and the sales scandal thrust the museum into the limelight and revealed that there was large scale public disapproval over its activities. These scandals and the fast-changing political context were to reposition the institution in the decades to come.

Following the sales, a new Director, John Paris was appointed to transform the museum. Paris' tenure brought a new era of professionalization to the museum. He brought in new policies which centered around South Africanizing the museum. This included increasing the representation of South African art in the collection and restructuring the display of the permanent collections. The following chapters will investigate the first international exhibition of South African art and Paris' tenure at the museum.

University of Cape Town

## Chapter Four

### Painting a nation: the emerging discourse of South African art in 1948

#### Introduction

The period after 1948 saw a dramatic movement away from previous practices at the South African National Gallery and was marked by greater government involvement in the arts. A new era of cultural ambassadorship dawned in South Africa and the first ever international 'exhibition of contemporary South African paintings and sculpture' toured the world in 1948. Alongside this exhibition was an edition of *The Studio* journal dedicated to South African art with an introduction written by Charles T. de Water, President of the South African Association of Arts and Minister Without Portfolio in the new Nationalist government. Leif Egeland, the Union High Commissioner to the UK who hosted the opening of the exhibition, said in his opening address that the idea of holding an exhibition of this magnitude originated with de Water, his predecessor. He claimed that de Water 'did more than anyone else to bring this idea to fruition.'<sup>1</sup> De Water also wrote the forward to the Afrikaans version of the exhibition catalogue.

The first South African international 'exhibition of contemporary painting and sculpture' was a venture sponsored by the Union government and administered by the South African Association of Arts. The Tate Gallery in London had extended an invitation for an exhibition of South African art in 1938.<sup>2</sup> But this invitation had been refused, as there was 'insufficient interest in the union' at the time.<sup>3</sup> The invitation was not revoked, however, and intending to take up the offer in the future, the Smuts government allocated £7000 for the exhibition.<sup>4</sup> At the time, the public protested against what was considered to be a waste of public money. But the project went ahead regardless.<sup>5</sup> The white National Party government was using money set aside by the Smuts government, and they took a keen interest in the exhibition. The South

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<sup>1</sup> Author unknown, "South African art exhibition opened: silent ambassador for goodwill and better understanding-D.F. Malan," *The Sunday Times*, (3 Oct 1948).

<sup>2</sup> Jasper Ridley in Author unknown, *Exhibition of Contemporary South African Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture: with a prelude to historical paintings*, Exhibition Catalogue (Cape Town: The Cape Times Ltd., 1948), 5.

<sup>3</sup> South African Library. South African Association of Arts Bulletin, (May 1948), 1.

<sup>4</sup> Author unknown, "Pack up S.A London art exhibition," *Cape Times*, (7 Oct 1948).

<sup>5</sup> Author unknown, "Pack up S.A London art exhibition," *Cape Times*, (7 Oct 1948).

African Association of Arts prepared the exhibition in a mere five months after the Nationalist government came into power.

For the Nationalist government, the exhibition presented the opportunity to showcase the contemporary art of a rich colony which had recently severed its Imperial ties. The government wanted South Africa to be perceived as a civilized, independent nation. There was no better way to present the civilization of a nation than through an ambassadorial art exhibition. According to *The Art Critic*, the exhibition served to 'correct any lurking suspicion' that the Union was concerned exclusively with 'gold mines and rugby football and that its life was something between a romance novel and a western movie.'<sup>6</sup> The exhibition attempted to foster goodwill and better understanding between Great Britain and South Africa, as the message written by Prime Minister D.F. Malan for the exhibition opening clearly stated. But, more importantly, it was an expression of a new nation's cultural aspirations and achievements, in a unique African context.<sup>7</sup>

This chapter will examine the exhibition catalogue and the articles concerning contemporary South African art published in a special edition of *The Studio* under the auspices of the South African Association of Arts.<sup>8</sup> These writings provide a rich context through which the changes in the late 1940s and early 1950s at the South African National Gallery can be understood. Re-constructing the story of South African art, the exhibition catalogue anticipated the ideology that informed the reorganization of the museum by John Paris, appointed Director of the South African National Gallery at the end of 1947. Roworth was never formally dismissed but resigned as Director after Paris' arrival in 1948. Paris was thought to be experienced in modern methods of museum organization and development, unlike Roworth who had been an academic and an artist.<sup>9</sup> This chapter argues that these key publications articulated ideas that were rooted in the Cape liberal context which allowed for a non-integrationist liberalism celebrating diversity. Some leading Cape liberals shifted towards separatism and so accommodated a separatist nationalism in state art policy.

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<sup>6</sup> *The Art Critic*, "S.A art as ambassador: show in city that went overseas," *The Argus*, (3 Nov 1949).

<sup>7</sup> Author unknown, "South African art exhibition opened: silent ambassador for goodwill and better understanding-D.F. Malan," *The Sunday Times*, (3 Oct 1948).

<sup>8</sup> South African Library, South African Association of Arts Annual Report (5 Apr 1949), 5.

<sup>9</sup> UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall, South African National Gallery Annual Report 1948/1949, 2.

This meant that while Afrikaner Nationalist politics was rigid and conservative, in Cape Town the nationalist intellectual tradition was more inclusive.

### **Writing a South African art history in 1948**

The Cape liberal tradition held to the possibility of evolutionary change toward a more equitable society, summed up in Rhodes' dictum 'equal rights for every civilized man.'<sup>10</sup> Civilization in this sense implied the assimilation into European, particularly British, culture of a limited number of educated black people. Equality with indigenous people was therefore based on sharing 'civilized' values. Afrikaner Nationalism, in power in 1948, made concrete in the tenets of Apartheid, believed that no such thing was possible. Political, social and economic organization was divided along racial lines and was designed to maintain white supremacy.<sup>11</sup> From the perspective of the South African National Gallery, European art, particularly British, remained civilized art, the standard by which aesthetic norms were to be established. It was relatively easy for the museum to slip into tacit support for white supremacy. These ideological positions informed the writing of South African art history at the time.

The South African international 'exhibition of contemporary painting and sculpture' motivated the writing of a South African art history which would tie together and validate the touring exhibition. This was done through *The Studio* special edition, which was supposed to precede the exhibition but was eventually released just after its opening at the Tate Gallery. Although *The Studio* special edition did not focus on the touring exhibition, one of its main aims was to contextualize and describe South African art at the time. It was intended to 'supplement and illuminate' the display.<sup>12</sup> Te Water stated that both publication and exhibition were meant to be a compendium of the effort, energy and enthusiasm of South African art, showing the combination of European contemporary trends and the unique influences of the South African environment.<sup>13</sup> The exhibition catalogue and *The Studio* together set out the beginnings of a nationalist framework for art. Given the liberal context in the Cape,

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<sup>10</sup> Christopher Saunders, *Historical dictionary of South Africa* (London: The Scarecrow Press Inc., 1983), 100.

<sup>11</sup> Nigel Worden, *A concise dictionary of South African history* (Cape Town: Francolin, 1998), 14-15.

<sup>12</sup> Author unknown, "The art of South Africa," *The Argus*, (21 Oct 1948).

<sup>13</sup> Charles T. te Water, "Gateway to South Africa," *The Studio*, (Nov 1948), 129.

this framework was somewhat flexible and ambivalent, and liberal inclusivity in the discourse of art was under pressure from Afrikaner Nationalism.

The exhibition catalogue was published in English and Afrikaans. Both versions contain an introduction, a history of South African art and list the works on display. Intended for different audiences, the English edition for the international audience and the Afrikaans for the local, they differ from each other in at least one crucial respect. The introduction of the English version was written by the head of the Board of Trustees at the Tate Gallery, J. Ridley, while the Afrikaans version was written by te Water, a leading liberal Afrikaner Nationalist. Te Water was a politician in the Union government and in 1927 he had represented the Union at the League of Nations in Geneva.<sup>14</sup> In 1948 he became 'minister without portfolio' in the Afrikaner Nationalist government.<sup>15</sup>

Te Water's introductions, in the exhibition catalogue and *The Studio*, explained the ideological motivation behind the exhibition. In both publications he emphasized the new nationalism. In the catalogue he began with the Anglo Boer war and told the story of the epic endurance of the white races of South Africa against harsh climates and indigenous people. He emphasized the kinship between the various white races based on shared European origins and their numerous 'civilizing' achievements. One of these achievements was the cultural worldview of this unique new race of white Africans which could be found in their art. Te Water claimed that art in South Africa was a direct result of the struggle with the African environment and that this exhibition was part of an endeavour to establish closer bonds of understanding with its founder civilizations. It was a 'humble' attempt to show commonality with the lands of the great art masters, to express the enduring struggle of the white races against the harshness of the environment and the philistinism of the indigenous people.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> T.R.H. Davenport, *South Africa: a modern history* (Johannesburg: Macmillan, 1985), 203.

<sup>15</sup> Charles T. te Water, "Voorwoord," *Tentoonstelling van Hedendaagse Suid-Afrikaanse Skilderye, Tekeninge en Beeldhouwerk: met 'n inleiding van geskiedkundige skilderye* Vertooning Katalogus (Kaapstad: The Cape Times Ltd., 1948), 5.

<sup>16</sup> Te Water, "Voorwoord." 5.

The story of South African art told in the exhibition catalogue by Geoffrey Long and in *The Studio* by R.K. Cope followed te Water's introduction. Durban born Long was a war artist and a parachutist 'behind enemy lines' with British troops during the Second World War. After the war he lectured art at Natal University and was also on the selection board of the exhibition.<sup>17</sup> Cope, Organizing Secretary of the South African Association of Arts wrote about the overseas reception of the touring exhibition.<sup>18</sup> Given te Water's membership of both the National Party and the Association of Arts it is likely that in both publications he was essentially speaking for the South African government. Long and Cope elaborated on te Water's introductions, incorporating a liberal approach.

Telling the story of contemporary South African art involved starting at the beginning of white settlement and tracing art's progress to the present. The history of South African art preceding the 1940s was represented as a pre-history. According to both writers no significant art was produced for the first two hundred years of white settlement! Long writes that there were few artists working in South Africa before 1900. In both Long and Cope's views, South Africa was too economically and socially undeveloped at this time, its people too impoverished to produce significant art. The contemporary period, however, was applauded as a cultural beacon as 'each year brings more interest in the Arts.'<sup>19</sup> And seldom had the 'material conditions been more favorable' for producing art than in present day South Africa and artists in the country were well positioned to take advantage of the opportunity.<sup>20</sup> The history of South African art was cast as riddled with difficulties presented by the 'wild' South African environment and the 'tin shanties of the mining camps.'<sup>21</sup>

Although optimistic, this story of South African art is cautious. Both writers stated that there was no national 'flavour' or movement, and no school of South African art, but rather small 'energetic' groups working in isolation.<sup>22</sup> They declared that the

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<sup>17</sup> L.G. Green, "Profile: Geoffrey Long," *The Argus*, (5 Feb 1949).

<sup>18</sup> R.K. Cope, "How oversea critics view South African art," *Cape Times*, (7 Feb 1950).

<sup>19</sup> Geoffrey Long, "Introduction," *Exhibition of Contemporary South African Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture: with a prelude to historical paintings*, Exhibition Catalogue (Cape Town: The Cape Times Ltd., 1948), 7.

<sup>20</sup> R.K. Cope, "South African Contemporary Painting and Sculpture," *The Studio*, (Nov 1948), 139.

<sup>21</sup> Long, "Introduction," 7.

<sup>22</sup> R.K. Cope, "South African Contemporary Painting and Sculpture," *The Studio*, (Nov 1948), 130. and Long, "Introduction," 7.

works on exhibition therefore pointed to the beginnings of a new creative impulse.<sup>23</sup> Early South African art in their view had a simple 'romantic' appeal to be seen in the works of landscape artist Thomas Baines (1820-1875). Baines is described as an explorer, prospector and artist who came to the Cape in 1842. He was 'an exuberant recorder of the early colonizing period.' His work illustrated the 'wonders of unknown Africa' and recorded scenes such as the 'rainbow over Victoria falls', 'the battles of the Bantu' and 'the exciting scenes he witnessed in Native kraals.'<sup>24</sup> Although both Long and Cope gloss over this period, there were nevertheless twenty works representing this phase in the exhibition. Nine other artists besides Baines were included. Most of these works had the Cape landscape and its people as subjects.

According to Cope and Long, the beginnings of 'progress' in South African art occurred after 1900 with the discovery of gold and after the 'boundaries had been fixed' around rivers and mountains, when 'guns and wagons gave way to spades and engines. This was progress!'<sup>25</sup> The development of cities, suburbs and the 'morning train' were the new necessities and 'being civilized' meant these things to the 'white man.' Cape Town was the quintessential civilized city, 'the only city with a past'. It had a way of life influenced by the arts and it remained the largest and most mature centre for arts in the Union.<sup>26</sup> The South African National Gallery was implicitly celebrated in this statement.

Two artists from Transvaal were cited as a link with the 'romantic' tradition.<sup>27</sup> Frans Oerder (1867-1944) and Anton van Wouw (1862-1945). Both were born in Holland and brought Afrikaner identity to the fore in South Africa early on. Described as the first painters related to contemporary trends,<sup>28</sup> Oerder was commissioned by the Kruger government to sketch in the field during the South African war while van Wouw was commissioned to sculpt the Paul Kruger statue in 1899, by Jewish

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<sup>23</sup> R.K. Cope, "South African Contemporary Painting and Sculpture." *The Studio*, (Nov 1948), 130-139. and Long, "Introduction," 7- 12.

<sup>24</sup> Author unknown, *Exhibition of Contemporary South African Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture: with a prelude to historical paintings*, Exhibition Catalogue (Cape Town: The Cape Times Ltd., 1948), 13.

<sup>25</sup> Long, "Introduction," 7.

<sup>26</sup> R.K. Cope, "South African Contemporary Painting and Sculpture." *The Studio*, (Nov 1948), 139. and Long, "Introduction," 8.

<sup>27</sup> Long, "Introduction," 7.

<sup>28</sup> R.K. Cope, "South African Contemporary Painting and Sculpture." *The Studio*, (Nov 1948), 134.

businessman Sammy Marks.<sup>29</sup> Following these artists were Abraham Volschenk (1853-1936), Hugo Naude (1869-1941) and Pieter Wenning (1874-1921), all of whom went unrecognized in their time, according to Cope.<sup>30</sup> Popular attention was given instead to pictures of Cape mountains, 'lit by the last sunset of Victorian bad taste.'<sup>31</sup> Naude was celebrated as the first to bring French Impressionism to South Africa and Wenning became South Africa's first 'pure painter.'<sup>32</sup>

Following the First World War, economic boom, prosperity and optimism, referred to by Long as 'the golden haze that hung over the country', led to landscapes and paintings of Cape Dutch homesteads becoming popular. Neither Cope nor Long mention the artists who produced these works.<sup>33</sup> Instead, they discuss Neville Lewis (b.1895) who was Slade trained and who they considered to have made a noteworthy contribution to portrait painting at the time.<sup>34</sup> Jacob Hendrik Pierneef (1886-1957), was influenced by the Formalist movements in Europe of the 1920s. Deemed a national figure, his position was unchallenged for 'almost twenty years.'<sup>35</sup>

Then came the Great Depression. A new generation of artists who had worked and studied overseas returned to South Africa. They brought with them a changed subject matter and a 'toughened disposition.'<sup>36</sup> Shortly before the Second World War, the New Group was formed in Cape Town. Among the founder members were Gregoire Boonzaier (b.1907) still life and landscape painter; Frieda Lock (d.1961) interiors, still life and landscape painter; and Terence McCaw (b.1913) portrait and landscape painter. Later members of this group were Irma Stern (b.1894), influenced by the 'exoticism' of Africa, Walter Battiss (b.1906) influenced by 'Bushman Painting' and Alexis Preller (b.1911), influenced by Surrealism. The New Group were noted as

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<sup>29</sup> Author unknown, *Exhibition of Contemporary South African Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture: with a prelude to historical paintings*. Exhibition Catalogue (Cape Town: The Cape Times Ltd., 1948), 14-27.

Richard Mendelsohn, *Sammy Marks: the uncrowned king of the Transvaal* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1991).

<sup>30</sup> R.K. Cope, "South African Contemporary Painting and Sculpture." *The Studio*, (Nov 1948), 134.

<sup>31</sup> Long, "Introduction," 8.

<sup>32</sup> R.K. Cope, "South African Contemporary Painting and Sculpture." *The Studio*, (Nov 1948), 134.

<sup>33</sup> Long, "Introduction," 8.

<sup>34</sup> Long, "Introduction," 8.

<sup>35</sup> R.K. Cope, "South African Contemporary Painting and Sculpture." *The Studio*, (Nov 1948), 135.

<sup>36</sup> Long, "Introduction," 9.

producing the most 'advanced' art in the country.<sup>37</sup> Most of these artists had European origins or training. Boonzaier worked in London and Spain, Lock was born in England, McCaw studied at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, London, Stern studied in Germany and Preller studied in London and Paris.<sup>38</sup> Together these contemporary artists represented a varied and highly cosmopolitan grouping, a flowering of art in South Africa. The expansion of the New Group after World War Two is described as coinciding with a greater interest in art, the opening of commercial galleries and the availability of books on art.<sup>39</sup> Most of the artists featured in the exhibition were from this period. Both Cope and Long listed the works of these artists and commented on their diversity of styles. Cope declared that the time was now ripe for developing regional trends, as was happening in the U.S. It was imperative to 'move forward in standards' and education, to reduce the 'sense of national inferiority and unthinking worship of everything foreign.'<sup>40</sup> Long believed that the country's problems and provocative questions could stimulate a new and clearer direction for the arts.<sup>41</sup>

The new focus on contemporary art, rejected by Roworth, thought of as provocative and even publicly claimed to be the product of lunacy by institutions such as the South African National Gallery, was soon to become part of the museum's official policy. This represented a dramatic change for the museum. Many artists from the New Group were included in the exhibition. Lippy Lipshitz and Maurice Van Essche, both vociferous opponents of Roworth and Sibbett had works on display. Writing contemporary artists into the canon of South African art was a decisive move at this time and broke with past institutional practices. This visible new direction, spurred by the liberal intellectual tradition, served the nationalist sentiment. The tired, conservative European hearkening of Roworth was replaced by a focus on the contemporary and marked the South African present as vital, experimental and a new beginning.

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<sup>37</sup> Long, "Introduction," 11.

<sup>38</sup> Long, "Introduction," 8-10.

<sup>39</sup> Long, "Introduction," 10.

<sup>40</sup> R.K. Cope, "South African Contemporary Painting and Sculpture," *The Studio*, (Nov 1948), 139.

<sup>41</sup> Long, "Introduction," 12.

The exhibition consisted of 149 art works in oils, gouache, water colours, pen and ink and a few sculptures. These works were selected from more than 1000 pieces submitted. Although the South African Association of Arts organized the exhibition, the selection of the paintings, drawings and sculptures was undertaken by a board of twelve appointed by the Union government.<sup>42</sup> According to the Arts Association's Bulletin, the choice of art works rested entirely with the Board and the 'job of the Association went no farther than bringing the works of the artists and the members of the Board face to face with one another.'<sup>43</sup>

Members of the Board were chosen from all over the Union and came from Pretoria, Johannesburg, Pietermaritzburg, Port Elizabeth, Stellenbosch and Cape Town.<sup>44</sup> They included practising artists, critics, art lecturers and historians.<sup>45</sup> Members could not enter work for selection.<sup>46</sup> However, many had affiliations to and were members of the South African Association of Arts.<sup>47</sup> Importantly, Director of the Tate Gallery, John Rothenstein, assisted the Board as an adviser. Artists were invited to submit work and the Board visited private and public collections.<sup>48</sup> The Board held an open 'preference for work of a South African character and subject matter' and ironically, the feature most avoided was any 'direct imitation of European art.'<sup>49</sup>

The early period of South African art was represented by twenty works. Most of the works had the Cape and its people as subjects. Thomas Baines (1820-1875) had five landscapes representing scenes from the early colonial period. Bowler (1813-1869) had three paintings of Table Bay. George Angas (1822-1886) had water colours of a 'Cape Malay woman' and a 'Bushman with poisoned arrows.' Samuel Daniel (1775-1811) had two water colours depicting hunting scenes. Many of the artists were Europeans who came to the Cape for short periods or worked in the civil service.

<sup>42</sup> South African Library. The South African Association of Arts Annual Report. (1949), 4.

<sup>43</sup> South African Library. South African Association of Arts Bulletin. (May 1948), 1.

<sup>44</sup> South African Library. South African Association of Arts Bulletin. (May 1948), 1.

<sup>45</sup> R.K. Cope. "How oversea critics view South African art." *Cape Times*. (7 Feb 1950).

<sup>46</sup> South African Library. South African Association of Arts Bulletin. (May 1948), 1.

<sup>47</sup> The Selection Board of the exhibition was P.J Theron (chairman), M Bokhorst, R Prowse, G Haywood, F.E.J Malherbe, D Anderson, C. O'C. Maggs, J.L.M. Franken, O.J.P Oxley, L.W. Thornton-White, J.C. Heath and G. Long. Author unknown, *Exhibition of Contemporary South African Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture: with a prelude to historical paintings*, Exhibition Catalogue (Cape Town: The Cape Times Ltd., 1948), 4.

<sup>48</sup> R.K. Cope. "How oversea critics view South African art." *Cape Times*. (7 Feb 1950).

<sup>49</sup> South African Library. South African Association of Arts Bulletin. (May 1948), 1.

Angus accompanied Sir George Grey's expeditions to South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Daniel was employed at the Castle. George Lambert and Samuel Scott (dates unavailable) were commissioned by the British East India Company to depict the stations and trade routes to the East. Charles D'oyley (1781-1845) was a member of the Indian Civil Service and holidayed in the Cape in 1833. Frederick Timpson Frons (1802-1887) came to the Cape on a 'health trip.'<sup>50</sup> Frans Oerder (1867-1944) was the first war artist in South Africa, commissioned by Paul Kruger of the Transvaal republic. J.C Poortemans (1786-1870) was a lithographer who also produced drawings of the Cape and Anton van Wouw (1862-1945) became famous for his bronzes of African people.<sup>51</sup>

Key artists were repeatedly mentioned in the press and their works typified the exhibition.<sup>52</sup> Their works were typically landscapes, showing specific areas of the country. These works also pointed to European influences prevalent in the exhibition as a whole.<sup>53</sup>

Described in the British press as South Africa's 'leading artist', J.H. Pierneef had six works on display.<sup>54</sup> The landscape 'Kremetartbome' (Baobab Trees) (Fig. 14) received a laudatory mention by the *The Art Critic*.<sup>55</sup> Pierneef was influenced by Cézanne's structuralist approach to the landscape, where colour fields were divided along angular lines. In this work an immense Baobab tree stands in the centre of a barren 'Northern Transvaal' landscape. Three miniature baobabs surround it in the far distance and other bits of dry shrubbery are dwarfed by its tremendous stature. A portrait of a leafless tree, the central Baobab takes up most of the picture plane. The taut muscles of its powerful, gigantic trunk ripple with undulations of brown and grey.

<sup>50</sup> Author unknown, *Exhibition of Contemporary South African Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture: with a prelude to historical paintings*, Exhibition Catalogue (Cape Town: The Cape Times Ltd., 1948), 13-14.

<sup>51</sup> Author unknown, *Exhibition of Contemporary South African Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture: with a prelude to historical paintings*, Exhibition Catalogue (Cape Town: The Cape Times Ltd., 1948), 13-14.

<sup>52</sup> Author unknown, "S. African art in London exhibition opened in Tate Gallery: Message from Dr. Malan," *Cape Times*, (21 Sep 1948).

Author unknown, "S.A art exhibition returns: will be on view at the National Gallery," *Cape Times*, (1 Nov 1949).

The Art critic, "Art exhibition that went overseas," *The Argus*, (10 Nov 1949).

South African Library. South African Association of Arts Bulletin, (May 1948), 1-2.

<sup>53</sup> Note that none of these works are dated, the exhibition catalogue only gives the dates of the artists.

<sup>54</sup> Author unknown, "Art in the Union," *Daily Telegraph*, (21 Sep 1948).

<sup>55</sup> The Art critic, "Art exhibition that went overseas," *The Argus*, (10 Nov 1949).

Its branches weave wildly through the pale light, reminiscent of a proud elaborate headdress. It is a site of vital energy in a land of vast bleakness. Outlined in dark brown with strong contrasting shadows set against the surrounding pale starkness, the tree is propelled forward. It stands as a testament to the powerful, triumphant survival of a thing of greatness in a landscape of scarcity.

Le Roux Smith Le Roux's 'Verlate Karoo plaas' (Deserted Karoo farm) (Fig. 15), is another work that speaks to the South African environment. Once again, there is no human presence in the Karoo landscape. Here the farm houses stand empty, set in a quiet landscape surrounded by gentle undulating hills. Although the landscape is harsh, seen in the dry, bare trees in the foreground, the farm provides peaceful solitude. The whitewashed houses in the foreground are lovingly embraced by their surrounding walls, while the fields in the background speak of a plentiful harvest to come. Here the intervention of farming is seen as positive. An otherwise arid and wild landscape is tamed and liberated from the Karoo wilderness.

Similarly, in the 'Landskap met skape' (landscape with sheep) (Fig. 16) by Maggie Laubser, the landscape is portrayed as peaceful and abundant. This work shows the influence of a 'gentle' German Expressionism, where colour and line are used emotionally. Three sheep graze peacefully in the foreground, while grassy mountains recede far into the distance. A rural woman carries a bundle (possibly of fire wood) on her head and walks on a path going into a valley, towards huts. Rural huts dot the landscape, nestled amongst the undulating mountains and billowing clouds. The receding mountain range speaks of the vastness of the country. This is a landscape filled with lush, peaceful colour. Harmonious tones of green and white fill the land and sky.

Gerard Sekoto was the only black artist in the exhibition. He was self taught and lived and worked in Paris. According to Berman, his inclusion in the exhibition stimulated much interest in his work and he subsequently sold paintings to the Guildhall Gallery in Chicago and he was included in group shows in Paris.<sup>56</sup> Sekoto's 'Sikspens toegangs geld' (Sixpence a door) (Fig. 17) is his most exhibited and reproduced

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<sup>56</sup> Esme Berman, *Art and Artists of South Africa: an illustrated biographical dictionary and historical survey of painters and graphic artists since 1875* (Cape Town: A.A. Balkema, 1970), 268-270.

work.<sup>57</sup> The viewer is not placed at a distance from the activity in Sekoto's work. We are presented with a street scene where black people wait to gain entrance to a theatre from which they are debarred by a bright white screen. Small boys strain their necks to get a view of the proceedings. A bold pink road curves in the foreground and green foliage extends to the background. Sekoto shows how access to certain forms of art was denied to black South Africans. This racialised urban context is removed from the idealized vision of the huts in Laubser's landscape.

Alexis Preller's 'Basoetoe legende' (Basotho Allegory) (Fig. 18) explores another facet of indigenous life by looking at Basotho myth and symbolism. Two central figures dressed in traditional dress appear to be drinking to the ancestors and gaze deep into gourds. Within the vessels they see a vision of Basotho people passing drink around. Their vision is represented by the dwarfed people in the foreground. To their extreme right stands a dry, bare tree the evidence of drought. Water and its importance are central to the painting. A dwarfed woman bends down to offer water to an abstracted head. There is an abundance of clay pots used for carrying water which is either offered or drunk. The abstract patterns adorning the clothes of the central figures create movement and spill into the vision and into the foreground. A striking image of a white egret perches on reeds over a wide bowl of water. The pattern crosses various levels of meaning. From the central figures (the world of the real), they move across the world of the vision and then pass into a realm of symbolism, coming to rest between the large purple pot and the white egret in the foreground. Preller's Basotho world is one of bright, intense colour and a highly illustrative Surreal- inspired reality. He captures a Basotho dream-world of visions and an altered reality.

The display of portraits in the exhibition points to the diversity of South African indigenous people by emphasizing difference in physical types. Neville Lewis's 'Blinde Maleier in rooi fes' (Blind Malay in red fez) (Fig. 19), Irma Stern's 'Asandi meidjie' (Asandi maiden) (Fig. 20) and Francois Krige's 'Die Brigadier se lyfbediende' (The Brigadier's batman) (Fig. 21) are examples which illustrate this diversity of figures. All the figures look into the distance and are unfrontational.

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<sup>57</sup> Author unknown, *Art and urbanization: South Africa 1940- 1971*, Exhibition Catalogue (Johannesburg: Warren Siebrits Modern and Contemporary Art, 2003), 12.

Stern and Krige's portraits are quick charcoal drawings. Stern's 'maiden' appears to be nude, with hair braided and a tattoo on her cheek. She is identifiable by her exotic physical characteristics, her heavy lidded eyes and pouting lips. Krige's manservant works in an urban context, he is dressed in heavy woolen military clothes. He is isolated, pensive and even lonely. Lewis' 'Malay' is painted in oil. An elderly, grey bearded man he wears a conical fez and neck scarf. His facial features are elongated and show the lines of age and hardship.

### **Response to the exhibition: the critics, the public and the South African Association of Arts**

The 'South African international exhibition of contemporary painting and sculpture' was seen at the Tate Gallery by 85 577 people.<sup>58</sup> The exhibition received mixed treatment in the press. According to South African correspondents in London, British newspapers either gave it very little space or were highly critical of the exhibition.<sup>59</sup> The emotional responses the South African public had to the exhibition indicate that the exhibition was a highly contentious endeavor on the part on the new government. It was publicly disputed whether the exhibition was, as D.F. Malan's opening message at the Tate Gallery stated, 'a product of South Africa's cultural and social aspirations and achievements.'<sup>60</sup> The art critics generally saw the exhibition as unsuccessful in demonstrating the breadth of South African art. Unlike its reception in Britain, where the exhibition was largely ignored by the media,<sup>61</sup> it was a highly visible point of debate in the Cape Town press and its opening in London caused a great deal of public interest in Cape Town. There was public discontent over the exhibition but also vociferous support from official sectors. The art critic for the *Cape Times* supported the exhibition and applauded the government's efforts, saying that the exhibition was 'highly representative.'<sup>62</sup> Another correspondent for the *Cape Times* in London described the exhibition as being 'the soul of South Africa as seen

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<sup>58</sup> Author unknown, "Critics overseas review S.A art exhibition," *Cape Times*, (31 Mar 1949).

<sup>59</sup> Author unknown, "Criticism of S.A art in London," *Cape Times*, (22 Sep 1948).

<sup>60</sup> Author unknown, "South African art exhibition opened: silent ambassador for goodwill and better understanding-D.F. Malan," *The Sunday Times*, (3 Oct 1948).

<sup>61</sup> 'The exhibition of South African art which opened at the Tate on Monday night received little attention in the daily press.' Author unknown, "Criticism of S.A Art in London," *Cape Times*, (22 Sep 1948).

<sup>62</sup> The Art critic, "Show in city that went overseas," *The Argus*, (3 Nov 1949).

through the highly individual eyes of her most representative artists.<sup>63</sup> Yet another claimed that the exhibition made 'history for South Africa.'<sup>64</sup> But there was discontent amongst the the public. Firstly the exhibition was openly criticized as being unrepresentative of South African art and having leanings towards outdated European movements. The fact that the government had decided not to show it in South Africa before it was sent on tour caused further outrage.

According to the art critic for *The Argus*, only one British critic, M. Collins, grasped the meaning behind the lack of a distinctive South African art.<sup>65</sup> Collins cast the debate not around the absence or presence of a national school but rather around South Africa as part of a smaller 'cosmopolitan' world where influences were derived from other traditions of art. Collins saw this cross pollination as part of the modern condition. According to the art critic, European critics had to realize this and that until 'native' artists were more commonplace in the Union, art could not be derived from the 'Bushman cave' or the 'Bantu's carved fetish' but would be derived from the long tradition of painting in England and the Netherlands. Under the present state of society, art in South Africa would 'necessarily be an extension of art in Europe.'<sup>66</sup>

An opposing view was held by the British critic Eric Newton of the London *Sunday Times*.<sup>67</sup> He felt that as a body of work the exhibition did not present a national style at all but rather a conglomeration of outdated European styles. Describing the exhibition as 'premature', he stated that if the exhibition of South African art was indeed representative, a South African art could hardly be seen to exist. He described the early part of the exhibition as a romantic hearkening back to previous styles and a manifestation of the fascination with the picturesque. The later part was either 'mimicry by local artists of European styles that could never have evolved in South Africa' such as: Impressionism, Post Impressionism and modern Mexican, or highly photographic-type paintings which could only be differentiated from good color photographs by the skill of the painter.<sup>68</sup> Responding to Newton's criticisms, the *Cape*

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<sup>63</sup> Author unknown. "S. African art in London: exhibition opened in Tate Gallery: message from Dr. Malan." *Cape Times*. (21 Sep 1948).

<sup>64</sup> R.K. Cope. "How oversea critics view South African art." *Cape Times*. (7 Feb 1950).

<sup>65</sup> The Art critic. "Influence in Modern Art." *The Argus*. (25 Nov 1948).

<sup>66</sup> The Art critic. "Influence in Modern Art." *The Argus*. (25 Nov 1948).

<sup>67</sup> Cape Times Correspondent. "S.A art exhibition criticized." *Cape Times*. (28 Sep 1948).

<sup>68</sup> Cape Times Correspondent. "S.A art exhibition criticized." *Cape Times*. (28 Sep 1948).

*Times*' art critic backed off from his laudatory remarks and claimed that he was merely taking South African standards as his foundation. He acknowledged how 'far those standards fall short of those accepted in the older civilizations of Europe' but believed that 'this exhibition is indeed a very comprehensive cross section of South Africa's elementary strivings towards progress.'<sup>69</sup>

It was H.V Michaelis' letters to the *Cape Times*, however, that sparked the greatest controversy. Michaelis stated that it was not surprising that British critics decided that 'the kindest course of action was to ignore the show', as it was quite blatantly 'a foolish selection of mediocre, stupid and dull paintings.'<sup>70</sup> Michaelis condemned the exhibition in its entirety, calling it an utter waste of public money, and cited its negative reception in London as a good enough reason for its being packed up and shipped back to South Africa. In another letter, Michaelis declared that the exhibition was not 'representative.' It was more than probable, he said, that there would have been less local and international criticism of the exhibition had the collection not been entirely confined to a 'narrow clique' of Modern European art imitators. The British critics believed that the exhibition was representative of South African art and consequently stigmatized it as 'childish, premature, and only concerned with imitating European oddities and Mexican Indians.'<sup>71</sup>

A letter from B. Lewis agreed with Michaelis, saying that many members of the public shared similar views, believing that the exhibition should urgently return to South Africa. A grave mistake made with the exhibition was the clandestine method of selection. By refusing to exhibit the works before they went abroad, the Arts Association had avoided criticism and controversy. The result was 'derogatory criticism from objective critics in London.'<sup>72</sup> F.D. Lycett Green claimed that while Michaelis condemned the Association of Arts for the selection of the art works, they had not been involved in the selection.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Author unknown, "S.A art exhibition." *Cape Times*. (8 Oct 1948).

<sup>70</sup> H.V. Michaelis. "Pack up S.A London art exhibition." *Cape Times*. (7 Sep 1948).

<sup>71</sup> H.V. Michaelis. "Union's art exhibition in London." *Cape Times*. (11 Oct 1948).

<sup>72</sup> B. Lewis. "Was the Union's art exhibition a mistake?" *Cape Times*. (6 Oct 1948).

<sup>73</sup> F.D. Lycett Green, "Quality of art." *Cape Times*. (15 Oct 1948).

Using the pseudonym 'Cry the Beloved Country', another writer points to the hypocrisy of the Arts Association after the cool reception the exhibition received in London. Following the 'flourish of trumpets' that marked the selection and departure of the exhibition the public found that neither the Arts Association nor the 'Art critic' had ever really thought much of the exhibition. Scoffing at the selection, the writer notes that some scenery could at least have been included as a tourism advertisement for the country.<sup>74</sup> Another writer, M.B., was also angered by the selection process and the fact that some artists were represented by multiple works while others were completely omitted. The writer suggests that South Africa's 'prematures' be brought back home and that the government cut its losses. Nobody resented criticism, said M.B, but to 'have South African art condemned on an unrepresentative selection is galling.'<sup>75</sup> S.D. King, quoting the secretary of the Empire Art Council, Chelsea, agreed that the exhibition did not represent an adequate cross-section of South African art. He felt that the exhibition was derivative, that many works subscribed to a misconception of British taste and that there was no South African national school.<sup>76</sup> H.V. Michaelis thought that works by South African artists who had 'recognition in Europe and America' should have been present.<sup>77</sup> The critic Newton decried the exclusion of work by Edward Wolf, who had 'a big reputation in Britain and on the continent.'<sup>78</sup> Other critics felt that the focus on contemporary art limited its appeal. 'Cry the Beloved Country' felt that the works were 'ugly' and that 'nothing of beauty was included.'<sup>79</sup> M.B also questioned the contemporary focus saying that this caused the 'most outstanding artists to be omitted- to mention only three Roworth, Pilkington and Wiles.'<sup>80</sup>

Two Cape Town critics, positive to begin with, eventually conceded that the exhibition lacked a national character. The Art Critic wrote that the aim of the exhibition was not an advertising campaign to encourage tourists to 'come to sunny South Africa.' Rather, the exhibition sought to prove to the world that art was a living part of the contemporary world of work and thought in South Africa. He noted that

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<sup>74</sup> Cry the Beloved Country, "Union's art exhibition in London," *Cape Times*, (11 Oct 1948).

<sup>75</sup> M.B. "Union's art exhibition in London," *Cape Times*, (11 Oct 1948).

<sup>76</sup> S.D. King, "South African art," *Cape Times*, (15 Nov 1948).

<sup>77</sup> H.V. Michaelis, "Union's art exhibition in London," *Cape Times*, (11 Oct 1948).

<sup>78</sup> Author unknown, "S.A art exhibition criticized," *Cape Times*, (28 Sep 1948).

<sup>79</sup> Cry the Beloved Country, "Union's art exhibition in London," *Cape Times*, (11 Oct 1948).

<sup>80</sup> M.B. "Union's art exhibition in London," *Cape Times*, (11 Oct 1948).

*The Times* of London had identified 'the strong progressive spirit' of South African art and of 'an adventurous struggle for freedom.'<sup>81</sup> In his view, an overwhelming national character was encapsulated in the intense colour which contrasted with the 'misty half light of Europe' demonstrating that the exhibition was as national 'as a strip of biltong, and all the better for it!'<sup>82</sup>

R.K Cope, Organizing Secretary of the South African Association of Arts, wrote that while there was, as yet, no national school, the beginnings of one were evident. He wrote that the overseas criticisms were instructive as they suggested that even though there was nothing near a South African national school of painting, one was starting to emerge. In Brussels, the exhibition was heralded as the starting point for a new manifestation of art while in the Netherlands the response to it was that art in South Africa was on its way to developing a national identity. Cope noted that the subject matter had interested the critics who had enthused about the 'blinding sunlight of Africa' and the country's 'many races and its styles of life.' From this direction, Cope believed, a significant and unique contribution to art would surely emerge. Cope agreed that South African artists would get nowhere by 'rehashing' sixty years old ideas of French, English and German artists.<sup>83</sup> Of the American and Canadian leg of the tour, Cope wrote that the exhibition caused great interest as South African art problems had close parallels in those countries. Critics were again intrigued by the 'adapting of old traditions' to the new and striking conditions of Africa. In Washington the critics were stunned to find an art they barely knew existed!<sup>84</sup> In contrast, a short article in *The Argus* commented on an editorial in the *Evening Star* of Washington. The exhibition was described as being a gesture of friendship on the part of the Union government, of a country so remote yet bound to America 'by many ties of history.' The exhibits were described as disappointing as they were 'less nationalistic' than hoped for as most of the artists studied in London, Paris and Munich. The conclusion was reached that 'it might have been better if they remained in Cape Town and Pretoria.'<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> The Art critic, "Critics overseas review S.A art exhibition," *The Argus*, (31 Mar 1949).

<sup>82</sup> The Art critic, "Art exhibition that went overseas," *The Argus*, (10 Nov 1949).

<sup>83</sup> R.K. Cope, "How oversea critics view South African art," *Cape Times*, (7 Feb 1950).

<sup>84</sup> R.K. Cope, "How oversea critics view South Africa art," *Cape Times*, (7 Feb 1950).

<sup>85</sup> Author unknown, "South African art exhibition moves to Washington," *Cape Times*, (2 Aug 1949).

The South African Association of Arts defended the exhibition in its Annual Report for 1949 and its Bulletins for 1948 and 1949.<sup>86</sup> These reports were written for the select audience of its members and for its government funders who had just increased support by doubling their annual grant to the Association.<sup>87</sup> The Association of Arts claimed that art criticism overseas was 'sympathetic and constructive', and, although never delving into it, they claimed that the controversy that surrounded the exhibition was a sign of 'vigorous interest.' Their opinion seemed to be that it was positive that South African art was noticed in the national daily press, journals and provincial papers. The Association claimed that it was an honour that South African art was judged by the same 'standards as European art, without any attempt to be patronizing.'<sup>88</sup>

R.K Cope, Organizing Secretary of the South African Association of Arts, released a statement on behalf of the Association to the effect that no one in South Africa expected the exhibition to take Europe 'by storm' as South African art had not yet attained to European standards. Nobody should have been surprised when criticism was adverse, as it was acknowledged that, in the realms of art, South Africa had far to go. He blamed the overall paucity of reporting in the British press on post-war paper restrictions.<sup>89</sup> The Association's Annual Report stated that the exhibition was honorably treated and that its reception was encouraging. South African public opinion was characterized as the binary opposite of the voices of specialist art critics, who were 'sympathetic', 'constructive' and 'serious', while the public was 'excessively exuberant.'<sup>90</sup> The Association attributed the public's response to the exhibition to their mediocre understanding of art and their naive belief that art was a 'battlefield' where various schools were continually locked in dispute.<sup>91</sup> Regarding one of the public's main complaints, Cope wrote that the government had decided that the exhibition was not to be seen in the Union before going overseas as 'the time

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<sup>86</sup> Author unknown, "International standards please! Selecting the South African Overseas Art Exhibition." *South African Association of Arts Bulletin*. (May 1948), 2.

R. Henniker-Heaton, "Critical reflections on the Overseas Exhibition." in Author unknown, *South African Association of Arts Bulletin*. (Oct 1949), 1-3.

<sup>87</sup> South African Library, South African Association of Arts Annual Report. (5 Apr 1949), 1.

<sup>88</sup> South African Library, South African Association of Arts Annual Report. (5 Apr 1949), 4.

<sup>89</sup> R.K. Cope, "No reason to resent criticism- London exhibition of S.A art." *Cape Times*. (8 Oct 1948).

<sup>90</sup> Author unknown, "International standards please! Selecting the South African Overseas Art Exhibition." *South African Association of Arts Bulletin*. (May 1948), 1-2.

<sup>91</sup> Author unknown, "International standards please! Selecting the South African Overseas Art Exhibition." *South African Association of Arts Bulletin*. (May 1948), 1.

factor would have rendered impossible prior exhibition in South Africa.<sup>92</sup> The President of the South African Association of Arts, C.F. Rey, published a short article in the *Cape Times* in which he wrote that it was a triumph for the government to have embarked on the project and to have financially supported the venture.<sup>93</sup>

After much controversy, the exhibition was finally opened in Cape Town in October 1949. Its tour of the Union was suspended due to a lack of funds and possibly to avoid further public furor. The Cape Town showing at the South African National Gallery was extended by two months and closed at the beginning of 1950.<sup>94</sup>

### **Nationalism and diversity**

The exhibition was diverse, in two senses. Firstly, although the exhibition almost exclusively represented white South African artists, the work of Gerard Sekoto (b.1913), a black South African, was included. This at least acknowledged the existence of racial diversity in the country. Secondly, there was considerable diversity amongst the white artists in the exhibition, in terms of their styles, influences and, importantly, ancestry.

While the promotion of the diversity of white artists was politically expedient, as we shall see below, Sekoto presented a contradiction. In a Cape liberal tradition which acknowledged that western art could be produced by people of colour, his inclusion presented no problem, but in an Afrikaner Nationalist context where races 'developed' artistically along different lines, Sekoto was an anomaly.

According to Long, Sekoto was an enigmatic but worthy choice whose 'position is difficult to assess.' He was at once a self-taught 'Bantu artist' who was 'divorced by race and environment from the European artists of the country' yet he also had French training.<sup>95</sup> Long and Cope state that his stature as an artist was 'obvious.' He was praised as depicting his 'own people' in their urban landscape with 'ability and remarkable insight.'<sup>96</sup> His work was described as Expressionist with an urban

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<sup>92</sup> South African Library, South African Association of Arts Annual Report, (5 Apr 1949), 5.

<sup>93</sup> C.F. Rey, "Art exhibition in London," *Cape Times*, (4 April 1949).

<sup>94</sup> Author unknown, "Union art tour cancelled," *Cape Times*, (7 Jan 1950).

<sup>95</sup> Long, "Introduction," 11.

<sup>96</sup> R.K. Cope, "South African Contemporary Painting and Sculpture," *The Studio*, (Nov 1948), 133.

indigenous flavour. With French training, Sekoto bridged the European and the South African contexts. Sekoto utilized western artistic standards just as the white South African artists did and combined it with South African subject matter. He was included because he upheld western artistic standards.<sup>97</sup>

Cope refers to the lack of art from indigenous people and that 'unpredictably rich reinforcements' could be drawn on by providing art education for 'persons of non-European birth.'<sup>98</sup> In the Cape liberal tradition, 'non-European' artists could be brought up to an appropriate standard.<sup>99</sup> Such art education was available for children in Cape Town in 1949 at institutions such as the newly opened 'Coloured Children's Art Centre.'<sup>100</sup> By 1953, art education was also available at Zonnebloem College, a college for 'coloured' trainee teachers.<sup>101</sup> John Paris opened one such exhibition and spoke of the 'universal problem in South African art', the 'lack of adventure and a lack of identification outside the person.' This 'problem' was neither unique to South African art nor to coloured art with its 'great problem of multi-racialism.' Coloured artists could record the history of the Cape far more surely than European artists as they formed an integral part of its ancient history, he said. The future for coloured art might, noted Paris, arise 'out of a protest against industrialization' in the Cape. Paris described the unique quality of coloured art as straddling the indigenous and the western. The indigenous was seen as a response to the natural and industrial environment while the western was expressed through the type of art produced through western standards employed by institutions such as Zonnebloem College. If coloured artists were to combine these elements, their art would be as true to coloured people as 'the palazzo was of the life of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Venetian.' According to Paris there would only be a coloured art when there was a distinct coloured 'identity.'<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> By 1962, after the Afrikaner Nationalist sentiment in art had been reified, Sekoto was written out of the story of South African art. In an extensive work on Twentieth Century South African art, Sekoto was described as a having made no lasting impression on South African art. He was merely a 'social critic' who 'was once a promising artist, who like many others could not live up to his promise.' F.L. Alexander, *Art in South Africa since 1900- Kuns in Suid Africa sedert 1900* (Cape Town: A.A. Balkema, 1962), 23.

<sup>98</sup> R.K. Cope, "South African Contemporary Painting and Sculpture," *The Studio*, (Nov 1948), 139.

<sup>99</sup> For a study of the development of art education in black schools in Natal 1948 to 1962 see John W. Grossert *Art education and Zulu crafts* ( University of Stellenboch: Unpublished PhD thesis, 1969).

<sup>100</sup> Author unknown, "Coloured pupils keen art students," *Cape Times*, (30 March 1949).

<sup>101</sup> Author unknown, "Paris on Universal Problem," *Cape Times*, (17 Oct 1953).

<sup>102</sup> Author unknown, "Paris on Universal Problem," *Cape Times*, (17 Oct 1953).

According to historians Wilson and Thompson, there was a political need in 1948 to stress cooperation between whites. After the narrow Afrikaner election victory the Nationalist Party appealed to white people to stand together and fight for survival against the 'torrent of Blackness which threatened from inside and out', a reference to Africa's rush to independence.<sup>103</sup> The Afrikaner Nationalists saw the need to use art, particularly memorialisation, as a political tool of nationalism.

An opportunity to do just this was the opening of the Voortrekker Monument near Pretoria, in December 1949. The opening, proclaimed the 'biggest festival in history' provided an unprecedented opportunity to reenact the grandiosity of the Great Trek centenary celebrations held in 1938.<sup>104</sup> Ox wagons trekked from various parts of South Africa, dispatch riders based on the system used by the Boer commandos brought messages from the 'volk' in distant places and stirred up 'enthusiasm and national feeling in the process.'<sup>105</sup> However, for all its associations with an Afrikaner identity, there were indications at the proceedings that a concerted effort was being made to promote a broader white nationalism, not an exclusive Afrikaner Nationalism. At this point it became important not just to proclaim Afrikaner superiority but to promote an inclusive white South African nationalism.<sup>106</sup> The Nationalists had a fragile hold on state power. They had won the 1948 election by a very narrow margin and were under pressure to deal with growing African urbanization and an upsurge of militant opposition. At stake was National Party power and white supremacy. This was why the quest for legitimacy across white class lines became a fundamental component of Nationalist political strategy.<sup>107</sup> It played an important role in formulating Apartheid policy and an identity for whites which reinforced ideas of supremacy.

The keynote speaker at the Voortrekker monument, Justice J C Newton Thompson was selected to represent the white English-speaking component of the festival.

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<sup>103</sup> Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson, *The Oxford History of South Africa* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1971), 374.

<sup>104</sup> For comments on the commemoration of the Trek in 1938 in Cape Town see: Bickford Smith et al., 79.

<sup>105</sup> Leslie Witz. *Apartheids festival: contesting South Africa's national pasts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 96.

<sup>106</sup> Witz, *Apartheids festival*, 96.

<sup>107</sup> Witz, *Apartheids festival*, 97.

Speaking ahead of D.F. Malan, he called on the descendants of European civilization in South Africa to converge so that it would be possible to speak of a 'white community' as the 'South African nation.'<sup>108</sup> Malan then spoke of Voortrekkers blazing the trail of South African independence by maintaining white authority and white race purity. An image on the frieze inside the monument reiterates the idea of racial co-operation. Representing a historical scene set in Grahamstown of an English speaking settler handing over a bible to the trek leader Jacobus Uys, the frieze emphasizes the historical precedent of white co-operation.<sup>109</sup>

Echoing these sentiments in *The Studio*, te Water appealed to readers not to forget that this 'southern civilization' claimed its ancestry from Germany, France, Holland and the British Isles. Now rooted in the soil, this civilization stood firm in the face of the 'ever present pressure of the African in his overwhelming numbers and his way of life.'<sup>110</sup> Throughout white development and expansion, tormenting questions of the natural environment and the survival of the race remained present, he wrote.<sup>111</sup>

For te Water, the environment was double sided, at once generous and dangerous. It was plenteous, provided inspiration and made South African art unique with intense colours so 'unlike Europe' in its landscape and people. White South Africans discovered and protected the resources of their 'eie' (own) land and dug deep for metals and minerals like coal, gold and diamonds.<sup>112</sup> But like the social environment, the natural environment was also harsh and in continual need of civilizing. Te Water conjoined the South African landscape and black Africans. Both were used extensively in South African art as subjects. He identified the nation as encompassing a 'semi-arid' landscape constantly threatened by 'the erosion of its soil' and the surrounding swarms of primitive indigenous people. Whites were striving to overcome this harsh environment, and they were extraordinarily industrious in building cities, developing mining and producing art. Whites represented 'culture' taming and harnessing 'nature' in a continual struggle. These 'inescapable and

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<sup>108</sup> Witz, *Apartheids festival*, 97.

<sup>109</sup> Witz, *Apartheids festival*, 97.

<sup>110</sup> Charles T. te Water, "Gateway to South Africa," *The Studio*, (Nov 1948), 130.

<sup>111</sup> Te Water, "Voorwoord," 5.

<sup>112</sup> Te Water, "Voorwoord," 5.

insistent challenges' of the environment were witnessed in art and its responses to the environment.<sup>113</sup>

According to te Water, the common ground between the English South Africans and Afrikaners was a shared European ancestry and civilization. Overcoming environmental odds, Afrikaner and the English 'Suid-Afrikaners' (South Africans) built their houses, churches and schools in the midst of the 'wemel' (swarms) of 'primitiewe' (primitive) Bantus, Hottentots and 'klein Boesmans' (small Bushmen).<sup>114</sup> This new 'menseras'(race) created from the stimulating environment of Africa, its difficulties and tensions, was 'Europa se antwoord op Africa's se roepstem' (Europe's answer to Africa's call).<sup>115</sup> This great energy and diversity of racial, religious and cultural characteristics in South Africa accounted for a 'tolerance of creeds', religions and of ideas such as 'freedom and liberty.'<sup>116</sup> This desirable 'diversity' gave South African art a 'catholicity of taste and style.'<sup>117</sup>

The exhibition reflected this diversity, itself resting on a contradiction within the nationalist discourse of South African art history. Diversity implied an absence of cohesion and made critics question the presence of a national school of South African art.<sup>118</sup> However, from te Water's point of view it was clear that what unified the artists was the fact they belonged to a 'nuwe menseras' (new race). They had demonstrated this by their commitment to the South African subject matter which gave the exhibition its South African 'flavor' and its unique national identity. This ranged from the realist, highly detailed Eastern Cape landscapes of Baines, the Impressionist influenced 'veldflowers' of Naude to the German Expressionist inspired 'Arab priest' of Stern and the intense vibrancy of Battiss' 'Rock shelter.'<sup>119</sup> Te Water interpreted this diversity as 'vigour.'

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<sup>113</sup> Charles T. te Water, "Gateway to South Africa," *The Studio*, (Nov 1948), 130.

<sup>114</sup> Te Water, "Voorwoord," 5.

<sup>115</sup> Te Water, "Voorwoord," 5.

<sup>116</sup> Charles T. te Water, "Gateway to South Africa," *The Studio*, (Nov 1948), 130.

<sup>117</sup> Charles te Water, "Gateway to South Africa," *The Studio*, (Nov 1948), 130.

<sup>118</sup> Author unknown, "S.A Art exhibition criticized," *Cape Times*, (19 Nov 1948).

Author unknown, "Union Art exhibition in London," *Cape Times*, (11 Oct 1948).

Author unknown, "S.A Art exhibition criticized," *Cape Times*, (28 Sep 1948).

Author unknown, "South African art exhibition at the Tate Gallery," *Cape Times*, (21 Sep 1948).

<sup>119</sup> Author unknown, *Exhibition of Contemporary South African Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture: with a prelude to historical paintings*, Exhibition Catalogue (Cape Town: The Cape Times Ltd., 1948),14-28.

## Conclusion

This exhibition highlights a key moment in the history of South African art. It indicates an impulse to start collating South African art and writing a South African art history. For the Nationalist government it was not only an opportunity for sending a 'silent ambassador' around the world, it was an opportunity for challenging international perceptions about South Africans and South Africa.<sup>120</sup> This chapter has shown that the Cape liberal context and Afrikaner Nationalism helped to shape the exhibition and the writing of a particular kind of art history in 1948. While occurring in the political context of early Apartheid, this liberal temperament tolerated the inclusion of Sekoto while celebrating the diversity of white artists. As seen from the public responses the exhibition was highly contested.

The significance of the exhibition for the South African National Gallery was both practical and ideological. On a practical level the exhibition helped to increase attendance at the gallery significantly. Reports at the time show an increase of 18,946 visitors to the museum over the period 1949 to 1950.<sup>121</sup> The Annual report for the year 1950/1951 shows an increase of £5,300 received from the government.<sup>122</sup> This lifted the flagging spirits of an institution which had recently been embroiled in controversy. Ideologically, the exhibition sketched the intellectual context for the museum's incoming Director, John Paris.

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<sup>120</sup> Author unknown, "South African art exhibition opened," *The Sunday Times*, (25 Sep 1948).

<sup>121</sup> UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1949/1950, 3.

<sup>122</sup> UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1950/1951, 3.

## Chapter five

### Innovation and intervention at the South African National Gallery: John Paris' Directorship 1949-1962

#### Introduction

The period 1949-1962 was one of professionalization, innovation and a rigorous movement toward 'modern' museum management at the South African National Gallery.<sup>1</sup> John Paris arrived in Cape Town in January 1949<sup>2</sup> to take up the position of Director vacated by Edward Roworth.<sup>3</sup> Within his first year, newspapers were reporting his new 'schemes' and the changes he was envisioning.<sup>4</sup> As early as 1950 there were reports of a cultural 'boom' in Cape Town with the National Gallery at the centre of the activities.<sup>5</sup> There was an increase in public attendance due to large local and overseas exhibitions.<sup>6</sup> Alongside these events came increased government financial support at a time when the nearby South African Museum was lamenting that *they* had received no government increase since before 1938!<sup>7</sup>

This chapter explores Paris' innovations at the South African National Gallery. John Paris was born in Hove, Sussex in 1912. He studied art at the Brighton School of Art and then literature at Worcester College, Oxford. He served throughout the Second World War on the Allied side, as camouflage artist to the Scottish Command. Later, he worked as head of the Army Formation College where he eased 'artists out of the services and back into civilian life.'<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Paris was hired on the basis that he was the 'first director experienced in modern methods of gallery organization and development.' UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1948/1949, 1.

<sup>2</sup> John Paris. "Proud city possession needs aid: SA Gallery's great work over 13 years." *Cape Times*, (12 Jan 1962).

<sup>3</sup> Roworth resigned in 1949 after Paris' arrival. UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1948/1949, 1.

<sup>4</sup> Author unknown. "Reorganizing of the S.A National Gallery: Start made on long term schemes." *Cape Times*, (27 Sep 1949).

<sup>5</sup> Author unknown. "Cultural life in city booms record year for art, plays and shows: National Gallery drew 125, 000." *Cape Times*, (7 Jan 1950).

Author unknown. "Art Gallery visitors increase of 22, 000 last year." *The Argus*, (6 Jan 1950).

Dean Anderson. "Year of richest art experienced in Cape Town." *Cape Times*, (2 Jan 1953).

<sup>6</sup> John Paris. "Proud city possession needs aid: SA Gallery's great work over 13 years." *Cape Times*, (12 Jan 1962).

<sup>7</sup> Author unknown. "S.A Museum on the rocks: grant same as in 1938." *Cape Times*, (21 March 1949).

<sup>8</sup> E. Allen. "Profile: John Paris." *The Argus*, (11 Mar 1950).

Paris held various professional posts in Britain preceding his position at the South African National Gallery. He was Assistant Librarian at Oxford University and later a lecturer in art history at the National Gallery, London from 1939 to 1949. While lecturing there, he became Deputy Director of the Walker Gallery, Liverpool.<sup>9</sup> Comparing his job in Liverpool with that at the South African National Gallery, he described the former as 'straight forward.' The Walker Gallery was well established, with 'good and sufficient collections.' There it was a matter of keeping the 'wheels smoothly turning.'<sup>10</sup>

At the South African National Gallery his task was to be very different. Paris now had to instigate change at a museum that lacked the infrastructure and the collections of the Walker Gallery. His main intention was to make the National Gallery 'a driving force in the nation's cultural affairs', to stop it from being provincial and make it 'truly national.'<sup>11</sup> Among other things, he implemented the Stratford Report's recommendations on museum management.<sup>12</sup> I will show that Paris' new policies were intended to modernize the management of the South African National Gallery. I will investigate the major trends of his policy, paying particular attention to the evolution of the display of the permanent collection. I will show how an Afrikaner Nationalist story of South African art was superimposed on the display, through an analysis of two documents published by the museum at the time.

In this chapter I will show that John Paris's ideas were more liberal than Roworth's and he had very little, if any, concern with imbuing the collections of art at the South African National Gallery with any overt political ideology. It is interesting, then, that the rearrangement of the permanent collections during his tenure appears to be loaded with an Afrikaner Nationalist ideology. I suggest that this occurred because increased funding from the government was accompanied by a reduction in autonomy. Roworth's tenure was marked by an absence of other art professionals on the Board of Trustees and a lack of government involvement. Roworth had almost complete autonomy. Although I have been denied access to minutes of the meetings held at the

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<sup>9</sup> Author unknown, "John Paris" *Cape Times*, (12 May 1960).

<sup>10</sup> E. Allen, "Profile: John Paris" *The Argus*, (11 Mar 1950).

<sup>11</sup> Author unknown, "Weeding out at art gallery: new director to make changes," *Cape Times*, (14 Apr 1949).

<sup>12</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947).

museum during Paris' tenure,<sup>13</sup> the way Paris' display policy was molded to suit the new political dispensation suggests that Paris did not have the same degree of independence as Roworth and that museum policy and practices were subject to political influence.

### **Paris and Roworth**

According to the Stratford Report, the most 'outstanding weakness' of past administration was the 'lack of clearly defined policy with respect to the functions and aims of the Gallery.'<sup>14</sup> Under Roworth's directorship (1940-1949) there had been very little policy making. His ideas in the press were confined to matters of aesthetics. He published his ideas on 'good art' and intended to educate the public's taste. Foremost, Roworth was an artist and academic, he was not a manager, and the museum became a battleground for ideas about art. The strong links the museum had with academia through UCT's art school (Roworth was Director of both institutions) seemed to cause him to struggle to differentiate between the museum's academic and public function. Paris' positioning was very different from Roworth's. He was a foreigner with little knowledge of South African art, but was respected for his cosmopolitan experience. His running of the museum was more practical and he dealt with the nuts and bolts of the institution as well as with underlying ideas. According to Paris, the underlying ethos he wished to instill left no space for 'personal likes and dislikes.'<sup>15</sup>

### **New policies at the South African National Gallery (1949-1956)**

Following the Stratford Report, Paris adopted three key policies to inform the running of the museum. These were: the reorganization of the permanent collection, the increased collection of South African art and gaining access to European art by loaning it from overseas art museums and private collections.<sup>16</sup>

Paris invited overseas art museums to send 'masterpieces' on exchange to South Africa. During his tenure three important collections successfully visited the

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<sup>13</sup> See letter as Appendix A from Iziko Museums to Prof. Anne Mager. 12 December 2003.

<sup>14</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 5.

<sup>15</sup> John Paris, "Mr. Paris explains his policy," *Cape Times*. (20 Apr 1953).

<sup>16</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 6.

museum.<sup>17</sup> The Sir Alfred Beit Collection remained from 1950 to 1955. This was a collection of old masters which contained examples of work by Vermeer, Goya and Ruisdael.<sup>18</sup> The Hughes Collection, containing Modern French and English art arrived in 1953. The Robinson Collection, opened in 1958, contained early Italian paintings by Tiepolo, Murillo, the Van Dycks and Gainsborough.<sup>19</sup>

Although these exhibitions helped to draw crowds, the main focus of the museum was not to be European art. The collections at the South African National Gallery were to focus on South African art and were to be built up with the 'best obtainable examples of works of all the arts' which would present the 'whole trend of South African art from its indigenous beginnings.'<sup>20</sup> A scheme to buy more paintings was fundamental to realizing Paris' ideas of displaying South African art. In order to rearrange the museum's permanent collections, the gaps in the collection had to be filled. He felt that there were 'not enough good pictures really representative of a school or a period.'<sup>21</sup>

In order to make the museum 'national' in its scope, Paris also planned traveling exhibitions. Exhibitions dealing with 'various aspects of art would be arranged to tour the country, giving information specifically on South African art.'<sup>22</sup> The exhibitions would be classified into three groups. The first would be the largest and most valuable and would be sent only to large art museums in Johannesburg and Durban as they had the necessary infrastructure. The second kind would be smaller versions of the first which would be sent to towns like Stellenbosch. The third group would be even smaller 'although not artistically inferior.' Less valuable, they would be suitable for church and town halls in 'lesser centres.'<sup>23</sup> The exhibitions would be stored and displayed in a 'rail container' which would be 'an art gallery in miniature.' The pictures would travel on felted racks and 'the recipients would have to erect screens in

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<sup>17</sup> Author unknown, "Reorganizing the S.A. National Gallery: Start made on long term plans," *Cape Times*, (27 Sep 1949).

<sup>18</sup> John Paris, "Proud city possession needs aid: SA Gallery's great work over 13 years," *Cape Times*, (12 Jan 1962).

<sup>19</sup> John Paris, "Proud city possession needs aid: SA Gallery's great work over 13 years," *Cape Times*, (12 Jan 1962).

<sup>20</sup> E. Allen, "Profile: John Paris," *The Argus*, (11 Mar 1950).

<sup>21</sup> Author unknown, "More pictures for city: National Gallery changes," *Cape Times*, (26 May 1949).

<sup>22</sup> Author unknown, "Many plans for developing S. African Gallery," *The Argus*, (26 May 1949).

<sup>23</sup> Author unknown, "Art exhibitions to tour Union: National Gallery plans outlined: No inferior work will be sent," *Cape Times*, (5 Dec 1950).

the gallery or hall.<sup>24</sup> By increasing the scope of the museum in this way Paris could ensure that the 'pictures could be seen in all the centres of the Union' and also that the museum was marketed across the country.<sup>25</sup>

Paris' new plans included starting a library service, setting aside a permanent study room and giving a series of lectures. He intended to place a new emphasis on the 'applied arts.' This would include 'furniture, pottery and silverware.'<sup>26</sup> His early plans were favorably received by the Board of Trustees. C.S. Barlow, a member of the Board, said that in the past no 'particular' policy was 'ever pursued' at the museum and with these new policies in place the museum would go forward.<sup>27</sup>

### **Art display and the permanent collection (1949-1958): Cape liberalism and Afrikaner Nationalism at the museum**

Paris implemented his new policies gradually and by 1956 the permanent collection was reorganized entirely. Paris's display ideology evolved from ideas relating to provenance and chronology. He was interested in keeping works which belonged to particular bequests together and attempted to show where individual and groups of works were located in a history of South African art.<sup>28</sup> His early policy shows signs of the Cape liberal context and his personal liberal intellectual temperament. Paris aimed for inclusivity at the museum, intending to 'open it up' and 'stop it (from) looking like a morgue.'<sup>29</sup> The museum was to become a 'place of delight and pleasure' where the 'people of Cape Town *live* with its works.'<sup>30</sup>

By 1958, Paris' arrangement of the permanent collection still existed, but an Afrikaner Nationalist ideology was making its presence felt in the story of South African art. This could be seen in the exhibition catalogues published by the museum. The 'Select and summary guide to the permanent collections excluding prints and

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<sup>24</sup> Author unknown, "Art exhibitions to tour Union: National Gallery plans outlined: No inferior work will be sent," *Cape Times*, (5 Dec 1950).

<sup>25</sup> Author unknown, "Art exhibitions to tour Union: National Gallery plans outlined: No inferior work will be sent." *Cape Times*, (5 Dec 1950).

<sup>26</sup> Author unknown, "Reorganizing the S.A. National Gallery: Start made on long term plans." *Cape Times*, (27 Sep 1949).

<sup>27</sup> Author unknown, "More pictures for city: National Gallery changes." *Cape Times*, (26 May 1949).

<sup>28</sup> Author unknown, "Weeding out at Art Gallery: new director to make changes." *Cape Times*, (14 Apr 1949).

<sup>29</sup> Author unknown, "Tip-toeing in gallery will go." *Cape Times*, (10 Sep 1953).

<sup>30</sup> Author unknown, "Tip-toeing in gallery will go." *Cape Times*, (10 Sep 1953).

drawings' and the 'Colour chart illustrating the policy of the South African National Gallery' point to this ideological strengthening of Afrikaner Nationalist ideas,<sup>31</sup> although the latter document also contained enduring traces of liberalism evident in references to the 'universal' appeal of art regardless of race.<sup>32</sup> These publications will be discussed in greater depth below.

The ideological tension between Afrikaner Nationalism and liberalism could be witnessed in a debate that was broiling in parliament at the time. In 1957, the government was about to introduce 'cultural Apartheid'.<sup>33</sup> This bill was designed by then Minister of Native Affairs, Dr. H.F. Verwoerd, to 'cut off Europeans and non-Europeans in cultural matters'.<sup>34</sup> The Bill proposed to exclude blacks from museums. The United Party would not accept the Bill. Mr Waterson of the United Party stated that since the Minister could not claim that 'non- Europeans made a nuisance of themselves or had been objectionable in these institutions' the bill served no 'useful purpose.' It would only bring 'hardship and inconvenience' to 'both sections of the population.' Dr Steenkamp, also of the United Party agreed and said that although social separation had been in place for three hundred years, certain exceptions in the form of art museums and museums had always existed. This was because these institutions were difficult to duplicate for the different races. He claimed that Verwoerd had simply become 'Apartheid mad'.<sup>35</sup>

Mrs. Ballinger, a 'Native representative', stated that the Bill gave boards of institutions the power to impose the colour-bar and she was 'utterly opposed to regulations made on a colour bar-basis.' As the country moved closer to 'Western

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<sup>31</sup> Author unknown. *Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings* (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958).

South African National Gallery Library. Author unknown, *Colour chart illustrating policy of the South African National Gallery* (Cape Town: Published by the Trustees, 1958).

<sup>32</sup> South African National Gallery Library. A. H. Honikman, in Author unknown, *Colour chart illustrating policy of the South African National Gallery* (Cape Town: Published by the Trustees, 1958).

<sup>33</sup> Author unknown. "Cultural Apartheid introduced: Waterson on injustice and hardship." *Cape Times*, (19 Mar 1957).

<sup>34</sup> Author unknown. "Cultural Apartheid introduced: Waterson on injustice and hardship." *Cape Times*, (19 Mar 1957).

<sup>35</sup> Author unknown. "Cultural Apartheid introduced: Waterson on injustice and hardship." *Cape Times*, (19 Mar 1957).

civilization' it should become less concerned with 'artificial' differences and 'more united on questions of culture and civilization.'<sup>36</sup>

Mr. Potgieter of the National Party responded by saying that the United Party was making a 'mountain of a mole hill.' Did they approve of the fact, he asked, that 'white children were prevented from getting a good view of the cages at the Johannesburg Zoo by a wall of Natives?' Mr. Mostert, also of the National Party, agreed and said that it was the 'abuse of cultural opportunities such as the museums in Cape Town' that made it necessary to introduce Apartheid measures. But Mr. Williams of the United Party retorted by saying that this was 'nonsense', it was 'absurd that the Government wanted to introduce these measures into museums.'<sup>37</sup> During Apartheid blacks were never barred from visiting the South African National Gallery, making it one of the only public institutions that was not racially segregated.

### **Art display and the permanent collection (1949-1958): policy and implementation**

Stratford had indicated that it was impossible to see the collections of the museum without 'being impressed by the apparently unsystematic way in which the pictures are hung' and the way in which 'old and modern painters (found) their places next to one another.'<sup>38</sup> In 1949 Paris submitted a memorandum to the Board of Trustees and the Minister of Education, Arts and Science on the new arrangement of the collection and proposed changes to museum policy.<sup>39</sup> He had plans to 'bring the gallery closer to the people of Cape Town' by extensively reorganizing the museum.<sup>40</sup>

Regarding the permanent collections, he would devote separate rooms in the museum to different schools of painting. This arrangement would outline the history of art clearly. Only the most important work would be given prominence in the museum.

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<sup>36</sup> Author unknown, "Cultural Apartheid introduced: Waterson on injustice and hardship," *Cape Times*, (19 Mar 1957).

<sup>37</sup> Author unknown, "Cultural Apartheid introduced: Waterson on injustice and hardship," *Cape Times*, (19 Mar 1957).

<sup>38</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 6.

<sup>39</sup> UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1949/1950. 4.

<sup>40</sup> Author unknown, "Reorganizing the S.A. National Gallery: Start made on long term plans," *Cape Times*, (27 Sep 1949).

All other works would be stored in a way that would be accessible to the public 'if they *really* wanted to see it.'<sup>41</sup>

Although intending to devote different rooms to different periods, Paris believed that art should not be classified as 'modern or old' as each picture was a part of the 'whole history of art.' Art should never be isolated from its context and the viewer should never have fixed ideas about the art work or impose their own personality on it.<sup>42</sup> He expressed disapproval for those 'Huns and Vandals' who condemned 'Modern developments in art', and stated that they were very similar to 'the ones of old who drove the Christians into the Catacombs', a very different tune to Roworth's!<sup>43</sup> He did not see the 'physical reason why an artist should not paint the front and back of the head of a figure on the same canvas.'<sup>44</sup> In order to bring these ideas about art into the public sphere, Paris suggested to the Board that he deliver evening lectures dealing with art in its 'political, literary and economic background.'<sup>45</sup>

By 1950, the re-arrangement of the museum was in progress. Paris first adopted the principle of exhibiting the entire collection chronologically and by school. The Atrium was cleared of the casts of the Beit Collection in order to receive examples of 'prehistoric bushman and indigenous Native arts.'<sup>46</sup> As suggested by the Stratford Report, the central Liberman Gallery was cleared of all art except South African art.<sup>47</sup> This gallery became the central focus of South African art in the museum.

Hyman Liberman was the Mayor of Cape Town from 1904 to 1907.<sup>48</sup> His bequest to the City of Cape Town was originally intended for a 'public monument, a Triumphal

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<sup>41</sup> Author unknown, "Weeding out at art gallery: new director to make changes," *Cape Times*, (14 Apr 1949).

<sup>42</sup> Author unknown, "No isolation in art: Mr. Paris on the valid approach." *The Argus*, (9 Feb 1949).

<sup>43</sup> Author unknown, "Huns and vandals of art: painter's questions to Gallery Director," *Cape Times*, (14 Apr 1950).

<sup>44</sup> Author unknown, "Huns and vandals of art: painter's questions to Gallery Director." *Cape Times*, (14 Apr 1950).

<sup>45</sup> Author unknown, "New director's plans for art gallery." *Cape Times*, (11 Feb 1949).

<sup>46</sup> UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1949/1950, 4.

<sup>47</sup> 'I think that the Liberman room should be restored to its original purpose of housing only the works of South African artists.' Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town. Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 5.

<sup>48</sup> Author unknown. *Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings* (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958),7.

Arch at the foot of Government Avenue.<sup>49</sup> Since it was impossible to erect such a structure, the funds were diverted to other causes. In 1925, the museum was one of the institutions that benefited from Liberman's philanthropy. A section of the museum, named the Liberman Gallery, was built to display 'the work of South African artists.'<sup>50</sup> Under Roworth, no more than one-third of the wall space was occupied by local artworks, 'the remainder displaying miscellaneous paintings of different schools and periods.'<sup>51</sup> It was Paris' intention to use this 'large central gallery' to illustrate the development of South African art.<sup>52</sup>

In keeping with the Cape liberal tradition, the Liberman Bequest also established the 'Hyman Liberman Institute' in 1934.<sup>53</sup> The institute started as a 'reading room and community centre for the poor in District Six' and became a centre of 'high' culture in the area. It was also the home for the group to be known as the Eoan Group, which started from elocution lessons and expanded into the drama group 'the Liberman Players.'<sup>54</sup> In the rooms surrounding the Liberman Gallery, Paris planned to hang works illustrating important European movements.<sup>55</sup> The main bequests were to be exhibited separately. The Beit and Bailey collections were to be housed in separate rooms while a room would be set aside for English and French drawings.<sup>56</sup>

In 1951 Paris decided to give priority to South African painting and sculpture in order to 'fill the serious gaps in the historical sequence.'<sup>57</sup> He also decided to set up a department of prehistoric and indigenous art, 'in order to tell the whole story of South African art in two adjacent rooms.'<sup>58</sup> Paris was to push for the inclusion of indigenous art in the display policy of the museum. The following year he stated that 'prehistoric, primitive and indigenous arts' were produced by the peoples who began art history on

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<sup>49</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 5.

<sup>50</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): Annexure C.

<sup>51</sup> Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947): 9.

<sup>52</sup> UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1949/1950, 5.

<sup>53</sup> Vivian Bickford-Smith, Elizabeth van Heyningen and Nigel Worden. *Cape Town in the Twentieth Century* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1999), 84.

<sup>54</sup> Bickford-Smith et al., *Cape Town in the Twentieth Century*, 84.

<sup>55</sup> Author unknown, "New director's plans for art gallery," *Cape Times*, (11 Feb 1949).

<sup>56</sup> UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1949/1950, 2.

<sup>57</sup> UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1950/1951, 4.

<sup>58</sup> UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1950/1951, 6.

the African continent and it proved South Africa to be a cradle of cultures even though the country was still a new nation.<sup>59</sup> These plans were realized in his display.

In order to mark the 'inauguration of the new department of prehistoric and indigenous art' and to introduce rock art to the public, the museum exhibited a collection of Abbe Breuil's traced transcripts of rock paintings.<sup>60</sup> These works originated from Southern Rhodesia, South West Africa and the Drakensberg. Newspapers claimed that the exhibition was a 'major attraction' and could give insight into the lifestyle of the 'Bushman race.' Commenting on the perceived erotic qualities of the voluptuous bare breasted women depicted in this work, *The Argus* claimed that crowds would be 'fascinated' by the 'sweater girls of Prehistoric times.'<sup>61</sup>

Paris also introduced a new system of display based on five categories, which bore similarities to the international 'Exhibition of contemporary South African paintings, drawings and sculpture.' These categories would consist of 'Africana', which would include works by early 'topographical artists like Thomas Baines.' The work would be considered for aesthetic rather than historical reasons.<sup>62</sup> The 'Pioneer' section would consist of artists such as Wenning and Oerder whose works laid the foundation of a South African school of art.<sup>63</sup> The 'Group and Schools' section would show the origin and trends of contemporary South African art and its European influences. 'Individual Artists' would be a section catering for artists who directly influenced trends, who 'sought out new idioms for themselves and who tried to discover a style indigenous to the country.'<sup>64</sup> The last section would be the 'Prehistoric, Primitive and Indigenous arts', intended to present the beginnings of South African art.<sup>65</sup> These

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<sup>59</sup> UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1951/1952, 3.

<sup>60</sup> Author unknown, "Sweater girl of prehistoric times will fascinate National Gallery visitors," *The Argus*, (21 Feb 1951).

<sup>61</sup> Author unknown, "Sweater girl of prehistoric times will fascinate National Gallery visitors," *The Argus*, (21 Feb 1951).

Author unknown, "A great man: the Abbe Breuil," *The Argus*, (23 Feb 1951).

<sup>62</sup> Author unknown, "£15 000 scheme for S.A art: wider scope for National Gallery," *Cape Times*, (5 Dec 1950).

<sup>63</sup> UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1951/1952, 4.

<sup>64</sup> Author unknown, "£15 000 scheme for S.A art: wider scope for National Gallery," *Cape Times*, (5 Dec 1950).

<sup>65</sup> UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1951/1952, 5.

works were to be chosen for their 'aesthetic rather than their ethnological interest.'<sup>66</sup> These ambitions were realized in the permanent display.

In 1953, Paris described the kind of work that would be accepted for display in the permanent collection. At this time he felt there was a need to accession artworks that would 'fill the gaps' in the display. The collection was not intended to represent one kind of art but 'all kinds of art' which would add up to a history of art for South Africa. The kind of work accepted into this history would be based on 'quality' which would be judged by specialists and art critics. Four issues needed to be considered in selecting the art works: whether the work had a place in the historical sequence, whether the artist was of importance, whether the work was 'good' enough, and whether there were similar works in the collection.<sup>67</sup>

In 1955, a critical shift was made to museum policy. There was a shift from a focus on historical sequence and quality to making the 'nation' an important criterion of display. The permanent display was to show the origins and development of South African art as 'an essential part of the development of the nation.'<sup>68</sup> This policy shift coincided with the formation of new committees and sub-committees (made up of Board Members) which Paris appointed to make recommendations to the rest of the Board. The two main committees were the 'acquisitions committee' and the 'development of services' committee which considered the educational function of the museum as well as fund raising. Although the Board retained the authority to purchase works, the 'acquisitions committee' could consider 'likely' acquisitions and make recommendations.<sup>69</sup> This change may reflect a more active interest from Board members in the running of the museum, and a corresponding reduction in Paris' autonomy.

Acquisition policy also changed at this time. South African art was no longer acquired to 'fill the gaps in the historical sequence' but was collected to give a better representation of the art of 'founder countries Holland, Germany, England, France

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<sup>66</sup> Author unknown, "£15 000 scheme for S.A art: wider scope for National Gallery." *Cape Times*, (5 Dec 1950).

<sup>67</sup> John Paris, "Mr. Paris explains his policy." *Cape Times*, (20 April 1953).

<sup>68</sup> UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1955/1956, 8.

<sup>69</sup> UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1958/1960, 3.

Italy.<sup>70</sup> It is not clear from the available documentation which parties instigated this change, but it suggests a very different philosophical approach to that of Paris.

In 1956 the new 'South African' room in the museum was opened.<sup>71</sup> The South African display followed the lines of Paris' early policy with a focus on the Liberman Gallery. The display had a 'comprehensive' focus on contemporary South African art. According to the *Cape Times*, the room was divided into sections with wooden lattices to allow works to be grouped together. For example 'one subdivided wall contain(ed) only Pierneefs and (was) balanced at the other end of the room by a grouping of work by Irma Stern.'<sup>72</sup> Recalling the selection from the international 'exhibition of contemporary paintings, drawing and sculptures', the works on display included those by Jean Wertz, Alexis Preller, Maggie Laubser and Maud Sumner.<sup>73</sup> On the opposite wall, hung in chronological order were the works of Pieter Wenning, Neville Lewis, Terence McCaw and Strat Caldecott. In the adjoining room were paintings by Thomas Baines, Frans Oerder and Volschenk. According to the *Cape Times*, in this section the 'styles and colors speak more of Europe' and it was 'stimulating' to walk into the gallery of contemporary painters which 'shows a development in expression more appropriate to the bright sun and bold contours of the South African scene.'<sup>74</sup>

#### **The permanent exhibition catalogue and the colour chart (1958)**

The exhibition catalogue and the colour chart of 1958 (Fig. 22a & 22b) were prepared to 'assist' and 'aid' visitors to the museum.<sup>75</sup> They describe a contrived ideological scheme imposed on the permanent collection. They do not deal with specific works but with groups of works in relation to each other. These documents informed visitors that South African art was related to the 'civilization and culture' of European

<sup>70</sup> UCT Libraries: Hiddingh Hall. South African National Gallery Annual Report 1956/1957. 3.

<sup>71</sup> Author unknown. "South African room in the gallery has been entirely rearranged." *Cape Times*, (5 Nov 1956).

<sup>72</sup> Author unknown. "South African room in the gallery has been entirely rearranged." *Cape Times*, (5 Nov 1956).

<sup>73</sup> Author unknown. "South African room in the gallery has been entirely rearranged." *Cape Times*, (5 Nov 1956).

<sup>74</sup> Author unknown. "South African room in the gallery has been entirely rearranged." *Cape Times*, (5 Nov 1956).

<sup>75</sup> South African National Gallery Library. Author unknown, Colour chart illustrating policy of the South African National Gallery (Cape Town: Published by the Trustees, 1958). 1.

‘founder nations.’ These ‘nations’ linked artists to their countries of origins which were also their ‘source of artistic inspiration.’<sup>76</sup>

The concept of ‘founder nations’ was part of the Afrikaner Nationalist ideology. It conveyed two ideas: that South Africa was ‘founded’ by whites of European origin and that their European ancestry created unity amongst them. Applied to South African art the ‘founder nations’ constituted the European countries Holland, England, France and Germany. To these countries white settlers were supposedly bonded both racially and ideologically. Founder nations in the discourse at the South African National Gallery at this time recalls te Water’s ideas in the 1948 catalogue of the ‘exhibition of contemporary South African paintings, drawings and sculpture’(see Chapter Four). According to te Water, the white races were responsible for civilizing and developing South Africa. Their European ancestry and tradition allowed them to tame the South African wilderness through industry so as to reap the country’s bounties. Art was seen as a product of European civilization in South Africa. This civilization was ‘Europa se antwoord op Afrika se roepstem’ (Europe’s answer to Africa’s call).<sup>77</sup> However, South Africans were not Europeans. A ‘nuwe menseras’ (new race) linked by European ancestry was rooted in South Africa’s ‘ryk aarde’ (rich earth).<sup>78</sup> As described in Chapter Four, Afrikaner Nationalists believed that white unity was central to white survival in South Africa.

The 1958 exhibition catalogue of the permanent collection is an in depth study of the collection and has the story of South African art subdivided according to the different galleries in the museum. It is a narrative of contemporary South African art, British art, Dutch art and French art. With the exception of South African art which is located in a historical overview, the catalogue generalizes about the European countries. It leaves it up to the visitor to ascertain any direct influences of the ‘founder nations’ on the contemporary art of South Africa.

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<sup>76</sup> South African National Gallery Library. Author unknown, Colour chart illustrating policy of the South African National Gallery (Cape Town: Published by the Trustees, 1958),1.

<sup>77</sup> Charles T. te Water,“Voorwoord,” in Skrywer onbekend, *Tentoonstelling van Hedendaagse Suid-Afrikaanse Skilderye, Tekenings en Beeldhouwerk: met 'n inleiding van geskiedkundige skilderye* Vertooning Katalogus (Kaapstad: The Cape Times Ltd., 1948), 5.

<sup>78</sup> Te Water, “Voorwoord,” 5.

The colour chart (Fig.22a & 22b) makes the connection between contemporary South African art and art from the 'founder nations' more explicit. It is a diagrammatic attempt in pamphlet form to tell the same story as the catalogue, and illustrates the theoretical stance of the catalogue. It is noteworthy that the preface to the colour chart was written by A.H. Honikman, the Chair of the Board of Trustees and not by Paris, the Director of the museum. Honikman identifies the Board's main preoccupations in the preface and sets a liberal tone. He states that art is one of the 'refinements of the human race.' It has 'universal appeal and knows no barriers of language or race' and can be appreciated by everyone. The purpose of the chart was to make the permanent exhibition more accessible to the public. Honikman explains that South African art is a product of the 'civilization and culture' of the 'founder nations.' The exhibition shows the 'artistic achievements' of South Africa.<sup>79</sup> Thus, while the museum's Director, Paris, conceptualized the display of South African art in the collection, members of the Board interpreted it from an Afrikaner Nationalist point of view with traces of Cape liberalism. The catalogue and chart are discussed in more detail below.

### **The Liberman friezes**

The permanent collection was housed in the Liberman Gallery. This room was the 'centre for the display of the artistic achievements of the country.'<sup>80</sup> When the room was first built in 1930, the trustees of Liberman's estate had the Burmese teak doors and friezes which surround the room and other parts of the museum carved by German Jewish sculptor H.V Meyerowitz (1900-1945).<sup>81</sup> The friezes of the Liberman Gallery were intended as a memorial to the former Mayor, Hyman Liberman. The catalogue uses these friezes to frame the story of South African art and interprets the images in terms of Jewish arrival in the Cape.<sup>82</sup> The description of the Liberman friezes is a liberal acknowledgement of the cooperative relationship between Jewish immigrants and South Africa. The catalogue acknowledges the contribution South

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<sup>79</sup> South African National Gallery Library. A.H. Honikman in Author unknown, *Colour chart illustrating policy of the South African National Gallery* (Cape Town: Published by the Trustees, 1958), 1.

<sup>80</sup>South African National Gallery Library. A.H. Honikman in Author unknown, *Colour chart illustrating policy of the South African National Gallery* (Cape Town: Published by the Trustees, 1958), 1.

<sup>81</sup> Author unknown. *Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings* (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958), 6.

<sup>82</sup> Author unknown. *Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings* (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958), 6-7.

Africa made to easing the plight of the Jews as well as the contribution made by South African Jewry to the country.

The Liberman friezes combine a depiction of Cape Town's flora, fauna and indigenous people interspersed with motifs of colonial Jewish history. Alongside the depictions of 'proteas', 'baboons at toilet', 'natives and flowers' and 'ox wagons', runs a story of the biblical endurance of suffering Jews from various parts of Europe coming to the 'Promised Land' of South Africa.<sup>83</sup> Biblical images drawn from the Old Testament intersect with colonial images of the natural environment. In the central architrave are various figures depicting the 'wandering Jews on their way to the Cape.'<sup>84</sup> They are described as 'the donor's people and the people of the sculptor.'<sup>85</sup> On the left, leading upward, are various biblical images which expound the industriousness of the Jews and their many struggles, such as the Israelites making bricks under duress in Egypt. Various Jewish tragedies are depicted, such as burning of the temple in Jerusalem and the slaughter of Jewish women, symbolized by the murder of the 'daughter of Zion slain by the Romans.'<sup>86</sup> Juxtaposed with this is a frieze of the Jews expulsion from Spain.

The Jews are shown as finally finding solace and peace in South Africa. Jewish immigrants arrive in South Africa, which is denoted by an 'old farm house.'<sup>87</sup> These early settlers are depicted, in the character of 'Old Moses of the eighteen twenties pushing a barrow.'<sup>88</sup> The cycle of Jewish strife ends with a group celebrating rest and peace in the Promised Land. Above the lintel is another biblical reference, 'Rebecca (is) at a well giving water to Eleazer, proclaiming hospitality' in the new land.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Author unknown. *Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings* (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958). 6.

<sup>84</sup> Author unknown. *Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings* (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958). 6.

<sup>85</sup> Author unknown. *Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings* (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958). 6.

<sup>86</sup> Author unknown. *Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings* (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958). 6.

<sup>87</sup> Author unknown. *Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings* (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958). 7.

<sup>88</sup> Author unknown. *Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings* (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958). 7.

<sup>89</sup> Author unknown. *Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings* (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958). 7.

In contrast, indigenous people are portrayed as passive and generous and are linked to the natural environment. The last panel is named 'land of milk and honey.' It portrays the people of Cape Town celebrating the land's abundance and offering no resistance to the encroaching colonists.<sup>90</sup> 'Malay boys carry fish and grapes' bearing fruits of the earth and sea, 'a native girl stands beside a ripe maize plant' symbolizing the fecundity of the land, while a 'native warrior leans on his shield' showing no hostility.<sup>91</sup>

### **The South African collection in the Liberman room**

Following the description of the Liberman friezes, the catalogue tells a story of 'South African art', in order to contextualize the art in this gallery. The story in the catalogue combines three main ideas. To begin with, the successes of colonialism and 'progress' account for the presence of art in South Africa. The political stability experienced after the formation of Union allowed a unique South African art to form. Finally, the identification of three distinct strands of artistic development, derived from the 'founder nations' allowed South African art to thrive and to become 'self conscious.'<sup>92</sup>

According to the catalogue, the story of South African art started with the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck and the Dutch colonizing the Cape in 1652. At this time, Dutch art had reached its apex but none of its influence was seen in South African art. The earliest depictions of the Cape were produced by travelers, missionaries and explorers and were 'romantic reconstructions' of the landscape.<sup>93</sup> The artists working in this tradition were Baines, Bowler and Poortermans. At this time 'there was no immediate local tradition.' Far from Europe, there was no 'fine hierarchy of religious art to set a standard.'<sup>94</sup> Progress began when 'trekking wagons' became houses and the 'tin shanties of the mining towns became cities.' A more settled way of life arose and

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<sup>90</sup> Author unknown. *Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings* (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958), 6.

<sup>91</sup> Author unknown. *Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings* (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958), 6.

<sup>92</sup> Author unknown. *Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings* (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958), 7.

<sup>93</sup> Author unknown. *Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings* (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958), 8.

<sup>94</sup> Author unknown. *Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings* (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958), 7.

there was a greater demand for art. While ‘taste takes time’, with economic progress its growth was ‘sure-footed.’<sup>95</sup> Art followed ‘progress’, political stability and white unity. According to the catalogue, ‘peace had to succeed war, Union had to succeed separate endeavor, before any self conscious South African art could arise.’<sup>96</sup> Only after this occurrence could South African art begin to ‘transplant the European idiom.’<sup>97</sup> South African artists had to be conscious of their unique physical and social environment, with a ‘soil ancient as time, where the golden artifact and the object of ivory still lies buried.’<sup>98</sup>

Three ‘threads’ of South African art were discernable as contemporary South African artists began to identify with their unique environment. These ‘threads’ or influences showed a development from the trends of European art but were adapted to the South African ‘idiom’ and environment.<sup>99</sup> The first thread starts with English topographers such as Baines. Another came from Dutch artists through the influences of Oerder and Wenning seen in the work of Pierneef. The third thread was from German Expressionism whose influence could be seen in the work of Stern and Laubser.<sup>100</sup>

The colour chart (Fig. 22a & 22b) describes the influences of the ‘founder nations’ in greater detail and makes a stronger connection between contemporary South African artists and their European influences. It contains a diagram consisting of three concentric circles with South African art in the Liberman Gallery at its centre. The first ring is described as the ‘direct sources of South African art.’ These are categorized as Dutch 19th century art, English 19th and 20th century art, Modern continental movements and German Expressionism. Beyond these section is earlier art from the ‘founder nations’, namely Dutch 17th and British 18th century art. In the

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<sup>95</sup> Author unknown. *Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings* (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958), 8.

<sup>96</sup> Author unknown. *Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings* (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958), 7.

<sup>97</sup> Author unknown. *Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings* (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958), 8.

<sup>98</sup> Author unknown. *Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings* (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958), 8.

<sup>99</sup> Author unknown. *Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings* (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958), 8.

<sup>100</sup> Author unknown. *Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings* (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958), 8.

outer circle are 'important early masters of all schools in their own right', the masters 'from whom artists of the founder nations in turn derive.'<sup>101</sup>

The chart illustrates that Dutch art influenced Wenning, Oerder and Pierneef. German Expressionism influenced Stern and Laubser. English art influenced Lewis, Goodman and Shephard and Continental Modern schools influenced Sumner and van Essche.<sup>102</sup> By separating South African artists into 'groups' the chart illustrates that it was natural for white artists in South Africa to be drawn to the art of the 'founder nations.' There is no attempt to explore any specific similarities between the works of the 'founders' and the South African artists. The chart simply infers that these artists derived the most influence from the countries of their ancestors.

The catalogue details the character of the art of the 'founder nations.' The two main influences of South African art derived from Britain and Holland. The catalogue attempts to give a general 'feeling' of the art of these countries. English landscape in the mid-1800s grew out of a 'love of the land' and it was 'conditioned throughout by economic changes.' English art at this time speaks of an age of industry and 'high-mindedness.'<sup>103</sup> In contrast, the Dutch school of the seventeenth century is described as 'homely and domestic' whose influence cannot be overemphasized in the 'background of South African life, culture and the Afrikaans language.'<sup>104</sup> This art is described as the 'art of the earth' not 'of visionaries.' It is an art that is 'unsurprising and unspectacular but tender.' According to the catalogue the best of Holland is 'taste, temperance, slowness and good craftsmanship.'<sup>105</sup>

### **The catalogue, the chart and Paris (1958-1962)**

The catalogue of the permanent exhibition and the colour chart indicate a shift of ideology at the South African National Gallery. There was a new emphasis on an

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<sup>101</sup> South African National Gallery Library. Author unknown. Colour chart illustrating policy of the South African National Gallery (Cape Town: Published by the Trustees, 1958), 2.

<sup>102</sup> South African National Gallery Library. Author unknown. Colour chart illustrating policy of the South African National Gallery (Cape Town: Published by the Trustees, 1958), 2.

<sup>103</sup> Author unknown. *Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings* (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958), Section 3.

<sup>104</sup> Author unknown. *Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings* (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958), Section 3.

<sup>105</sup> Author unknown. *Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings* (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958), Section 3.

Afrikaner Nationalist ideology through ideas about the 'founder nations' but concurrently, there were also traces of an enduring Cape liberal ideology. By 1958, Paris' early ideas were supplanted to accommodate these ideologies. His ideas on South African art followed a linear progression from indigenous art. These were discarded in favor of the 'founder nation' theory, where South African artists could be linked to European art but separated from indigenous art. The catalogue describes the Atrium where Paris displayed indigenous art. It states that it contained examples of 'South African rock engravings and Bantu sculpture' but that these works were to be cross referenced to 'certain forms of Modern European art' in the display. This would highlight that Modern art was 'greatly influenced by the primitive vigor of African art.'<sup>106</sup>

Following the opening of the permanent exhibition in 1958, Paris made no public comment regarding the permanent display and he passed no significant policy. With the appearance of the new committees it appears that his position at the museum had changed. Large collections were still arriving at the museum and drawing considerable crowds.<sup>107</sup> In 1959 with the arrival of the Robinson collection, Paris hinted at what was occurring behind closed doors at the museum. Paris asserted almost wistfully that 'a nation is judged not by its politics but by its arts.'<sup>108</sup> If Cape Town were destroyed 'her civilization would be estimated not by her momentary contentions, but by the things her people have made.'<sup>109</sup>

In 1962, Paris left the South African National Gallery. In the same year he wrote an article about the museum's main achievements over the last thirteen years. He described his stay as 'a time of struggles and endeavour, high hopes and disappointments, of storms and clashes.'<sup>110</sup> He emphasized the European collections which came to the museum in the form of the 'Sir Alfred Beit Collection, the Hughes Collection and the Robinson Collection.' According to Paris, 'these things changed

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<sup>106</sup> Author unknown. *Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings* (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958),5.

<sup>107</sup> Author unknown, "Opening of £1, 000, 000 art exhibition will be a gala occasion," *Cape Times*, (4 Apr 1959).

John Paris, "Robinson Collection: loss would be tragedy for S.A.," *Cape Times*, (10 Mar 1961).

<sup>108</sup> John Paris, "Robinson Collection: loss would be tragedy for S.A.," *Cape Times*, (10 Mar 1961).

<sup>109</sup> John Paris, "Robinson collection: loss would be a tragedy for S.A.," *Cape Times*, (10 Mar 1961).

<sup>110</sup> John Paris, "Proud city possession needs aid: SA Gallery's great work over 13 years," *Cape Times*, (12 Jan 1962).

the whole balance and standard of criticism in South Africa.’<sup>111</sup> He made no mention of the collection of South African art in this article, an extraordinary omission considering the time and effort he had expended on the permanent collection during the first half of his tenure. Instead, he made a plea for donations for the institution to ‘move forward.’ According to Paris ‘what happens next may be chance or miracle but like any other future it remains to be hoped for with a high heart.’<sup>112</sup>

### **Conclusion**

This chapter investigated the changes that occurred at the South African National Gallery during Paris’ tenure as Director. From his arrival at the museum Paris sought to recast display policy. Many of his ideas were implemented in the permanent collection in 1956. In 1958 a changed discourse was superimposed on the collection through the accompanying catalogue and colour chart. The ideological shifts suggested a move away from Cape liberalism and a strengthening of Afrikaner Nationalism. This shift was probably imposed by Board members seeking ideological control over the official story of South African art. But we cannot say this definitively until the South African National Gallery allows researchers access to their archives. After 1958 Paris seems to have been marginalized somewhat- his public statements were limited to announcing the arrival of new traveling exhibitions and his ‘farewell’ article makes no mention of South African art. Paris left the museum as ‘high Apartheid’ took hold of national politics.

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<sup>111</sup> John Paris, “Proud city possession needs aid: SA Gallery’s great work over 13 years,” *Cape Times*, (12 Jan 1962).

<sup>112</sup> John Paris, “Proud city possession needs aid: SA Gallery’s great work over 13 years,” *Cape Times*, (12 Jan 1962).

## Conclusion

From its inception in 1871 to the end of Paris' directorship in 1962, the South African National Gallery was a place where various constituencies were included and excluded. Until the crisis of 1947, the museum's position as a colonial institution was reinforced by the conservative ideas held by its then Director and the head of the Board of Trustees, both of whom had strong ties to the British Imperial project. As a consequence of the 1947 Commission of Enquiry and strengthening Afrikaner Nationalist temperament in government, the museum had to accommodate changed notions of South African identity in its collection and display practices. By 1962, the museum was overshadowed by Afrikaner Nationalism, but not entirely overwhelmed.

The conservative, colonial identity of the South African National Gallery is part of its enduring legacy. In the 1940s the museum's Director positioned the institution firmly within a conservative Imperial praxis. In 1941 he sought to discredit Modern Art and proclaimed that he had started a new national school of painting. The chair of the Board of Trustees echoed the Director's views. Both applauded British art and its potential to 'educate' the public's taste. The Bailey collection acquired in the mid 1940s remains a defining part of the South African National Gallery's collection and a reminder of its imperial legacy. Furthermore, a direct result of the art sales scandals of the 1940s was the passing of a policy that no works of art may be 'alienated or deaccessioned.'<sup>1</sup> Because of this policy, the museum cannot dispose of works.

The international 'Exhibition of South African paintings, drawings and sculptures' of 1948 began to shape a new story of South African art history. It positioned South African art in the contemporary period and emphasized the diversity of the styles of artists as well as their European influences and ancestry. The exhibition's approach was influenced by a particular political motive – the need in the late 1940s and early 1950s for Afrikaner Nationalists to create a sense of unity among white South Africans. It made a lasting impact on the writing of South African art history. The artists representing South African art in the exhibition became a part of the South

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<sup>1</sup> Marilyn Martin, "Introduction" in Author unknown, *Contemporary South African art 1985-1995 from the South African National Gallery permanent collection*, Exhibition catalogue (Cape Town: South African National Gallery, 1997), 17.

African art canon. This is evident in Berman's, 'Art and artists of South Africa' and Alexander's 'Art in South Africa since 1900: kuns in Suid Afrika sedert 1900.'<sup>2</sup>

This canon and the associated categories and concepts which make up the discourse of South African art history have been inherited almost unchanged from that exhibition. In 1984, for example, the South African National Gallery published an 'information sheet' that focused on the history of South African painting.<sup>3</sup> The publication was a guide for teachers and complemented the exhibition 'South African art for schools.' The pamphlet tells a chronological story of South African painting. It claims, as the international exhibition of 1948 did, that South African painting developed and grew with the expansion of the colony. The first artists were topographical landscape artists described as 'reporters' and 'very good draughtsmen.'<sup>4</sup> The period from 1930 is described as the most varied and energetic. There is an emphasis on the European influences in artists' work, as well as their diverse stylistic qualities, again echoing the 1948 exhibition catalogue. The examples of examination questions given in the information sheet emphasize areas of importance, such as South African painting in the context of the 'development of cities and the movement of artists away from rural backgrounds.'<sup>5</sup> Other questions focus on how European influences combine with an 'African feeling' in South African painting or the relationship of European art to the landscape in South African painting.<sup>6</sup> One suggested question asks students to consider the role of the woman artist in the development of South African art.<sup>7</sup>

The years 1948 to 1962 saw an increase in government involvement in art. This meant that art had meaning beyond the museum and also played a role in political agendas. It also meant that as art became overtly political it became a site for conflict and contestation. This could be seen in debates in the public sphere at this time, generated,

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<sup>2</sup> Esme Berman, *Art and Artists of South Africa: an illustrated biographical dictionary and historical survey of painters and graphic artists since 1875* (Cape Town: A.A. Balkema, 1970).

F.L. Alexander, *Art in South Africa since 1900- Kuns in Suid Afrika sedert 1900* (Cape Town: A.A. Balkema, 1962).

<sup>3</sup> Author unknown, *The influences and trends in twentieth century South African painting*, South African National Gallery information sheet no. 88 (Cape Town: South African National Gallery, 1984), 1-7.

<sup>4</sup> Author unknown, *The influences and trends in twentieth century South African painting*, 1.

<sup>5</sup> Author unknown, *The influences and trends in twentieth century South African painting*, 7.

<sup>6</sup> Author unknown, *The influences and trends in twentieth century South African painting*, 7.

<sup>7</sup> Author unknown, *The influences and trends in twentieth century South African painting*, 7.

for example, by the international 'Exhibition of South African paintings, drawings and sculptures' (1948-1950). The public questioned the aims of the exhibition and questioned whether it had a national character. This international exhibition showed the creation of a national settler identity through South African art. It attempted to promote South Africa as a new nation with strong European ties but on the cusp of a new vibrant era. Two ideological threads were prominent at the time - Cape liberalism and Afrikaner Nationalism - which were played out in various ways in the exhibition and extended to the artists represented and to the works on display.

The South African National Gallery's permanent collection, which opened in 1956, while largely overlooked by the public, concealed the continued political struggles at the museum throughout Paris' tenure. During his tenure, the story of South African art was reconceptualized. New policies were passed which aimed to increase the representation of contemporary South African art in the collection. With this new era of museum professionalization came increased public interest and increased government support. State interest also meant a lessening of the Director's autonomy, witnessed in the new exhibition of the permanent collection. Through the rearrangement of the permanent collection, the museum was repositioned in a nationalist South African context and the South African portion of the collection became the main focus of the museum. Ideologically, there was an attempt to position the collection as originating not from Britain but from the 'founder nations', an Afrikaner Nationalist concept which emphasized the European origins of the contemporary South African artists and the unity between them.

After Paris' departure in the early 1960s, the museum management entered a period of uncertainty.<sup>8</sup> A member of the Board of Trustees took over Directorship of the museum on a temporary basis, while directing another smaller museum. There were no longer any large traveling collections such as those which had drawn large crowds in the 1950s, but there was increased cooperation with corporate foundations such as the Rembrandt van Rijn and Peter Stuyvesant Foundations in Stellenbosch. Direct government funding also increased substantially.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Joe Dolby, "A short history of the South African National Gallery," *The Lantern*, (Dec 1981):46.

<sup>9</sup> Dolby, "A short history of the South African National Gallery," 48.

This study has sought to capture the character of a contingent and indeterminate history of the South African National Gallery over a period of great dynamism and change. It has emphasized that, as an institution, the museum was a space which was part of the broader social life of Cape Town. It was a place wrapped in diverse processes, a 'space of flows'<sup>10</sup> and conflicts. An imported colonial form, its status as an institution of 'high culture' and 'taste' positioned it as a site of contestation. Ideas espoused by its administrators were contested among the liberal sectors of the Cape Town public and amongst Afrikaners. In the 1940s, various groups sought to make the museum more inclusive. Since its early collections failed to provide a coherent sense of national identity, the collection and display practices were changed to become more accommodating under the Afrikaner Nationalist government. The museum continued to struggle to portray a national identity, as this remained in a continual state of flux in South Africa.

How to convey a sense of nationhood remains contentious. The museum still has to fulfill the function of providing a cultural and educational resource for 'the people of South Africa.'<sup>11</sup> However, its mission statement now incorporates the need to acknowledge the 'multicultural nature of South African society', to 'accommodate this diversity' and 'support the building of a national culture.'<sup>12</sup> Today, as ever, the South African National Gallery is a site that continues to negotiate the processes of inclusion and exclusion.

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<sup>10</sup> Nick Prior, *Museums and modernity: art galleries and the making of Modern culture* (Oxford: Berg, 2002), 212.

<sup>11</sup> Author unknown, *Select and summary guide to the permanent collection excluding prints and drawings* (Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa, 1958).

<sup>12</sup> Author unknown, *Contemporary South African art 1985-1995 from the South African National Gallery: permanent collection*. Exhibition catalogue (Cape Town: South African National Gallery, 1997), 9.

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Fig. 1. Kevin Brand. Detail of *19 Boys running*. 1988. Wood, polystyrene, paper, paint. height: 160cm.  
Sue Williamson, *Resistance art in South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1989), 125.



Fig. 2. Jane Alexander. Detail of *The Butcher Boys*. 1985-1986. Plaster, paint, bone, horns, wooden bench. Life size.  
Sue Williamson, *Resistance art in South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1989), 43.



Fig.3



Fig.5



Fig.4

Fig. 3. Edward Roworth: Director of the South African National Gallery 1940-1949  
Edward Roworth, "Student days in England," *The Monitor*, (8 Nov 1946), 12.

Fig. 4. Cecil James Sibbett: Head of the Board of Trustees 1947  
Author unknown, "Cecil James Sibbett," *The Monitor*, (17 Jan 1947), 18.

Fig. 5. John Paris: Director of the South African National Gallery 1949-1962  
Author unknown, "John Paris," *Cape Times*, (12 May 1960).

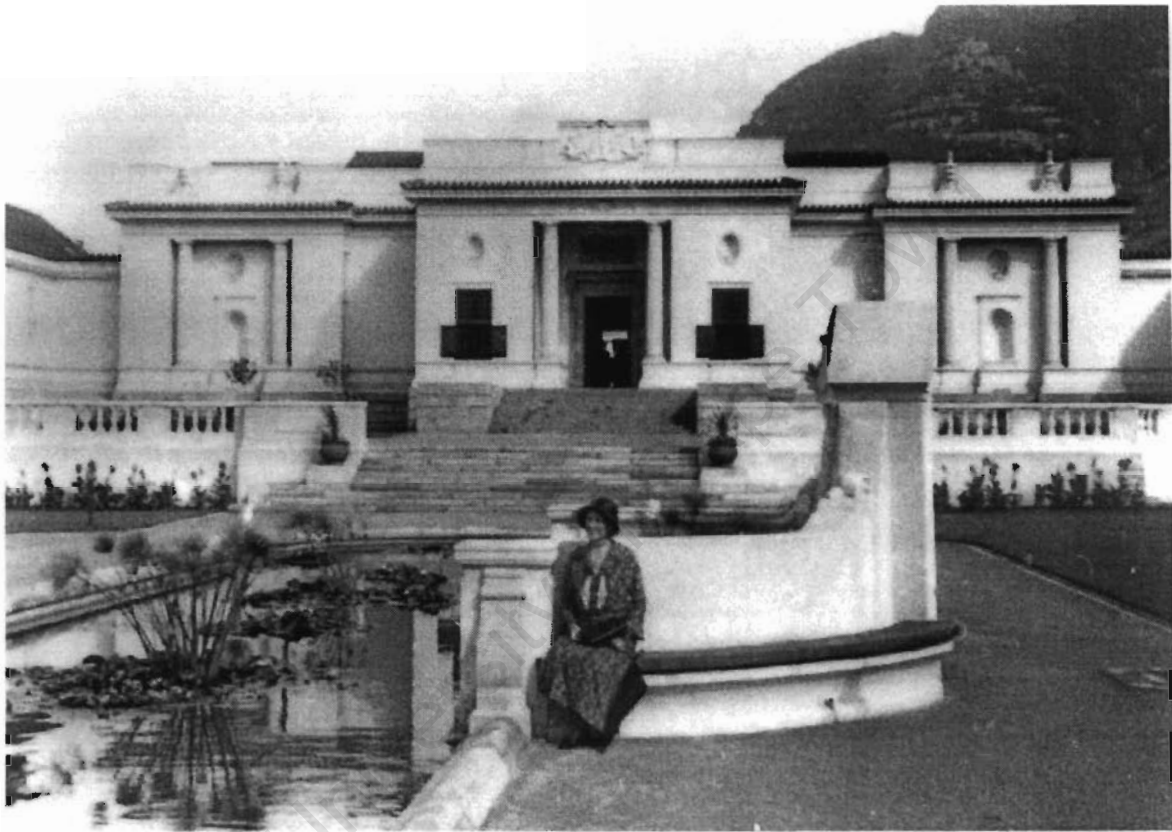


Fig.6. *The South African National Gallery with unknown woman in foreground. c.1930. Cape Town Archives AC 3690-2.*

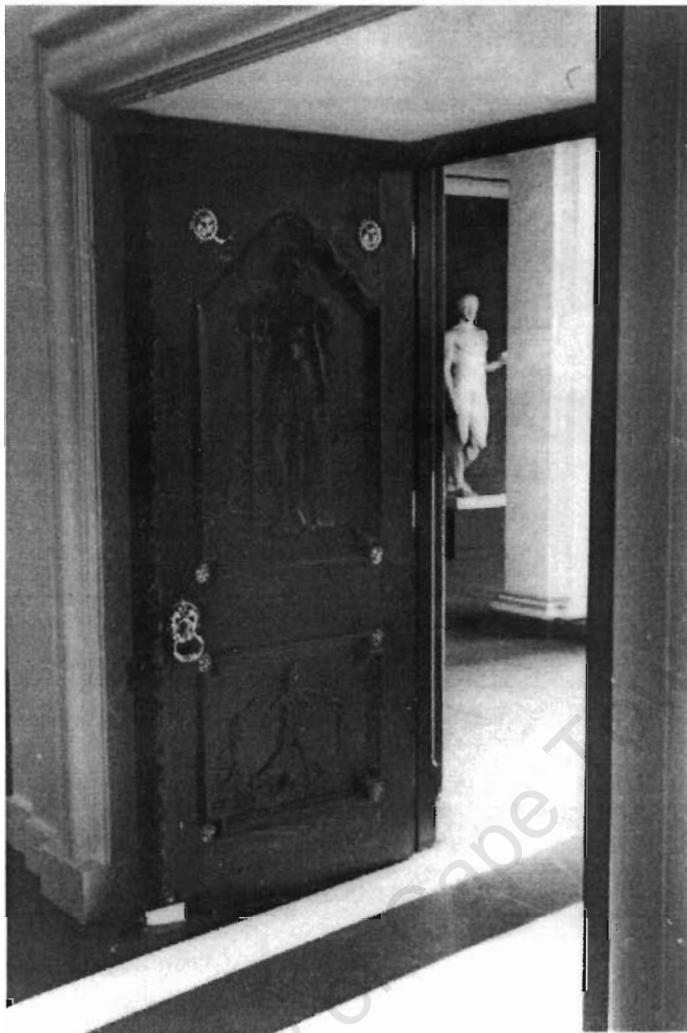


Fig.7. *The South African National Gallery interior detail of a door leading into Atrium. c.1930. Cape Town Archives AC 1400-8.*



Fig.8. George Henry. *The blue gown*. Oil on canvas. Dimensions unknown.  
Edward Roworth, "The South African Art Gallery," *Cape Times Annual* (1910): 8.



Fig.9. *Public Auction by Mr. Krook of Works from the South African National Gallery.* May 6 1947. South African Library SC121.

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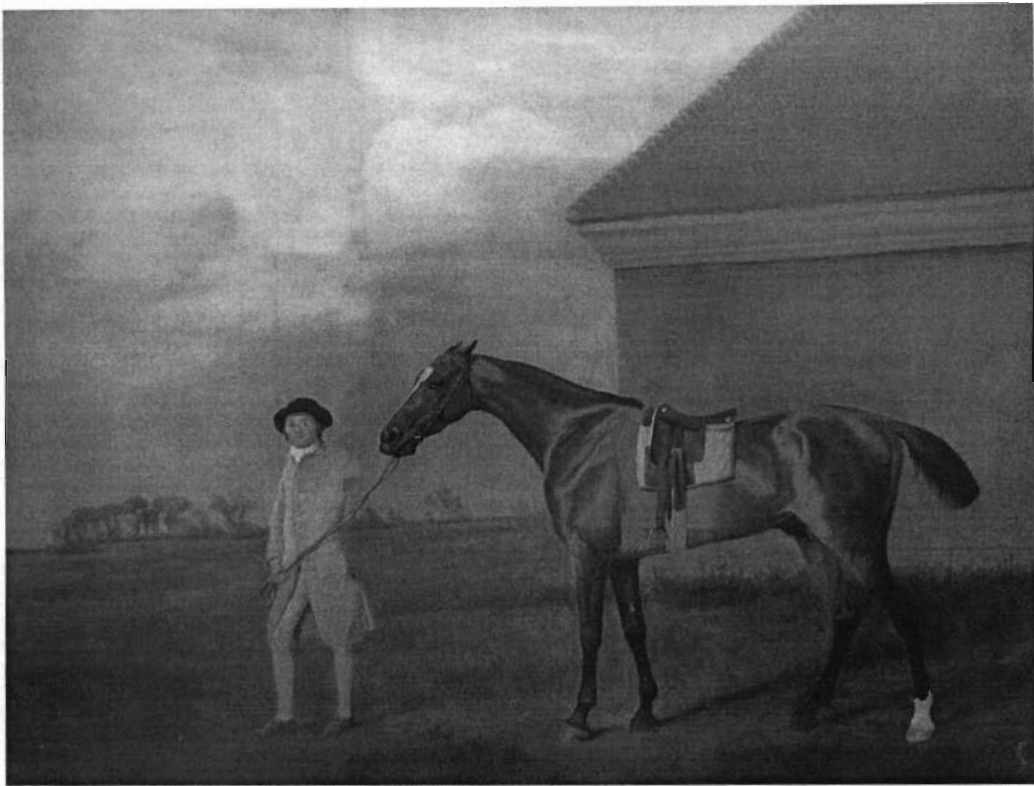


Fig.10. George Stubbs. (1724-1806). *Firetail with his trainer outside the rubbing down house on Newmarket Heath*. 1773. Oil on panel. 83 x 102 cm.

Anna Tietze, *The Sir Abe Bailey Bequest: A reappraisal*, Exhibition catalogue (Cape Town: Iziko Museums of Cape Town, 2001), 11.



Fig.11. John Nott Sartorius. (1759-c.1828) *The kill*. 1797. Oil on canvas. 88 x 114.5

cm. Anna Tietze, *The Sir Abe Bailey Bequest: A reappraisal*, Exhibition catalogue (Cape Town: Iziko Museums of Cape Town, 2001), 15.



Fig.12. Dean Wolstenholme SNR. (1757-1837). *Partridge shooting*. c. 1832. Oil on canvas. 53.5 x 73.5 cm.

Anna Tietze, *The Sir Abe Bailey Bequest: A reappraisal*, Exhibition catalogue (Cape Town: Iziko Museums of Cape Town, 2001), 18.

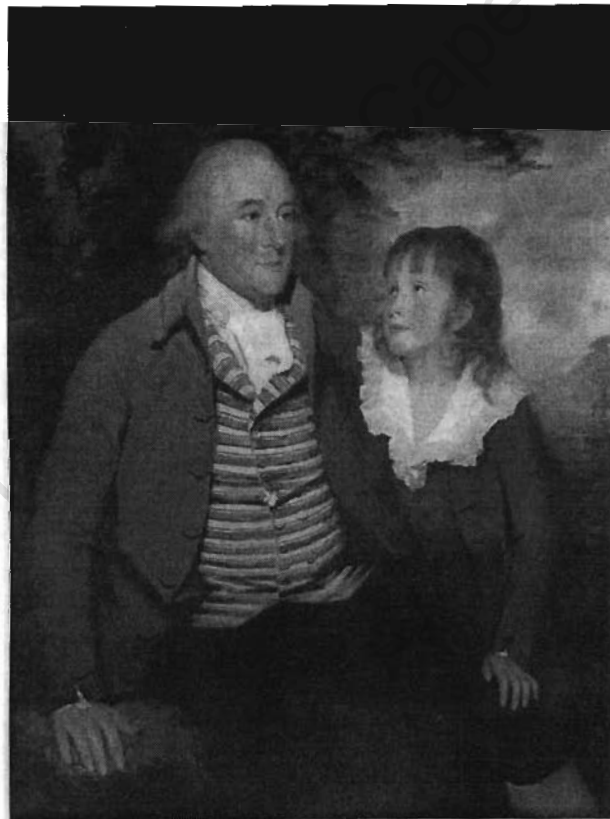


Fig.13. Sir Henry Raeburn. (1756-1823). *William Ferguson and his son*. Oil on canvas. 126 x 105 cm.

Anna Tietze, *The Sir Abe Bailey Bequest: A reappraisal*, Exhibition catalogue (Cape Town: Iziko Museums of Cape Town, 2001), 9.



Fig.14. Jacob Hendrik Pierneef. (1886-1957). *Kremetartbome (Baobab trees)*. 1933. Oil on canvas. 138 x 110 cm.

R.K. Cope, "South African Contemporary Painting and Sculpture," *The Studio*, (Nov 1948): 133.



Fig.15. Le Roux Smith Le Roux. (b.1914). *Verlate Karooplaas (Deserted Karoo farm)*. Oil on canvas. 75 x 48 cm.

Author unknown. *Exhibition of contemporary South African paintings, drawings and sculpture*, Exhibition catalogue (Cape Town, The Cape Times Ltd., 1948),24.

Skrywer onbekend, *Tentoonstelling van Hedendaagse Suid-Afrikaanse Skilderye, Tekeninge en Beeldhouwerk: met 'n inleiding van geskiedkundige skilderye*, Vertooning Katalogus (Kaapstad: The Cape Times Ltd., 1948), 24.

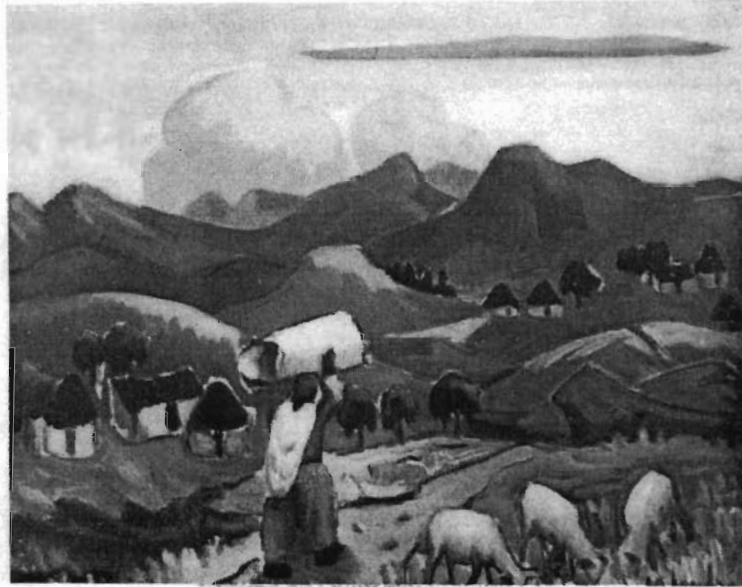


Fig.16. Maggie Laubser. (b.1886). *Landskap met skape* (*Landscape with sheep*). Oil on canvas. 50 x 40 cm.

Author unknown. *Exhibition of contemporary South African paintings, drawings and sculpture*, Exhibition catalogue (Cape Town, The Cape Times Ltd., 1948), 21.

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Fig.19. Neville Lewis. (b.1895). *Blinde Maleier* (*Blind Malay*). Oil on canvas. 50 x 60 cm.

Author unknown. *Exhibition of contemporary South African paintings, drawings and sculpture*, Exhibition catalogue (Cape Town, The Cape Times Ltd., 1948), 23.

Skrywer onbekend, *Tentoonstelling van Hedendaagse Suid-Afrikaanse Skilderye, Tekenings en Beeldhouwerk: met 'n inleiding van geskiedkundige skilderye*, *Vertooning Katalogus* (Kaapstad: The Cape Times Ltd., 1948), 23.

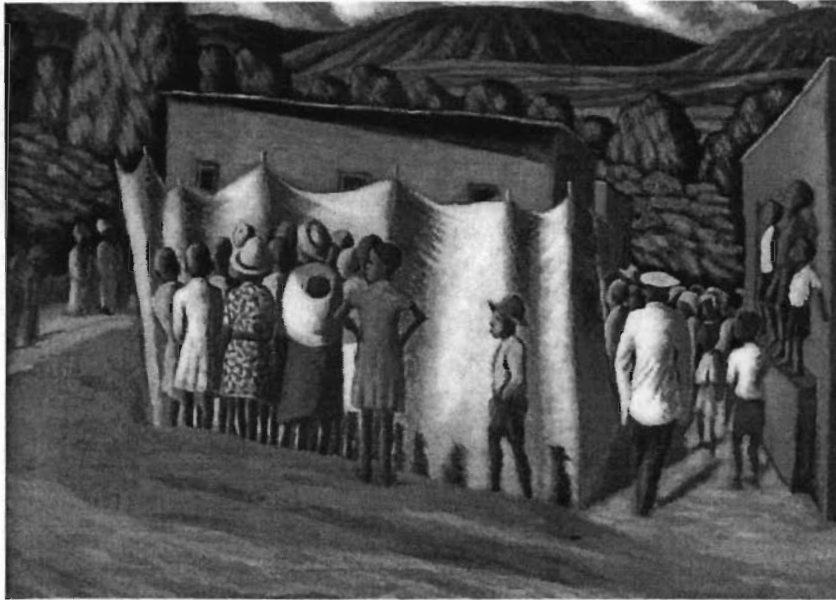


Fig.17. Gerard Sekoto. (1913-1993). *Sikspens Toegangsgeld* (Sixpence a door). Oil on canvas. 1946-1947. 70 x 50 cm.

Author unknown. *Exhibition of contemporary South African paintings, drawings and sculpture*, Exhibition catalogue (Cape Town, The Cape Times Ltd., 1948), 25.

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Fig.18. Alexis Preller. (b.1911). *Basoeto-Legende* (Basotho Allegory). 1947. Oil on canvas. 90 x 75 cm.

Author unknown. *Exhibition of contemporary South African paintings, drawings and sculpture*, Exhibition catalogue (Cape Town, The Cape Times Ltd., 1948), 28.

Skrywer onbekend, *Tentoonstelling van Hedendaagse Suid-Afrikaanse Skilderye, Tekenings en Beeldhouwerk: met 'n inleiding van geskiedkundige skilderye*, Vertooning Katalogus (Kaapstad: The Cape Times Ltd., 1948), 28.



Fig.20. Irma Stern. (1894-1966). *Asandi-Meidjie* (Asandi girl). Charcoal on paper. 58 x 45 cm.

Author unknown. *Exhibition of contemporary South African paintings, drawings and sculpture*, Exhibition catalogue (Cape Town, The Cape Times Ltd., 1948), 22.

Skrywer onbekend, *Tentoonstelling van Hedendaagse Suid-Afrikaanse Skilderye, Tekeninge en Beeldhouwerk: met 'n inleiding van geskiedkundige skilderye*, *Vertooning Katalogus* (Kaapstad: The Cape Times Ltd., 1948), 22.



Fig.21. Francois Krige. (b.1913). *Die Brigadier se lyfbediende* (The Brigadier's Batman). 1943. Pencil on paper. 33 x 43 cm.

Author unknown. *Exhibition of contemporary South African paintings, drawings and sculpture*, Exhibition catalogue (Cape Town, The Cape Times Ltd., 1948), 26.

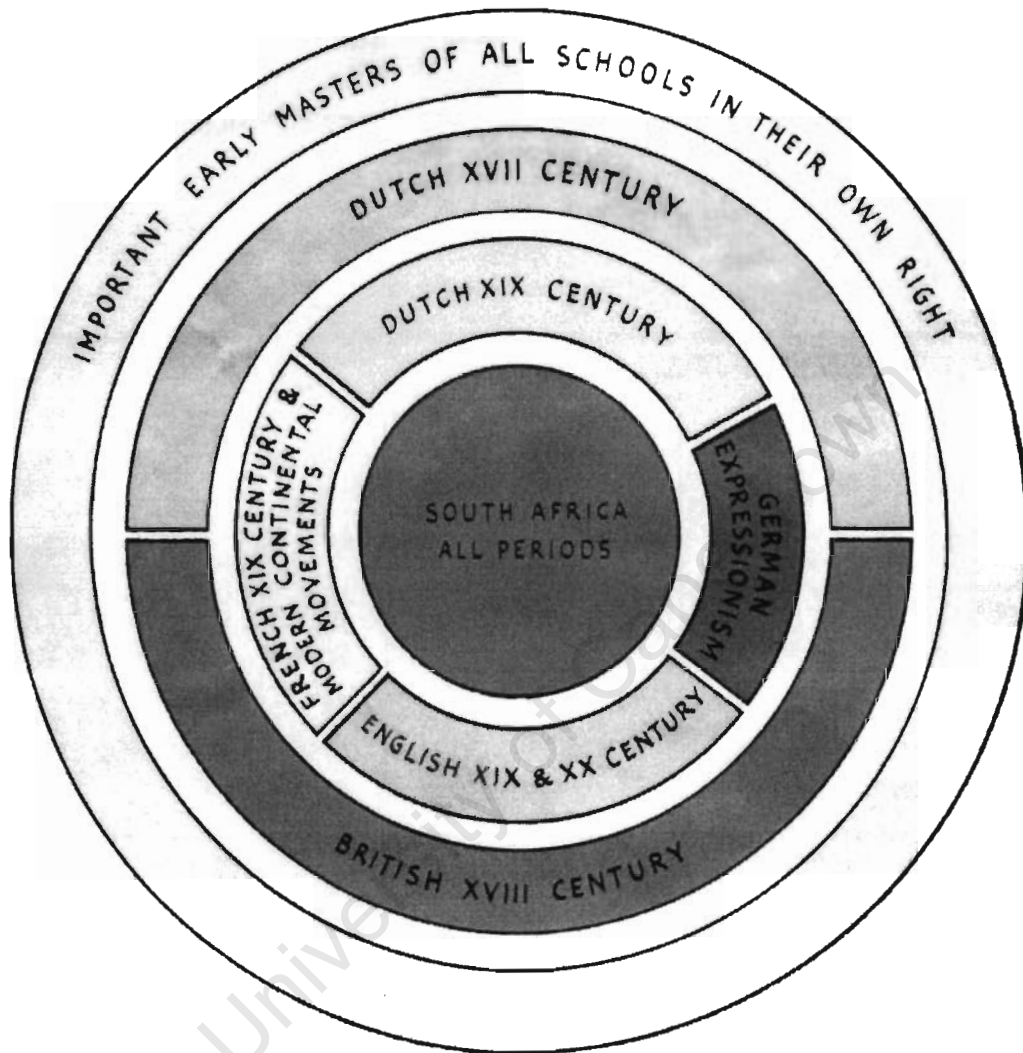
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## Floor plan of the South African National Gallery 1958



- I- French XIX Century and Modern Continental Movements
- II- Important early Masters of all schools
- III- Important early Masters of all schools
- IV- Dutch XVII Century
- V- English XIX and XX Century
- VI- Dutch XVII Century
- VII- British XVIII Century
- VIII- German Expressionism
- IX- South Africa all periods
- X- British XVIII Century
- XI- Dutch XIX Century
- XII- Dutch XVII Century
- XIII- South Africa all periods
- XIV- lecture room
- Z- Print library room

Fig.22a. Author unknown, Colour chart illustrating policy of the South African National Gallery (Cape Town: Published by the Trustees,1958).



COLOUR CHART ILLUSTRATING POLICY OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL GALLERY

Fig.22b. Author unknown, Colour chart illustrating policy of the South African National Gallery (Cape Town: Published by the Trustees, 1958).

**Appendix A: Letter from the South African National Gallery denying access to the archives. 12 Dec 2003.**

University of Cape Town

12 December 2003

Dear Prof Mager

**REQUEST FOR ACCESS TO THE SA NATIONAL GALLERY MINUTE BOOKS**

I received your message on my answering machine yesterday, and left a reply on your home number, but did not hear from you. Hence the fax.

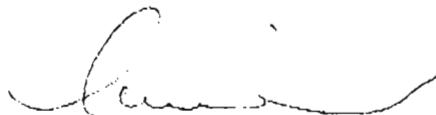
I regret that you have not had an earlier reply from us. Our Director and her Deputy are out of town at present.

I do, however, recall that the reply to your request was unfortunately negative, for various reasons

1. Our old minutes books are not easily accessible at present as they are not stored on site.
2. We have no one to supervise the access to these records. Owing to the confidential nature of the contents, only a limited number of staff members have access to them.
3. The records are presently stored in an area which is out of bounds as the Building Inspector from the Department of Public Works has discovered a structural fault on the second floor. All staff and visitors have been banned from this floor until further notice.

I do apologise for having to be the bearer of bad tidings, but I trust that you will understand our point of view.

Yours sincerely



**(MS) ADRI MINNAAR**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**  
**ART COLLECTION DIVISION**  
**TEL: 021 467 4663**

**Appendix B: List of works sold from the South African National Gallery, from the 1947 Stratford Report.**

Union of South Africa: Report of the Commission appointed in connection with the S.A Art Gallery Cape Town, Stratford Report (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1947), 11-14.

University of Cape Town

## ANNEXURE "B".

## LIST OF PICTURES SOLD TO MR. J. MONNICKENDAM FOR £150.

(vide Minutes of Trustees' Meetings dated April 29th, 1944 and December, 15th, 1944.)

No.	Title.	Artist.	Medium.
812	Bond and Free.....	Florence Reason.....	Oil.
801	Coast Scene.....	Carl Weber.....	Water Colour.
830	Coast Scene.....	Carl Weber.....	Water Colour.
286	Young Girl with Sheep.....	Early English School.....	Oil.
623	Ballad of Jim Crow.....	W. Kidd.....	Oil.
840	Moon River (Night Scene).....	Unknown.....	Oil.
781	Still Life (Fruit).....	W. Hughes.....	Oil.
737	Near Middleton Gower.....	I. Harris.....	Water Colour.
764	St. Michael's Mount, Cornwall.....	I. Harris.....	Water Colour.
936	Cupid.....	Unknown.....	Oil.
928	Group Drinking—Peasants.....	Unknown.....	Oil.
819	St. Luke.....	Unknown.....	Oil.
642	Head in Oval (L'Esperanza).....	School after G. Remi.....	Oil.
747	Head of Girl (Portrait Child).....	W. Fisk.....	Oil.
297	Still Life (Flowers and Fruit).....	Pieter Gallis.....	Oil.
1060	Roslin Castle, 1860.....	R. Rickard.....	Water Colour.
691	Winters.....	E. Struben.....	Water Colour.
1135	Morning at Kaffir Kraal.....	O. Hollander.....	Water Colour.
922	The Horse Fair.....	After Ross Bonheur.....	Oil.
366	Portrait of a Nun.....	Piero di Cosimo.....	Oil on Wood.
752	Scene in Egypt.....	H. Blynton.....	Water Colour.
751	Scene in Egypt.....	H. Blynton.....	Water Colour.
762	The Anatomy Lesson.....	School of Rembrandt.....	Processed.
798	Wild Boar (Picksticking Scene).....	English School.....	Oil.
845	Lock Leven Castle.....	G. F. Buchanan.....	Oil.
841	Portrait of a Grey Hunter.....	F. C. Joss.....	Oil.
788	Seascape.....	C. H. Thompson.....	Oil.
855	The Guardian Angels.....	Probably copy by W. Fisk.....	Oil.
857	Beatrice Cenci.....	Copy done in 1860.....	Oil.
786	Still Life (Fruit).....	F. Cook.....	Oil.
772	Proteus.....	H. W. Trollope.....	Water Colour.
773	Valley of the Rhone.....	Baroness von Cramm.....	Water Colour.
787	Hottentots carrying water.....	J. W. George.....	Water Colour.
1109	On Glengariff Bay.....	Mrs. E. Cane.....	Water Colour.
582	Karoo Sunset.....	O. Hollander.....	Water Colour.
930	Still Life (Fruit and Game).....	J. C. Guillaumet.....	Oil.
848	Daniel in Lion's Den.....	G. H. Thompson.....	Oil.
778	A Spring Evening, 1877.....	J. Tom Lloyd.....	Water Colour.
296	Portrait of a Lady.....	Umbrian School.....	Oil.
843	Boy with Sheep.....	R. Raimonde.....	Oil.
810	The Rivals.....	W. Fisk.....	Oil.
780	Market Girl.....	Reynolds.....	Oil.
920	St. George and Dragon.....	Unknown.....	Oil.
302	Dead Game.....	Ter D. van Valkenborch.....	Oil.
339	Musical Party.....	A. Brakenburgh.....	Oil.
293	Still Life (Fruit on Table).....	S. Verelst.....	Oil.
738	Drinking.....	Unknown.....	Oil.

MICHAELIS PICTURES INCLUDED IN SALE TO MONNICKENDAM.

No.	Title.	Artist.	Medium.	Size.
295	Girl with Sheaf (very poor copy)	English School	Oil on Canvas	25" x 25"
297	Flowers and Fruit on Table	Peter Gallis	Oil on Canvas	21" x 17"
366	Portrait of a Nun (Falsification)	Piero di Cosimo	Oil on Wood	11½" Circular
298	Portrait of a Lady	Umbrian School. (Falsification)	Oil on Wood	17½" x 13½"
302	Dead Game	van Valkenborch	Oil on Canvas	46" x 37"
339	Musical Party	Richard Barkenburg. (Most doubtful and unworthy of Gallery.)	Oil on Wood	25½" x 19½"
293	Fruit-on Table	Simon Verelat	Oil on Canvas	30" x 25½"
341	A Youth	School of Neufchatel	Oil on Wood	17" x 15"
342	Biblical Subject	Artist Unknown	Oil on Wood	—
344	Adam and Eve	F. P. de Grebber	Oil on Wood	11½" x 9"
346	Interior with Peasants	Ludolf de Jonge	Oil on Wood	15" x 12½"

LIST OF OIL PAINTINGS SOLD TO MR. TER BEEK FOR £80 ON 31st OCTOBER, 1945.

No.	Title.
* 341	Portrait of Man.
* 342	Biblical Subject.
* 344	Adam and Eve.
* 346	Tavern Scene.
741	Fruit Piece by George Lance.
758	Tavern Scene.
767	Apples, Quince and Blackberries.
789	Portrait of a Man in Small Oval.
† 795	Bay Arab by C. Joss.
797	Bull and Cow.
† 807	Mater Dolorosa by Salvi.
814	Portrait of a Boy.
816	Spaniel.
829	Small Portrait of a Man Reading.
830	Portrait of a Man. Oil on Copper.
910	The Protecting Angel. Copy of a production of Paolo Veronese's School.

\* Michaelis Pictures.  
† Bailey Bequest.

SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL GALLERY,  
GOVERNMENT AVENUE,  
CAPE TOWN.

LIST OF PICTURES SOLD TO MR. A. KROOK, FEBRUARY, 1947.

No.	Title.	Acc. No.	Artist.	Size.
1	The Reed Cutters	893	E. W. Waite	60" x 40"
2	Landscape	937	Unknown	60" x 40"
3	First Love	667	Betty Fagan	46" x 38"
4	Ploughing in Egypt	907	Gerardet	40" x 20"
5	Trekking near Grahamstown	558	Simpson	70" x 40"
6	In the Sovern Valley	941	M. R. Corbet	80" x 52"
7	The Jester (The Bridge)	898	E. A. Abbey	40" x 30"
8	An Essex Pastoral	895	Claude Haycs	72" x 46"
9	Meadows	660	Gwelo Goodman	30" x 20"
10	Doge of Venice	369	Copy	—
11	Haymaking on Scottish Farm	892	Sir David Murray	60" x 40"
12	Ostrich Farm, Stellenbosch	890	C. Rolando	53" x 34"
13	We were the First	894	James Fraser	62" x 38"
14	A Pageant of Spring	883	G. Wetherbee	48" x 32"
15	A Pastoral	646	Cecil Rea	56" x 43"
16	Landing of van Riebeck	1391	Jan Juta	63" x 69"
17	The Brazen Serpent	595	Daphne Taylor	72" x 60"
18	The Sacred Ibis	556	Crosland Robinson	80" x 44"
19	Launching the Salmon Boat	942	Sir Ernest Waterlow	72" x 42"
20	Nature's Rest	571	Gwelo Goodman	72" x 42"
21	Springtime	891	J. R. Weguelin	69" x 33"
22	After Dinner	572	Frans Oerder	55" x 33"
23	The Crucifixion	574	G. Wyld	60" x 40"
24	Christ Healing the Sick	885	Unknown	50" x 35"
25	Prince of Orange	884	Unknown	48" x 32"
26	Symbolic Procession (Aurora)	888	Unknown	65" x 42"
27	Up a Tree	918	C. Dollman	50" x 20"
28	Love's Young Dream	899	G. E. Hicks	45" x 36"
29	Hardpressed	920	A. Lemon	54" x 27"
30	The Glorious First of June	923	H. Wyllie	64" x 18"
31	Bettwys-y-Coed	847	W. Niemann	60" x 30"

No.	Title.	Auth.	Year.	Size.
23	In the Market Place.....	621 A. E. Procter.....	1877	4 1/2" x 3 1/2"
24	Sportsman with Game.....	866 Unknown.....	1877	4 1/2" x 4 1/2"
25	Baiting up to Port.....	666 H. Larnard.....	1877	4 1/2" x 3 1/2"
26	The Signal.....	1072 A. G. Goss.....	1877	4 1/2" x 2 1/2"
27	The Peasant Type.....	807 Edward Bireley.....	1878	3 1/2" x 2 1/2"
28	Church Farm, Smart.....	1508 Balesdo.....	1878	3 1/2" x 2 1/2"
29	The Long Barn.....	1120 G. D. Pepper.....	1878	3 1/2" x 2 1/2"
40	Table Mountain from Newlands.....	902 G. Rolando.....	1878	3 1/2" x 3 1/2"
41	Sands at the Mouth of the Canelo.....	1320 J. Charles.....	1877	3 1/2" x 1 1/2"
42	Crabtree Lake.....	1140 F. Cornelius.....	1878	4 1/2" x 3 1/2"
43	Seasons.....	903 D. Adams.....	1878	2 1/2" x 1 1/2"
44	The New Open Door.....	914 F. Bos.....	1878	2 1/2" x 2 1/2"
45	A Hedge Wrennet.....	834 Douglas Taylor.....	1878	2 1/2" x 2 1/2"
46	Aravae Pines.....	844 G. Rolando.....	1878	2 1/2" x 1 1/2"
47	A Sunny Afternoon, Newlands.....	906 G. Rolando.....	1878	2 1/2" x 2 1/2"
48	A Zulu Warrior.....	659 R. Lefriedh.....	1878	2 1/2" x 2 1/2"
49	Vegetable Stall in Dull.....	305 G. van Batsen.....	1878	2 1/2" x 2 1/2"
50	Cape Oct and Osm.....	836 A. MacAlbain.....	1878	2 1/2" x 2 1/2"
51	Opelid and Pygals.....	648 Berthou.....	1878	2 1/2" x 2 1/2"
52	Portrait of My Lady Darnel.....	332 Gualtin Stevan.....	1878	2 1/2" x 2 1/2"
53	The Sailing Boat.....	803 Wm. Hermann.....	1878	2 1/2" x 2 1/2"
54	Crane Bay.....	792 Wm. Hermann.....	1878	2 1/2" x 2 1/2"
55	Portrait of a Boy.....	830 Duval 17th Century.....	1878	2 1/2" x 1 1/2"
56	Amphitheat. Path.....	1308 F. Boshien.....	1878	2 1/2" x 1 1/2"
57	Interiors.....	927 Dutch-17th Century.....	1878	1 1/2" x 1 1/2"
58	Landscapes with Traveller.....	264 Unknown.....	1878	2 1/2" x 2 1/2"
59	Interiors of a Man. (Copy from Hald.).....	901 J. E. A. Volckens.....	1878	2 1/2" x 1 1/2"
60	September Roadster in Happy Valley.....	1218 Vera Volckens.....	1878	2 1/2" x 1 1/2"
61	Steady Alon.....	748 Unknown.....	1878	1 1/2" x 1 1/2"
62	Colleges Salsinha Bay.....	900 T. Dymond Field.....	1878	1 1/2" x 1 1/2"
63	Marine Party.....	266 Fra Filippo Lippi.....	1475	1 1/2" x 8"
64	School for Seafolk.....	312 William Fra.....	1475	1 1/2" x 1 1/2"
65	Road to Garcia Pass.....	744 F. R. Lee.....	1878	1 1/2" x 1 1/2"
66	Byrener's Room.....	793 J. Barenger.....	1878	1 1/2" x 1 1/2"
67	Ball Ldg.....	909 Unknown.....	1878	4 1/2" x 2 1/2"
68	Village Festival.....	846 W. Fild.....	1878	5 1/2" x 4 1/2"
69	Hill Tower, Gonsendahl.....	923 Alvar Jao Stevan.....	1878	2 1/2" x 2 1/2"
70	St. Francis.....	921 G. Rolando.....	1878	2 1/2" x 1 1/2"
71	The Cowman.....	794 J. E. Hodgson.....	1878	1 1/2" x 1 1/2"
72	Question : Answer.....	291 E. Ashberger.....	1878	1 1/2" x 2 1/2"
73	Arab Merc.....	240 F. R. Lee.....	1878	1 1/2" x 1 1/2"
74	Portrait of a Man.....	780 F. R. Lee.....	1878	1 1/2" x 1 1/2"
75	King Charles with His Family.....	269 Gregular Booser.....	1878	2 1/2" x 1 1/2"
76	Dutch Maryknig.....	369 Gregular Booser.....	1878	2 1/2" x 1 1/2"
77	View near Wylking.....	1123 E. van Schalkwyk.....	1878	1 1/2" x 1 1/2"
78	Outsides Heam, America.....	823 J. Borel.....	1878	1 1/2" x 7"
79	Portraits.....	1257 R. Ornelo Goodman.....	1878	2 1/2" x 1 1/2"
80	Dormitories.....	325 W. Fild.....	1878	2 1/2" x 2 1/2"
81	Toulson near Barnstaple.....			
82	Flowers.....			
83	Die Tomberg, No. Barbuda.....			
84	Terrace Road, Cornwell.....			
85	Ceylon.....			
86	The Rajah's Bear Boy.....			

\* I am assured by the Director and the Trustees that this picture is a palpable falsification and not by the famous Filippo Lippi. The picture was relined by Mr. Leonard at "NII" Pounds. (R.S. Commissioners.)

PAPER, WATER CHARACTERS AND DRAWINGS

No.	Title.	Auth.	Year.	Size.
95	Uakim.....	908 R. Ornelo Goodman.....	1878	4 1/2" x 3 1/2"
96	A Glance of the Sea.....	912 Sir F. Powell.....	1878	2 1/2" x 2 1/2"
97	Connecticut River.....	1141 Z. G. Haverth.....	1878	2 1/2" x 1 1/2"
98	The Tangled Wall.....	873 W. Lee-Bailey.....	1878	2 1/2" x 2 1/2"
99	Marriage near Worcester.....	1114 Percy Dixon.....	1878	2 1/2" x 1 1/2"
100	Whitby Quay, Yorkshire.....	721 J. E. Drummond.....	1878	2 1/2" x 1 1/2"
101	In Shallow Seas.....	838 F. S. Richardson.....	1878	2 1/2" x 2 1/2"
102	Still Life.....	1286 McCulloch Robertson.....	1878	2 1/2" x 1 1/2"
103	H.M.S. Monitor.....	1087 H. E. Tower.....	1878	2 1/2" x 1 1/2"
104	Market Place, Richmond Yorkshire.....	834 A. G. Ball.....	1878	2 1/2" x 1 1/2"
105	Vener. Richard.....	765 Chas. Watson.....	1878	2 1/2" x 2 1/2"
106	Madison Corn, Cornwall (I).....	777 J. C. Dym.....	1878	2 1/2" x 1 1/2"
107	Ships in English Channel.....	763 Unknown.....	1878	1 1/2" x 1 1/2"
108	Wreck of Essex Indianan.....	701 R. H. Nibbs.....	1878	1 1/2" x 1 1/2"

100	Mullion Cove, Cornwall (II)	796	J. C. Ulan	21" x 15"
101	French Fisher Folk	769	H. Caffero	21" x 14"
102	Brick Kiln near Cape Town	1305	Sydney Carter	22" x 14"
103	The Black Hat	888	T. C. Gotch	21" x 16"
104	Jungfrau near Interlaken	734	H. von Cramm	14" x 9"
106	Omegna, N. Italy	735	L. C. Dickenson	9" x 12"
106	Avenue Protes, Wynberg	750	C. Rolando	13" x 9"
107	Lake at Geneva	1112	Frank Buckley	16" x 11"
108	Auberge de Mangy	949	L. C. Dickenson	13" x 9"
108	Litchfield from Bowling Green	778	J. Simpson	12" x 8"
110	Dawn, Gordon's Bay	584	C. Penstone	14" x 9"
111	Military Camp, Wynberg	779	C. Rolando	16" x 10"
112	Bonneville	756	L. C. Dickenson	13" x 9"
113	Landscape	1217	Unknown	13" x 8"
114	Bay at Naples	837	L. C. Dickenson	16" x 11"
116	Dutch Boats on the Maas	733	Moffat Lindner	24" x 18"
116	Farm near Lynedoch	1302	Bright Fraser	18" x 12"
117	Noroot Mouth, Bude	732	Frank Walton	16" x 12"
118	Group in Canteen	1394	Margaret Hill	15" x 12"
119	Khan Kalah, Egypt	1122	Mrs. Strother-Stewart	14" x 9"
120	Bridlington Quay	831	G. Chambers	15" x 11"
121	Street Scene	667	Ronald Gray	12" x 9"
122	Voëklip Sands, Hartmanns	1298	H. W. MacKinney	13" x 19"
123	The Nave, Gloucester Cathedral	1127	Elizabeth Draks	14" x 10"
124	Mist passing Kloof Nek	753	J. C. H. Griffen	10" x 7"
126	Dolder Gate	632	D. McColl	11" x 10"
126	Coast Scene	771	W. H. Flak	9" x 6"
127	Five Sketches	1039-1043	G. du Maurier	10" x 7"
128	Landscape through an Arch	1058	J. F. Lewis	10" x 8"
129	Four small drawings (In one frame)	1057	J. F. Lewis	—
130	Rheims Cathedral	947	R. H. Wright	10" x 7"
131	Scene at Amiens	946	R. H. Wright	11" x 8"
132	Landscape	768	R. Gweilo Goodman	20" x 14"
133	Knowle Park, Kent	874	Unknown	18" x 12"
134	A Street in Alexandria	835	John Varley	30" x 13"
135	Douaranez, Brittany	1287	Emily J. Patterson	25" x 30"
136	Spring Sunshine in Woods	770	W. Walker	21" x 17"

The following Michaelis Pictures, included in the above list, were inadvertently sold, but were subsequently returned at £8. 16s. 6d. each.

#### OIL PAINTINGS

Acc. No.	Title	Artist
359	Doge of Venice	Copy.
* 305	Vegetable Stall in Delft	G. van Botten.
352	Portrait of my Lady Dorrel	Guillim Strates.
356	Interior	Dutch 17th Century.
294	Portrait of a Man	(copy of Frans Hals.)
354	Musical Party	Jan Horemans.
† 355	St. Francis	Fra Filippo Lippi.
291	Portrait	E. Emberger.

\* Badly damaged.

† See previous footnote on this picture.

Pictures presented by the S. A. Fine Arts Association before 1895, and included in the above collection sold to Mr. Krook.

No.	Title	Acc. No.	Artist
1	Trekking near Grahamstown	558	Simpson.
2	Ostrich Farm, Stellenbosch	390	C. Rolando.
3	Table Mountain from Newlands	302	C. Rolando.
4	Avenue Protes	844	C. Rolando.
5	A Sunny Afternoon, Newlands	906	C. Rolando.
6	Camps Bay	792	Wm. Hermann. (Bailey Bequest.)
7	Arab Mare	793	J. Baronger. (Bailey Bequest.)
8	View near Wynberg	822	C. Rolando.
9	Devonshire	740	F. R. Lee. (Bailey Bequest.)
10	Morning near Worcester	1114	Percy Dixon.
11	Omegna, N. Italy	735	L. C. Dickenson. (Bailey Bequest.)
12	Lake at Geneva	1112	F. Buckley. (Bailey Bequest.)
13	Auberge de Mangy	949	L. C. Dickenson. (Bailey Bequest.)
14	Litchfield from Bowling Green	778	J. Simpson. (Bailey Bequest.)
15	Bonneville	756	L. C. Dickenson. (Bailey Bequest.)
16	Bay of Naples	837	L. C. Dickenson. (Bailey Bequest.)