

# VARIETY THE SALIENT FEATURE OF SOUTH AFRICAN ACADEMY

1948

THE TWENTY-NINTH EXHIBITION of the South African Academy opened at the Art Gallery in Joubert Park to-day. That it is becoming a national event in the eyes of the artists of South Africa is indicated by a glance at the catalogue, which shows that exhibits have been drawn from all parts of Southern Africa. Some nationally recognised names are missing, but the exhibition is, nevertheless, more representative than it has been in past years.

## MANY FINE WORKS OF ART ON VIEW

A general impression of the walls makes one wonder whether the English critics have been quite fair in saying that there is no "South African" art, or only immature signs of it. One realises that they are not girding at the standard of the works now being shown at the Tate Gallery, but that they are complaining that no indigenous art appears to have sprung up in South Africa.

This South African Academy exhibition, however, seems to show that South African art does possess qualities which differentiate it from that of other countries. A warmth of colour seems to permeate the room. There is a variety in the means of expression which indicates perhaps that artists are unconsciously seeking ways of expressing the national spirit. There are subjects which obviously belong to Africa and Africa alone, and technical ways of dealing with them which seem individual.

The collection of pictures is modest and without great pretensions, but its varied atmosphere is pleasant. There are pictures by artists whose work has been well known to the public for many years, others by complete newcomers, but in between is a solid block of the work of those artists who compose the backbone of South African art to-day.

Jean Welz, whose exhibition is on view at the Constantia Galleries, and who was awarded the S.A. Academy Silver Medal last year, shows three pictures. Two are nudes, one, "Clarinet," still in an unfinished state. They are subdued yet rich in colouring, delicate in texture and accomplished and individual in technique. His "Portret van Mevr. A. van der Merwe" completes a trio which will delight the heart of every artist.

### DIFFERENT TECHNIQUE

Maud Sumner shows three works, an interior with figure and two flower-pieces. In "Small Daffodils," which is charming, she has employed a somewhat different palette and technique from her usual. The larger "Cape Flowers" glows with colour.

The Everard Group is well represented. Bertha Everard's large canvas "Evening in the Komati Valley," is an interesting example of the work of a highly individual South African painter, and a close study of its apparently simple technique will repay the student. Rosamund Everard-Haden's two pictures "Pear Tree" and "Water Fall," show the combined influences of her mother, Bertha Everard, and of her aunt, Edith L. M. King, one of South Africa's foremost water-colourists.

Le Roux Smith le Roux has chosen two completely South African subjects. "Abakweta Dawn" shows Bomvana initiation dancers decorating themselves, and "Vultures" shows extremely competent handling.

Among the older artists exhibiting is Alfred Palmer, who shows a decorative work, "The Ferry, Luxor." Erich Mayer's careful study, "Uitspan in the Bosveld," is the work of an artist who has placed on pictorial record phases of South African life which are gradually disappearing.

### FROM THE CAPE

Cape painters are well represented. Ruth Prowse's "Mrs. Trichard's House, District 6" is a most studious picture, and one of the gems of the exhibition, another being Leng Dixon's "Cape Winter." Maggie Launser's strongly individual style dominates a short wall with "Red Sails" and "Girl and Protea." There are valuable contributions from Nerine Desmond.

## MANY KILLED IN EARTHQUAKE

MOSCOW, Friday. — A violent earthquake rocked Ashkhabad, the capital of the Turkmenian Republic, yesterday, causing great loss of life and damage to property. The Soviet Government is rushing aid to the area, which is north of Afghanistan.

A Tehran report says that a shock lasting 23 seconds shook the Khorasan Province, near the Persia-Soviet border, killing 70 people. The village of Darchah

Freida Lock, Frank Spears, F. C. Farley and Terence McCaw.

An interesting wall has Douglas Portway's "Cape Lovers" as a centrepiece. The work is forceful. Two young artists to be watched with interest are Rosalind Hertset and Christo Coetzee. Christo Coetzee has an originality of outlook which may carry him far if he retains his sincerity. A little still-life by Willem Blom has a richness and depth quite remarkable in such a small painting. Louise Young's small landscape shows that she is gaining benefit from her studies overseas.

J. W. Bramham's Rosettenville picture shows Johannesburg as it is and his portrait is charming. D. Lloyd Evans, of Grahamstown, shows an English woodland scene which contrasts pleasantly with the South African landscapes around it. Simone Gast still paints her native France, and Clement Serneels, at the moment living in the Belgian Congo, is not as yet influenced by his tropical milieu. A newcomer to the academy is Otto Schroeder, of Windhoek, who shows a charming still life.

Credit is due to: Alfred Mason for knowing his job; Mary Davies for her feeling for composition, shown especially in "Man Reading"; Hilda Mason for successfully tackling a most difficult medium; Pat Skilliter for her sensitive little picture of Stellenbosch; T. van Noort for a dramatic rendering of an everyday subject.

Johan Engela for a capable, although somewhat sentimental portrait; Benny Gruzin for a new departure; Desiree Picton-Seymour for faithfulness to detail; J. Mohl for being the only Native to exhibit a picture; and Nina Campbell-Quine and Phay Hutton for charming whimsicalities.

### WATER COLOURS

The water colour section is rather richer than it was last year, and is strongly enforced by the work of Miss E. L. M. King and Erica Berry. Miss King's "Small Tree," shows her highly individual approach, and Miss Berry exhibits two attractive pictures made in England. One of them "Fireweed round St. Paul's," has a particularly topical interest, and her "Magaliesberg" has a breadth and simplicity of treatment which repay study.

Deane Anderson's "Cape Cart," is one of the highlights of the exhibition, and Richard Cheales's "Uphill Road" has great charm. Mary Packer's "Dusk, Pilgrim's Rest," shows competence in rendering twilight without sentimentality.

The exhibits of T. Orilwyn-Davies and Pok Yu Kam set one wishing that South African artists would pay more attention to drawing as a form for exhibition.

### SCULPTURE

The sculpture section is varied and interesting. The work of Willem de Sanderes Hendrikz, who has been awarded the S.A. Academy Silver Medal this year, will arouse great interest. The model for the Medical Corps Memorial, which is to be erected on Ingram's Corner, shows qualities of simplicity and strength, while the little "Hansdrakie" fountain-piece adds a playful phantasy eminently suited to the subject.

Mr. Coert Steynberg shows an interesting bronze, "Hamlet," which includes a portrait of Mr. Andre Huguencot. Elza Dzlomba's bust of Dr. Robert Broom is a strong and sincere piece of work, probably the best which has yet come from the hands of this gifted artist.

Gerard de Leeuw shows an excellent portrait head, and Edoardo Villa a simple and dignified "Mother and Child." Ivan Milford-Barborton is the only Cape sculptor represented and his "African Tolém Pole" is an accomplished piece of work.

Thomas Masekela, who was awarded a diploma in the art section of the Bantu Music Festival a few days ago, shows a small figure in wood portraying a man apostrophising the new

aman apostrophising  
The new urban. It holds  
something of the spirit of  
the best primitive sculpture