

CONSERVE FOR THE FUTURE

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CONSERVA

Mei/Junie/Julie 1994 Vol 9 No 3

- Wêreldomgewingsdaguitgawe
- World Environment Day issue

BEWAAR VIR DIE TOEKOMS

Redaksioneel/Editorial

Art is a universal language, yet it is difficult to define and it means different things to different people. It can be an expression of man's innermost feelings and of his sense of beauty. It can be a manifestation of his cultural and religious beliefs; a record of his history, of his development on earth and of his environment. The words of Balzac "Art is concentrated nature" echo the theme of this year's World Environment Day in South Africa (5 June), *The arts and the environment*.

This theme highlights the fact that the environment is often the source of inspiration for man's creativity. In many instances the environment also provides the material for works of art. This can be seen in most forms of art — rock art, poetry and literature, so-called township art, architecture, crafts, the performing arts, etc.

Conserva does not attempt to address all of these, but takes a closer look at some interesting aspects of art and the environment. Rock art is approached from an unusual angle; the wall art of vernacular dwellings in the rural areas of South Africa is discussed and an appreciation is given of the environmental art of some of South Africa's top black artists. Art is a part of every nation's culture and culture is a part of man's living environment. Readers are therefore also introduced to the Department of Environment Affairs's new Subdirector of Cultural Resource Management.

Readers may have noticed that this issue of *Conserva* is the May/June/ July issue. Owing to a cut in the budget for 1994 a decision was made to publish only five issues of the magazine instead of the usual six. The next issue will be the August/September/October issue and the one after that (the Marine Day issue) will be the usual November/December issue.

In 'n onderhoud met *Conserva*, wat op bl 22 en 23 verskyn sê dr Ian Player dat die mens in sy omgewing nie net met wetenskap te doen het nie, maar ook met poësie en met gevoel — "these are the things that lift up the human spirit". Dit is dan ook hierdie elemente in die omgewing wat die mens se gees ophef waarna die tema vir vanjaar Wêreldomgewingsdag verwys — nl die kunste en die omgewing. In die ongerepte natuur is 'n mens omring deur kuns. 'n Mens moet dit net kan raaksien en kan ervaar.

Met hierdie tema wil die Departement van Omgewingsake hulde bring aan al die kunsvorme in Suid-Afrika wat tot 'n dieper waardering van die omgewing bydra.

Die doel van die tema is ook om die publiek meer bewus te maak van die belangrike rol wat die kunste in die omgewing speel — nie net die natuurlike omgewing nie, maar ook die kulturele. Die natuur is byvoorbeeld dikwels die bron van inspirasie vir die mens se kreatiwiteit. Baie van die materiaal waarmee kunswerke geskep word, soos die verf vir rotskuns en vir tradisionele muurskilderye, die klip, marmer en hout vir beeldhouwerk of vir boumateriaal, die vesels vir weefwerk, ens, word ook uit die natuur verkry.

Conserva fokus in hierdie uitgawe op sommige aspekte van kuns in die omgewing.

Lesers het dalk opgemerk dat hierdie uitgawe van *Conserva* die Mei/Junie/Julie-uitgawe is. Weens 'n kleiner begroting vanjaar is daar besluit om net vyf uitgawes te publiseer in plaas van ses. Die volgende uitgawe sal die Augustus/September/Oktobre-uitgawe wees en die een daarna (vir Mariene Dag) die November/Desember-uitgawe.

Louise van Niekerk

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Landscape by Gladys Mqudlundlu. Oil on board. Collection King George VI. Read more about African landscape art on p 8/
Landskap deur Gladys Mqudlundlu. Olieverf op bord. Versameling Koning George VI. Lees meer oor die landskapkuns van swart kunstenaars op bl 8

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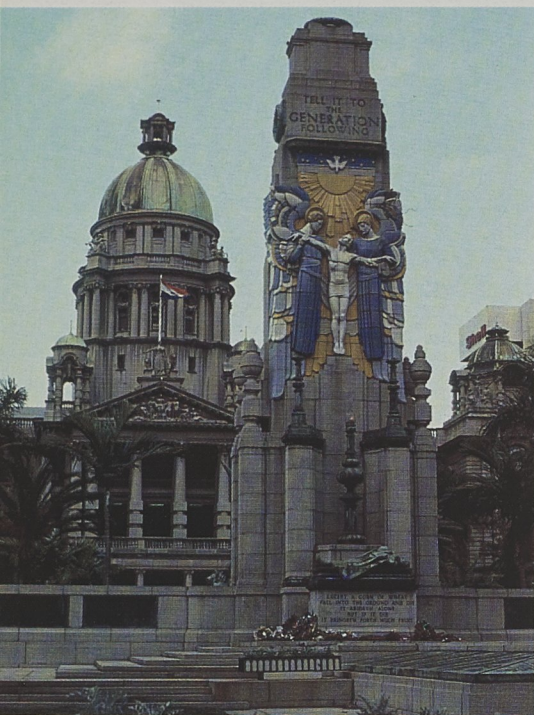
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INHOUD/CONTENTS

- 4 Managing the cultural environment
- 7 Jakarandastad, kultuurstad
- 8 They claimed the land in art
- 11 Lizards on the rocks
- 14 Wall art from the land
- 16 Uit die veld se spens
- 17 Briewe/Letters
- 18 Kortliks/Briefly
- 20 Books/Boeke
- 22 Conserva dialogue
- 24 Focus on/Fokus op

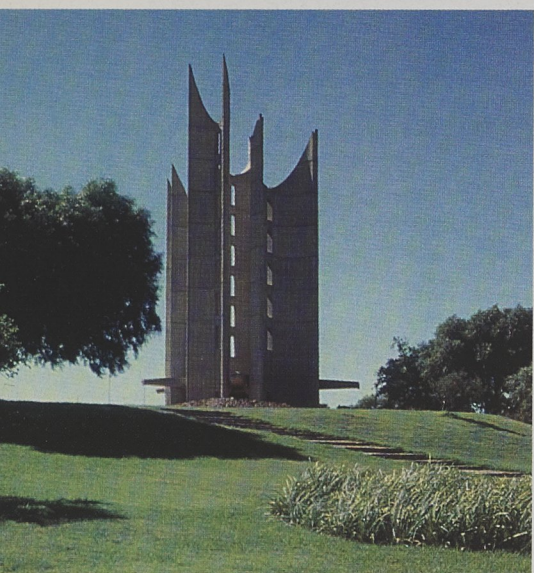
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Managing the CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

*Ingrid Coetzee
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Department of Environment Affairs*



Culture is not usually associated with environmental management. Yet it is an integral part of man's everyday life and is instrumental in shaping his living environment. It is therefore essential that the Department of Environment Affairs must also, in the context of its commitment to integrated environmental management, ensure that cultural resources are conserved and managed effectively. To affirm its commitment in this regard the Subdirectorate of Cultural Resource Management was established recently.

Cultural resources have traditionally been excluded from environmental management. This was largely due to the natural science and ecology bias of the environmental movement. However, there is a growing awareness of the fact that the environment does not only consist of nature, but also of people, their culture and the interaction between people and the environment.

One of the functions of the Department of Environment Affairs (DEA) is the determination of general policy, to be applied with a view to "the establishment, maintenance and improvement of environments that contribute to a generally acceptable quality of life for the inhabitants of the Republic of South

Africa". By definition in the Environment Conservation Act, 1989 (Act 73 of 1989) these environments include cultural resources.

The DEA recognises the importance of cultural resource management (CRM) as part of its commitment to promote an integrated and holistic approach to environmental management. It has promoted the effective conservation of cultural resources since 1986. Recently the department committed itself more explicitly to CRM by establishing the new Subdirectorate of Cultural Resource Management.

What is a cultural resource?

The term cultural resources refers to

*Top: Durban's historical city hall,
Natal
Photo: Arend Hoogervorst*

*Above: Voortrekker monument
near Winburg, Orange Free State
Photo: Ingrid Coetzee*

natural features and human creations in the environment, as well as traditional practices and beliefs associated with human activity and history. An important characteristic of these resources is that they reflect and sustain man's value systems and the cultural aspects of his life. The value of a cultural resource depends on the individual group's cultural, historical, intellectual or psychological frame of reference. Cultural resources possess significance, individually or in groupings, in archaeology, history, architecture, culture or religion.

Cultural resources typically include middens, rock art and other archaeological sites, battlefields and burial sites. These resources also comprise historical buildings ranging from simple vernacular structures to monumental architectural masterpieces, culturally significant and sacred sites, as well as traditional fishing practices, initiation ceremonies and beliefs.

Examples of cultural resources in South Africa include sites such as Paarl Rock in the Western Cape, the Modjadji cycad forest near Duiwelskloof in the Northern Transvaal, Lake Funduzi in Venda, Sol Plaatjies' home in Kimberley (Northern Cape), Chaka's drinking place in Natal, Hindu temples, Moslem holy graves (kramats), historical bridges, mountain passes, fountains, gates and water furrows.

Their importance to society lies mainly in providing a sense of historical continuity as well as group and national identity, thereby enriching people's existence and maintaining their identity in time and space. Cultural resources contribute to the quality of the environment. They have educational and recreational value and potential economic benefits as, for example, tourist attractions.

A resource is basically anything that is of use, and therefore of value, to people. It is essentially a functional relationship that exists between three things: human needs, human abilities and human appraisal of the environment. A resource is an abstract concept rather than a tangible object, and is culturally defined.

Historical background

Recent developments in the culture conservation field internationally and in this country have shown increasing awareness of the fact that cultural resources should, by

their very nature and inter-dependence with the environment, be part of a national environmental management policy.

It has become evident that insufficient attention to, or disregard of cultural resources in environmental management usually results in the destruction, desecration or damage of archaeological sites, historical buildings, sacred burial sites, etc.

CRM evolved in the USA in the mid-seventies largely as a result of federal historic preservation legislation. This required the inventorisation, assessment and management of cultural resources on federal land. In the USA CRM involves the application of management skills (including planning, organising, directing, controlling and evaluating) to achieve goals set through the



Ntwana woman in traditional attire
Photo: Rick Matthews

political process to preserve important aspects of America's cultural heritage for the benefit of its people.

In South Africa it was the Environment Conservation Act (Act 73 of 1989) that provided the impetus for the introduction of CRM. Here, CRM is also associated with inventorisation, assessment and management of cultural resources. However, it differs from the American approach in that it is not restricted to state programmes or public land and it is not driven by specific projects. It applies to policy and planning proposals for both public and private programmes and land.

CRM is seen as an inherent part of the integrated management of the environment.

CRM and IEM

With its new subdirectorates for CRM the Department of Environment Affairs strives to promote the interaction between culture and the environment on a national level according to the principles of Integrated Environmental Management (IEM).

IEM refers to the process whereby the environmental consequences of development are understood and adequately considered in the planning process. The purpose of IEM is to resolve or mitigate any negative impacts on the environment and to enhance the positive aspects of development proposals.

As far as cultural resources are concerned, a properly developed and coordinated management policy is needed to ensure that they are fully integrated with existing and future conservation projects, development proposals and the physical planning process.

One of a kind

The Subdirectorates of Cultural Resource Management of the DEA is the only body in South Africa that addresses the management and conservation of cultural resources within the parameters of integrated environmental management on a national level.

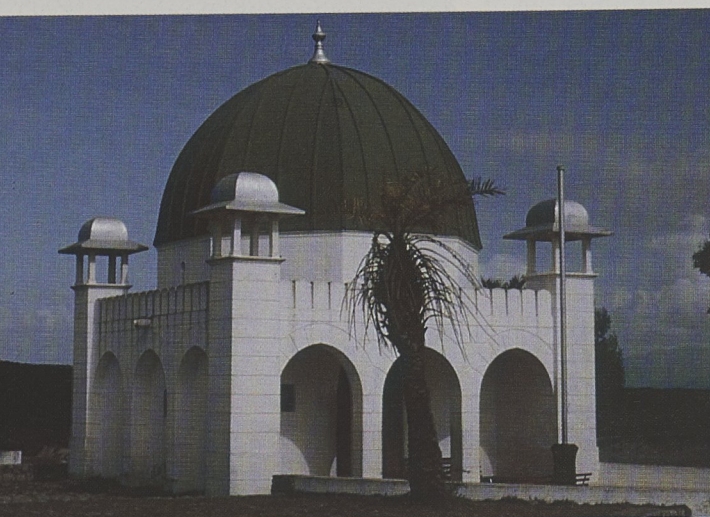
Cultural resources are also addressed on a national level by the National Monuments Council (NMC). However, the NMC's function is restricted to ensuring the protection and preservation of the country's cultural and historical heritage.

The functions of the new subdirectorates are

- to develop an effective strategy for cultural resource management;
- to give advice and guidelines to local and regional authorities as well as other role players regarding cultural resource management and
- to promote the integration of cultural resource management with environmental management.

DEA's programme for CRM

The Department of Environment Affairs has devised a comprehensive



Top: Statue of Chief Nyabelo at Erholweni (Mapoch caves) near Roossenekal, OFS

Photo: Ingrid Coetzee

Above: Moslem kramat

Photo: Department of Environment Affairs

programme to promote CRM within the framework of environmental management. The programme is aimed at all levels of government, the private sector, environmental consultants, cultural resource managers, NGOs and conservation agencies.

One of the projects of the CRM programme is an investigation into the historical significance and conservation prospects of mission settlements in South Africa. As land-use is reformed in South Africa's changing society missions have an important role to play as cultural resources. Planning for their careful conservation and management will enable this contribution to be made in the most useful and efficient way. The DEA recently published a report

on this project in an attempt to sensitise possible development and funding agencies.

Another project addressed the management of rock art in die Cederberg and Groot Winterhoek Wilderness Areas. The objectives of this project included a comprehensive survey of the rock art and the formulation of guidelines for rock art management in these areas.

A study of the state of archaeological information in the coastal zone from the Orange River to Ponta do Oura has also been undertaken. The report resulting from this study will be used in the formulation of a Coastal Zone Management Policy. This will ensure that coastal development is regulated in such a way that it does

not impact adversely on cultural resources.

The CANIS project (Cultural Resource Management in Afforested Areas, Nature Reserves and Indigenous and Related Forestry Regions in South Africa) is one of the bigger projects commissioned by the DEA to promote CRM. The aim of this project is to formulate policy guidelines for managing cultural resources in nature conservation and forestry areas.

It involved, *inter alia*, the input from approximately 50 nature conservation and forestry institutions in the country. A preliminary draft of policy guidelines were finalised and distributed for comment towards the end of 1992. These will be used in a workshop for nature conservation and forestry agencies later this year.

The DEA made provision for funding various other CRM projects in its 1994/95 budget. These include the development of a predicative model for archaeological sites; the development of guidelines for the management of cultural resources in the rehabilitation of mines and quarries; surveys of cultural resources in areas that are threatened by the closing of mines or increased mining activities; the continuation of the project on mission settlements through the publication of handbooks for mission communities and the development of a training package on IEM for cultural resource specialists.

Significant role

Problems associated with South Africa's cultural heritage such as inadequate and outdated legislation and the fragmented, reactive and uncoordinated nature of cultural conservation in this country cannot be solved at once. However, the establishment of the Subdirectorate of Cultural Resource Management within the DEA, represents an important step towards affording cultural resources proper consideration in environmental management. Once proper policies for cultural resource management are in place, potential conflict situations between developers and conservation groups will largely be defused.

CMR can play a significant role in a changing South Africa. It can contribute to fostering cultural tolerance, the development of communities and redressing the imbalances and injustices of the past.





'n Argitek se voorstelling van die hoofingang tot Pretoria se nuwe kultuurmuseum
Foto: Nasionale Kultuurhistoriese Museum

Pretoria het 'n ryk kultuurhistoriese erfenis. Tog kry hierdie stad nou eers 'n kultuurmuseum wat reg sal laat geskied aan dié erfenis. Die ou muntgebou in Visagiestraat ondergaan tans 'n gedaante-verwisseling en sal binnekort, in sy nuwe rol as kultuurmuseum, sy deure vir besoekers oopmaak. Die gebou sal ook deel vorm van 'n ambisieuse kultuurprojek vir Pretoria.

Jakarandastad - kultuurstad

Mauritz Naudé
Nasionale Kultuurhistoriese Museum

Die voorbereiding van 'n nuwe kultuurmuseum vir Pretoria is tans in volle gang. In plaas van 'n nuwe gebou te betrek word die ou Muntgebou tussen Visagie-, Minnaar- en Shubartstraat vir die doel omskep.

Die Nasionale Kultuurhistoriese Museum, wat jare lank in 'n gebou langs die Nasionale Dieretuin in Boomstraat gehuisves was, is reeds geruime tyd

onvoldoende. Daarby is die versamelings wat in dié ou gebou uitgestal en geborg is die afgelope paar jaar periodiek deur water oorstroom en gedeeltelik beskadig. Die aktiwiteite van die Nasionale Kultuurhistoriese Museum (berg-ruimtes, werkinkels, kantore, uitstallings) was ook tot onlangs in sewe verskillende geboue regoor die stad versprei. Dit maak bedryf en logistiek duur en onprakties.

Die nuwe museum sal bestaan uit ongeveer 6 000 m³ uitstalarea, 'n teater, amfiteater, ontdekkings- en aktiwiteitskamers, berg-ruimtes en restaurasiesentrums. Die twee wonings op die terrein word as 'n restaurant en gemeenskap-sentrum omskep. Parkering word gedeeltelik op die terrein voorsien en die hoofingang word vanuit die middel van die terrein betree.

Die plasing van die nuwe museum val saam met die opgradering van 'n gedeelte van Pretoria wat vir jare geen ontwikkeling getoon het nie. 'n Voorstel dat die bestaande stadsaal gedeeltelik of ten volle as 'n museum vir wetenskap en tegnologie ingerig gaan word, het die moontlikheid laat ontstaan dat 'n museum "mall", soortgelyk aan die Smithsonian Instituut in Washington, in dié deel van die stad gevestig kan word.

Aangesien die nuwe kultuurmuseum, die voorgestelde Museum vir Wetenskap en Tegnologie en die Transvaalmuseum langs mekaar geleë is behoort dit grootliks by te dra om dié deel van die stad meer lewe te gee. Indien planne realiseer om Minnaarstraat in 'n voetgangerstraat te omskep, kan dit ook 'n groot rol speel om die toeristebedryf in Pretoria 'n hupstoot te gee. Dié straat verbind die genoemde drie projekte asook historiese Burgerspark en Melrosehuis met mekaar.

Die terrein waarop die nuwe kultuurmuseum

ingerig word is ook van besondere historiese waarde. 'n Tronk is tussen 1874 en 1876 hier opgerig. Dié gebou is in 1880 versterk om as fort te dien. Tydens die Boereoorlog is die fort beleër en lede van die Rand Reformers is ná die onsuksesvolle Jameson-inval hierin opgesluit. Die Royal Mint is in 1921 op die terrein gebou en die bestaande gebou is tussen 1968 en 1972 hier opgerig.



They claimed the land in ART

Elza Miles
Fuba Academy

For many centuries artists throughout the world have depicted the environment in many different ways. By looking at the environment through the eyes of artists much has been learned about it. In South Africa the work of landscape artists such as Thomas Baines, Pierneef and Tinus de Jongh are well known. Little is, however, known about the work of contemporary African landscape artists. Although these artists were prohibited to own land, they claimed its beauty and diversity in their art.



The Land Act of 1913 reserved less than 10% of the land for black ownership. African farmers were either forced to the cities or the reserves. Others remained as farmhands on white farmers' land. In the cities their labour was needed on the mines while in the overcrowded reserves their arrival became a burden on the resources. Consequently most of them were destined to live in misery.

Against this historical background contemporary African painters claimed the land with either pencil, pen or brush on paper and canvas for each and every eye to behold. At least four generations of artists scrutinised the land and depicted its history from pre-industrialisation up to the impact that industry and urbanisation had on it.

In 1966 the Museum for Ethnology at Kiel University in Germany presented an exhibition entitled *A Zulu draws the Zulu way of Life*. The exhibition was devoted to the crystalline depiction of the life in Zululand near Ntumeni. Jabulani Ntuli (1898 to 1988) grew up and settled here in the late fifties after spending some time in urban areas as a watchman, domestic worker, gardener and switchboard operator.

Whether Ntuli depicts everyday life at a Zulu homestead, regiments drawn up in combat formation or a hunt, the environment is always allocated equal importance: environment and culture are inseparable.

These grew out of an ashpit by John Koenakeefe Mohl. Oil on board. Johannesburg Art Gallery



Top left: A tranquil scene in the village Makou near Pretoria by Michael Mmutle. Oil on canvas. John Miles

Bottom left: This mine scene by Moses Tladi is one of the masterpieces of South African landscape painting. Oil on canvas board. Private collection



Another African artist who pays attention to life in Zululand and specifically to Zulu religion is the philosopher of Cezaberg Laduma Madela (b. 1908/9) who is renowned for his work *Die Bantubibel*. His drawings of birds and reptiles (both mythical and natural), plants and landscape features are unique within the visual arts of South Africa.

Simon Mnguni (1885 to 1956?), John Koenakeefe Mohl (1903 to 1985), Moses Tladi (1906 to 1959) and Gerard Bhengu (1910

to 1989?) each depicted the different moods of the landscape. In his painting titled *Krantzkop*, Mnguni discovers human qualities in the focal feature of his landscape. Bhengu on the other hand focuses on the dramatic impact of light reflections from cumulus clouds on a Zulu homestead nestled in the greenery of Natal.

Plight of peasants

Unlike the two former painters of Natal who virtually enjoyed no

training in painting, Mohl studied art in Germany at the Dusseldorf Academy. He expresses himself mainly in oils.

His landscapes are a record of the plight of peasants on the move from a rural life-style to everyday existence in urban areas. One is tempted to juxtapose images of farm-life and those of the city throughout his oeuvre. On the one hand Mohl shows the viewer *The ploughing season in Bechuanaland* (now Botswana) where

the farmer steers a plough drawn by six oxen while a sturdy youngster is wielding a whip. The dark furrows signify the richness of the soil. Another painting titled *These grew out of an ashpit* touches on urbanisation showing the viewer a vegetable patch that flourishes on an ash pit. Against a light sky, maize and sunflowers guard the intimate growth of pumpkins.

Mining

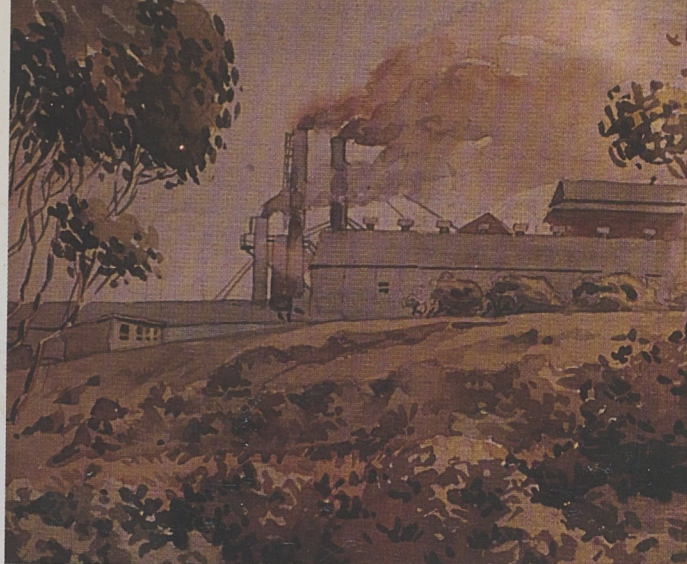
Tladi, who was born in Sekhukhuneland, worked as a gardener in Johannesburg. His landscapes have featured in exhibitions at the South African National Gallery in Cape Town alongside works of Hugo Naudé, Maggie Laubser and Irma Stern. Similar to Mohl his oeuvre also encompasses the difference between the quietude of the countryside and the effect of industrialisation and mining on the environment. One of the masterpieces in South African landscape paintings is his *Mine scene*. In this landscape Tladi juxtaposes factory-like architecture and mounds of excavated earth with the sky and dwarfed plants that are taking root even on these dumps.

Man's activities

For Milwa Mnyaluza Pemba (b. 1912) and Gerard Sekoto (1913 to 1993) man is the most significant role player. In Pemba's paintings the landscape of the Eastern Cape as well as New Brighton, where he has spent most of his adult life features prominently. In his superb water-colour painting *New Brighton Cement Works* he records the dichotomy of livelihood earned in a polluted environment. For Sekoto the landscape augments man's activities whether he drives a horse cart in Sophiatown, transports water on a donkey cart in Eastwood or commutes in a train to Orlando.

Land and myth

Gladys Mgudlandlu (1925 to 1979) merges land and myth in her undulating scenes of the Eastern Cape. She allows the viewer to look at the most venerated sanctuary of the Xhosa prophet Ntsikana. Her childhood memories of that place and the tales told by her grandmother, find expression in various gouaches and drawings in which the perspectives are always exceptionally fresh.



New Brighton Cement Works by Milwa Mnyaluza Pemba. Water colour on paper. South African Reserve Bank

Simon Lekgetho (1929 to 1985) comes to mind as a painter of landscapes. However, he also wove thought patterns of mythical dimensions that involved San rock art into his paintings, thus leaving a legacy of land and beliefs.

Alpheus Kubeka (b. 1925) made an impact as a portrait painter and illustrator. Yet he painted many landscapes on the walls in the homes of people in Dube. Most of them have however been destroyed during home renovations. These landscapes evoked memories of times spent in the country and of farms lost after the Land Act.

At the time that

Mgudlandlu was exploring the poetry of folktales in relation to the environment from which they emerged, a generation of young painters started to look at their surroundings in Soweto. Most of them spent their childhood in urban areas. Durant Sihlali (b. 1935) and Ephraim Ngatane (1938 to 1971) did not eschew the poverty they saw and experienced. Their ranks were joined in Mamelodi (near Pretoria) by artists such as Andrew Motjoadi (1935 to 1968) and Enos Makhubedu (b. 1938).

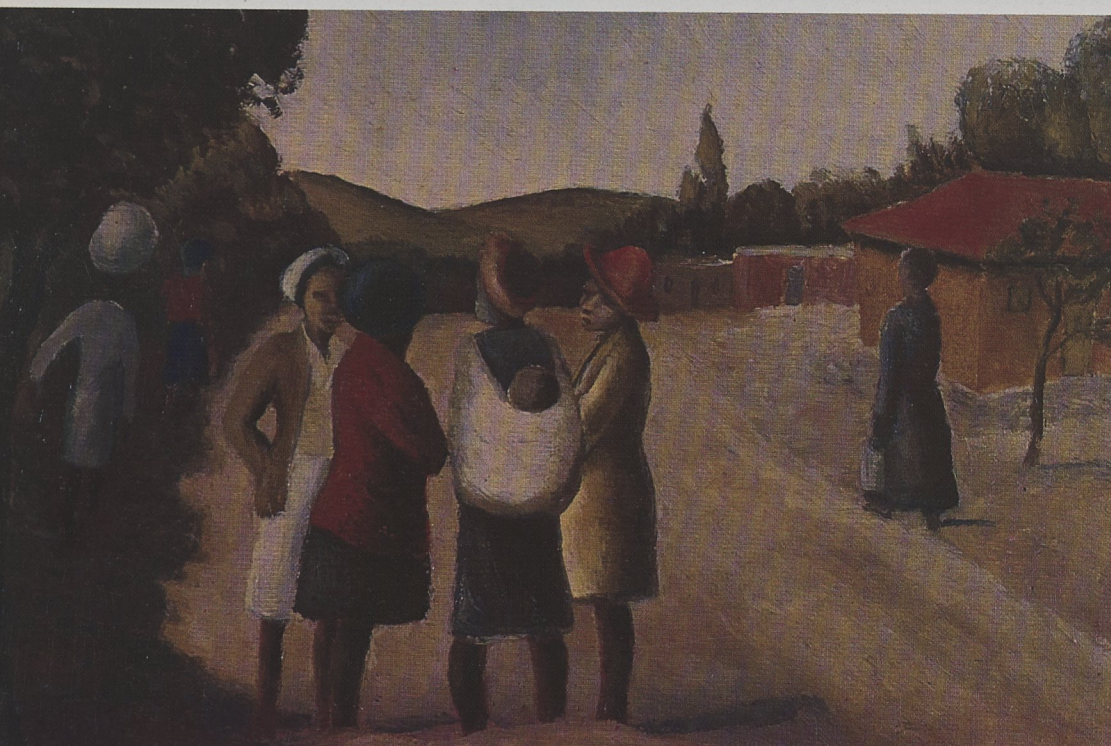
For many years Michael Mmutle (b. 1946) has been visiting a village

called Makou near Ga-Rankuwa (north of Pretoria). He has captured in paintings bordering on "magic realism" its informal squares, meandering streets and variedly coloured houses.

Railway stations

Thomas Nkuna (1959 to 1992) has not only recorded the urban environment of Johannesburg and the neglected gardens of railway stations such as Kazerne. He also captured the intersections of roads and powerlines that punctuate the natural beauty of the Broederstroom landscape. For him the classical garden fountain takes on a different appearance in the painting titled *On the banks of the Crocodile*. The force of the stream is devastating and white water gushes from beneath the bridge. Nervous linear patterns charge and electrify the shrubbery on the banks of the river.

Although these artists were prohibited to own land of their choice they unequivocally claimed the beauty and diversity of their environment on canvasses and sheets of paper.



For Gerard Sekoto the landscape augments man's activities as shown in this painting titled *Village gossip*. Oil on canvas. Johannesburg Art Gallery



*Rock painting of a mythical saurian figure in a rock shelter in the Soutpansberg. It may depict a reptile like a lizard or a crocodile, but could also be the legendary lightning bird that is believed to bring lightning.
Photo: Frans Prins*

LIZARDS on the rocks

*Sian Hall
Anthropology Department
Rhodes University*

Rock art (often referred to as Bushman art), is usually attributed to the San (Bushmen). However, other black indigenous groups were also responsible for some of these age-old treasures. These works of art reveal a wealth of information about the culture and beliefs of the people associated with them. While themes such as antelope, elephant and stylised human figures are common among the San paintings, the saurian (lizard-like) motif is wide-spread in the art of indigenous black groups and features prominently in African beliefs.

Lizards are a common motif in the rock art of indigenous black groups. These figures, clinging to their ancient sunning nooks on the gritty walls of rock shelters, extend from northern Tanzania to the Northern and Eastern Transvaal. However, not all saurian (lizard-like) figures depict lizards. Some represent crocodiles, others genet cats and pelts or skins, spread out to dry.

Colours used in these paintings can be divided into two broad, but distinct categories. The older paintings, which are of a reddish or ochreous (yellow) hue, contain more naturalistic figures than the later paintings, which are done in a white pigment. The majority of paintings in both traditions are however schematic.

The artists

The artists, or authors, of these paintings are indigenous black peoples of Central and Southern Africa and include Stone Age hunter-gatherers, Iron Age horticulturists and agriculturists and their descendants.

Local groups in eastern Zambia maintain that many of the paintings were done by the Batwa centuries ago. These people are said to have been short and very dark, a description similar to what the Venda and Northern Sotho (BaHananwa, BaKoni, BaTlokwa and BaBirwa) give of the Northern Transvaal Ngoni and BaSarwa.

The Ngoni and BaSarwa are said to have been hunter-gatherers who inhabited certain shelters in the

region, and who produced the older, coloured finger-paintings, including saurian figures. These people are still regarded by present groups as possessing special powers over the land and elements. Consequently they revere certain places, associated with these earliest peoples, that are believed to be highly energised, such as specific painted rock shelters.

In Zambia and Malawi it is known that the Nsenga and Dhewa were painters, while in the Northern Transvaal informants claim that their Venda and Sotho ancestors are responsible for some of the paintings.

MEANINGS OF THE PAINTINGS

The legavaan

Somewhere in the parched crags of the Makgabeng (Northern Transvaal) a North Sotho group has been observed sacrificing a legavaan (monitor lizard) to the ancestors (or spirits) in a painted shelter during a rain-making ritual. A diviner in the nearby Soutpansberg maintains that these paintings were used during initiation to instruct adolescents and to introduce them into the mysteries of their culture. He identified the saurian motif as being a legavaan skin pegged out to dry. The initiates would be instructed not to do this as legavaan skin, pegged out, would bring drought and disaster. From this information it seems that the legavaan is believed to have the power to both encourage and prevent rainfall.

The crocodile

Although many informants recognise the saurian motif as representing a legavaan, others identify it as a crocodile, or genet cat.

Various indigenous black groups use shelters for initiation and rain-making ceremonies. In eastern Zambia some saurian figures depicted in shelters are identical to those drawn during Nsenga female initiation ceremonies.

This figure represents both the genet cat and the crocodile, and is believed to possess important characteristics from both these animals. The crocodile is, for instance, seen as being both male and female, while the spots on the drawing duplicates the red and white spots of the genet cat. Red



A rock painting in a shelter in the Soutpansberg representing a white crocodile or a lizard. This motif is common in the art of indigenous black groups and features prominently in African beliefs
Photo: Frans Prins

The saurian motif in rock art sometimes depicts legavaan skin pegged out to dry like this one in a traditional herbalist shop
Photo: Frans Prins



and white in Nsenga symbolism represent male and female respectively.

The white crocodile

The crocodile pervades African thought, representing both the good and the bad in African society. It acts as the totem of many African groups and sub-groups of the Tswana, Sotho, Venda and Shona, and is venerated by these groups.

Among the Tswana it was a serious offence to kill a crocodile. If done intentionally the offender would be killed; if by accident, a black sheep would be sacrificed to appease the spirit of the crocodile.

The tribal spirit of the Northern Transvaal Hananwa is a white crocodile. A carving of this mythical reptile is kept hidden away in a cave and is only taken out during male initiation.

The Venda believe that under the silent and murky waters of the legendary Lake Fundudzi in Venda live the ancestors, sometimes appearing in the form of a white crocodile, to whom, in the past, young women were sacrificed. This lake is regarded as sacred even today and sacrifices of whatever nature are still made during ceremonies.

Witchcraft and the fear of poisoning is rife among the Venda.

The crocodile is regarded as a witch familiar, and the Venda, reluctant to kill a crocodile, will not even touch a dead one with their hands for fear of being called *muloi* (witch). The brain of the crocodile is believed to contain a deadly poison — the smallest fragment dropped into food or drink will prove fatal.

Crocodiles and cloudbursts

Among many groups both the diviner and the chief are responsible for rain-making as well as for the fertility and well-being of society. The crocodile is also associated with the chief and the diviner. It is believed to be a supernatural animal that has the power to produce rain.

A naturalistic figure of a crocodile, closely resembling the rock art motif, is present on Zimbabwean Shona divining dice. This symbolises the status of senior men, representing both wisdom and maturity. On Venda divining dice concentric circles symbolise the crocodile. This motif — also known as the crocodile's eye — is also found in some finger-paintings. In areas inhabited by the Venda and Shona concentric circles in the rock art may symbolise the crocodile as it does on the divining dice, and the associations may be the same.

The close association between the crocodile, rain and pools of water can be seen in the praise song of the Northern Sotho Moletse group. Their totem is the crocodile, and their founding ancestor is depicted as being a crocodile:

*To the crocodile, the invoker of
the waters of rain*

*To the lords of the rivers, the
hippo and the crocodile*

*The great torrents of rain will
come thundering down*

*Son of the father of the pools to
whom tribute is paid*

(Lekgothoane 1938)

The last line of this song refers to the custom of throwing some small object, like an ornament, into the river to appease the crocodile, the legavaan and the hippo, before attempting to cross.

A multivocal symbol

The crocodile represents two opposed, yet complimentary poles in the social order and cosmology of indigenous black society. It is both



A rock painting of concentric circles said to represent the crocodile's eye. In areas inhabited by the Venda and Shona this motif in rock art may be a symbol for the crocodile. It is also found on Venda divining dice


Photo: Frans Prins

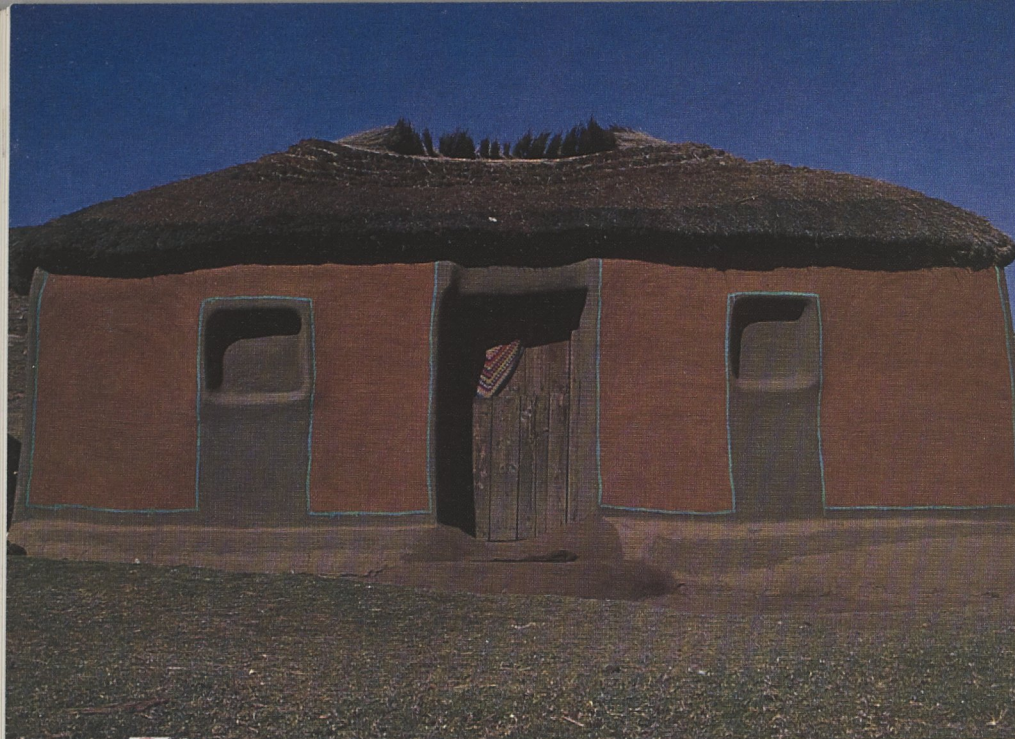
feared and revered. On the one hand it is associated with negative factors, and on the other, with positive. Negative factors include the crocodile's association with witchcraft and poison. Positive associations include the chief, power and status, the diviner, rain-making and the ancestors, old men and wisdom.

But which of these associations are captured in the rock art? No-one knows for sure, but it seems that this motif has the potential to include all of them depending on what purpose it is used for, and by whom. A different combination of factors would, for example, be activated for initiation ceremonies, rather than for

rain-making rituals, and possibly by different people. A symbol laden with so many meanings is referred to as multivocal.

Fascinating treasure

Located in different environments and associated with various indigenous black groups, the saurian motif forms part of Southern Africa's rich and fascinating treasury of rock art. Studying it does not only give one deeper insight into the way of life of the people associated with it. It also clearly indicates the powerful influence both the natural and cultural environments had on shaping their lives and their beliefs. 



Clay and dung from the surrounding environment were used for the wall panels of this charming vernacular dwelling. The blue-green lines were painted with commercial PVA paint
 Photo: Rick Matthews

Wall art from the LAND

Mauritz Naudé
 National Cultural History Museum

The colourful and richly decorated vernacular dwellings in some rural areas of South Africa provide welcome visual variety in the landscapes surrounding them. These homesteads are not only characteristic of the country's cultural heritage; they have also become an integral part of the environment, blending with their surroundings. They are, in fact, often decorated with materials taken directly from the landscape.



It is so easy to buy paint in a variety of colours in shops today, that one tends to forget the times when modern high-tech paints were not available. It is therefore amazing to see the variety of colours derived from the environment that are used on the vernacular dwellings in some rural areas.

Among the people of these regions it is considered a sign of wealth and status to live in a decorated dwelling and to be able to undertake the laborous task of redecorating it every winter.

Investigation has shown that although commercial paints are readily available, most of the materials used for decorating the mud and wattle-and-daub dwellings are still taken directly from the surrounding environment. These do not only include natural elements, but also some man-made components that are either thrown away or that can be bought at local shops.

South Ndebele

The South Ndebele people of the Eastern Transvaal highveld are best known for their richly decorated homesteads and lapa walls. Their settlements are welcome landmarks in the highveld landscape of undulating hills, endless maize fields and grassland. These homesteads are painted in a greater variety of colours than those of the Sotho people in the southern Transvaal and the Orange Free State. The latter use mainly black, browns and white for decoration.

The same colours are found among the Tsonga of the North-eastern Transvaal, the Venda in the Northern Transvaal, the Nguni-speaking groups along the South African east coast and the Xhosa further south in the Transkei, Ciskei and the north-eastern Cape province.

Earth colours

Some scholars suggest that among the tribal painters earth colours are often chosen in spite of opportunities to use modern synthetic colours. Traditional materials taken directly from the environment are of an organic nature. They are harmless to the inhabitants of the houses where they are used as well as to the artists who apply them. These materials can be obtained free of charge and are usually within walking distance (although sometimes quite far away) from the dwellings.



Clays

The most common material for decorative purposes taken from the environment is clays. These are used for plastering and for the eventual decoration of entire settlements.

The variety of colours covers a spectrum from black to white and from brown to pink and yellow. Black and terracottas (reddish-browns) originate from clay types that are grinded into a fine powder and then mixed with water.

The Xhosa obtain red paint by grinding the dampened top of imbhola, a hardened limonitic clay called *roolklip* (Afrikaans). White paint consists of ground chunks of lime that are mixed with water and sometimes with eggs. Among the Xhosa chalk-white is called *ikalika* (Afrikaans: *kalk*). Salt is sometimes added to strengthen the types of shale. Small, broken strips and blocks of shale are grinded to a powder and mixed with water before being applied.

Dung

Decoration of dwellings is usually associated with the wall surfaces. However, structures made of timber and grass also have parts that are decorated, such as the floor surfaces and the low walls inside the huts. As most of the communities have their own livestock that graze in the veld around their settlements, dung is readily available. It is the principle material used for covering floors. Collected while still wet, it is mixed with water and applied by hand.

The floors are not covered merely for the sake of covering them. It also serves a decorative purpose with different patterns drawn in the wet dung. Dung is also applied onto the lower parts of the walls inside the house and on the inside and outside

of the lapa walls. It is sometimes mixed with other materials such as clay and lime and is applied with a brush. The porous qualities of dung render it light, workable and more durable than dried clay on its own. The cellulose encourages cohesion and helps to create a strong, hard surface.

Black, brown and white

The colours most often used are a variety of browns, black and white. Soot, charcoal and coal are sometimes used as a base to produce a black pigment. On the highveld where coal occurs in abundance, it is simply taken from exposures in dongas or from the banks of rivers and spruits. It is grinded into a powder, mixed with water and then applied as a paint. Among the Sotho of the Orange Free State, black is often derived from a material reclaimed from old motor car batteries, known as *mashala*. White is sometimes made from fine white ash of burnt wood.

Variety of colours

As black workers moved to white farms and to the urban areas, their environment changed and they were exposed to new materials and a greater variety of colours. They were mainly introduced to these colours in the form of water-based powder paints.

Farmers whitewashed their farm houses with lime. Lime itself was not a new material, but greater quantities became available as it was sold per pound and later per kilogram. Farmers were also fond of giving their kitchen floors and concrete *stoeps* a coloured screed. For this they coloured the dry cement powder with red or green oxide and added water to it. The same powder was



Top left: Ndebele woman mixing paint

Middle: Clay plastering is applied to the wall in layers using the hand as a tool

Bottom: Dung is applied to the floor by hand and different patterns are drawn while it is still wet

Photos: Mauritz Naudé





and still is for sale in hardware stores today.

Black and yellow oxides are also still available. These powder pigments are mixed with water and then applied by brush. A yellow or cream coloured powder paint, also called *murallo*, was often used by the farmers to cover the inner and outside walls of the farmhouse and outbuildings. The same colour was used by the workers to decorate their own dwellings.

Lime is usually added to any base colour to create paler shades. To enhance a colour and at the same time make it more weather resistant, it is sometimes mixed with salt, maize meal or eggs, turning it into a primitive tempera paint. If the paint is too fluid it is heated on a fire or more powder is added. T H Mathews (1971) in his dissertation called *Tribal Painting in South Africa*, with particular reference to Xhosa Painting mentions that "... to give body to the white (colours), the Ndebele add to the water a little soft maize meal, not too thick. Among the Fingo, salt is often added to the white to improve its adherence."

Washing blue

When small shops started opening their doors for business in the rural areas, Reckitts Blue was introduced. This product (washing blue) was called *blousel* (Afrikaans) and was used for washing to brighten the white in textiles. It was sold at farm shops and was readily available to farm workers. The cubes were ground into a powder and mixed with water before it was applied. As this product was relatively expensive and sold in small quantities, it had to be used sparingly and was usually mixed with eggs. This ensured that the blue sections of a decorative pattern only had to be repainted every second year.

According to an observation made by the artist Walter Battiss, the green frequently used by the Ndebele near Pretoria, originated from a mineral deposit near Premier Mine at Cullinan, east of Pretoria.

Brushes

Except for decorations done by hand and using the fingers as tools, brushes are used for fine line decorations and to draw motifs on vertical surfaces.

The traditional vernacular brush consisted of between five and twelve chicken feathers that were tied together with sinew. Every feather was individually stripped until only the front two centimeters of the original feather was left. This left almost the entire shaft exposed. They were tied together in a bunch and produced a brush with a fine tip about 12 cm long. Today commercial paint brushes are bought from local stores. Old tooth brushes are also used, especially to draw lines with.

River stones

In the eastern Orange Free State the Sotho people also use small river stones to decorate their walls. The stones are imbedded into the wet and soft clay plaster on the exterior of their dwellings.

Although the most common designs are triangles, squares and parallelograms, the odd small circular motif tends to appear between corner patterns and strip designs. These little circles are not drawn by hand alone. Small bottle jar tops are used as matrices as they are easy to acquire and to hold with one hand while the tracing is done with the other.

Cement

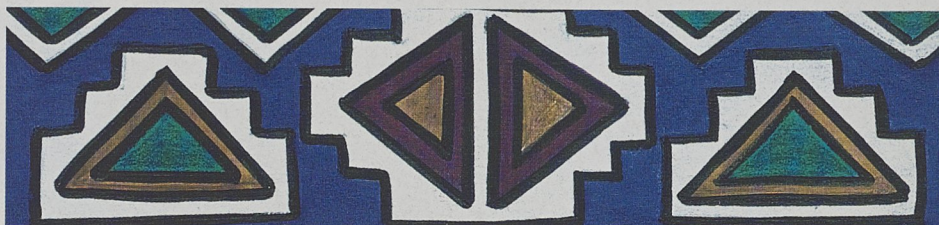
Vernacular buildings are still built with clay, dung and timber taken from the surrounding environment. The oldest types of decorations (other than painting on the walls) are the patterns drawn directly into the wet clay as well as the modelling of the wet clay to shape door posts, steps and benches (inside the dwellings). This eventually developed into elaborately sculpted entrances and facades.

Unfortunately the modern trend to use cement for mortar and plastering, leaves the builder and the wall decorator with no option but to stop decorating their houses in this way. Decoration was traditionally done by using the naked hand as a tool to model and draw lines in the wet clay (plaster). If cement is used this cannot be done, since the continuous direct contact of human skin with raw cement mixtures causes the skin to crack and deteriorate.

As the use of cement inevitably played a role in the disappearance of certain types of sculpted wall decorations, the availability of mass-produced paints and other building materials also has an impact on the decoration of the vernacular buildings in the rural areas. It is however, encouraging to see that the variety of commercial goods that are available are not necessarily preferred by those skillful decorators whose dwellings enhance rather than intrude on the natural environment.



Reckitts Blue and yellow PVA paint were used to decorate this Sotho dwelling of clay in the Eastern Free State
Photo: Jan du Bruyn

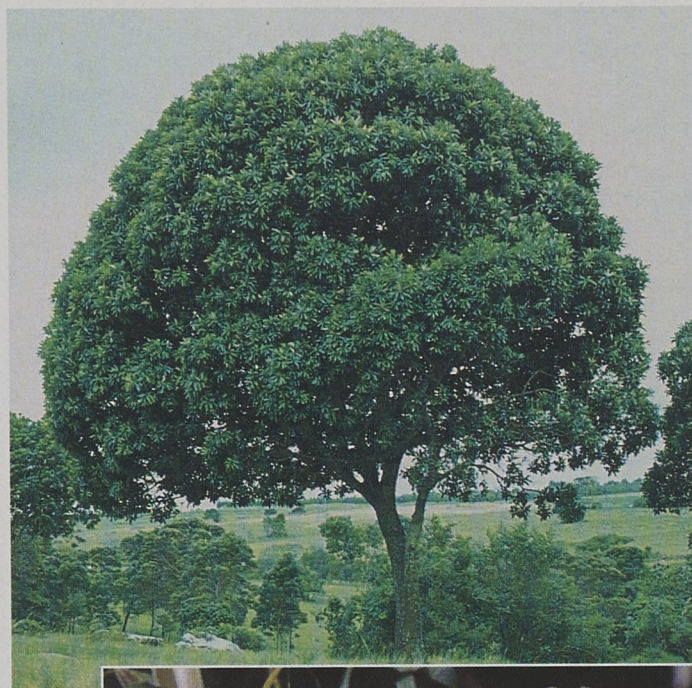


Uit die VELD

Dawie Strydom
Tuinboukundige
Nasionale Botaniese Tuin, Pretoria

se SPENS: rooiboekenhout

Rooiboekenhout (*Protorhus longifolia*) (Bernh.) Engl. (SA 364), behoort tot die familie Anacardiaceae. Dit word ook soms rooimelkhou of harpuisboom genoem. In Engels staan dit bekend as red beech, red Cape beech of purple currant.



Hierdie pragtige immergroenboom met sy swaar, blink blaarloof en ronde, digte kroon kom voor vanaf Oos-Kaapland, Noord-Natal, Kwazulu en Swaziland tot Noord-Transvaal.

Dit groei veral in woude en woudsome, in kloue en teen rivieroewers vanaf seevlak tot by 'n hoogte van 1 220 m bo seevlak.

As woudboom kan dit tot 18 m hoog word met 'n stamdeursnee van een meter. In die oop savannaveld en in woudsome is hulle gewoonlik korter met 'n kompakte, ronde of koelvormige kroon.

Die bas is dun, rooibruin tot bruin, betreklik grof en dikwels gegroef. Wanneer dit beskadig word, gee dit 'n wit, klewerige sap af.

Die blink, gladde leeragtige blare is enkelvoudig en teenoorstandig of amper-teenoorstandig. Aan die bokant is hulle donkergroen en ligter onder met 'n opvallende aar-netwerk. Elke blaar is sowat 10 cm tot 15 cm lank en 4 cm breed, met opvallende wasagtige verdikte

en effens ingerolde kante. Die middelrif van die blare is effens prominent bo en baie prominent onder, terwyl die netjiese parallelle sekondêre nerwe na buite reghoekig vertak en naby die rand verklein. Hulle word op stewige stingels van ongeveer 2,5 cm lank, gedra. Ou blare word 'n kenmerkende geel tot dieprooi wanneer hulle afval.

Die boom se blommetjies is 'n bleek perspienk tot 'n groenerige wit kleur. Hulle is ongeveer 6 mm in deursnee en word in trosse, wat tot 15 cm

vervolg op bl 18



Heel bo: 'n Rooiboekenhoutboom met sy ronde digte kroon
Foto: J Vahrmeijer

Bo: Vrukkies en blare van die rooiboekenhout

Links: Die blommetjies van die rooiboekenhout word in trosse gedra
Foto's: H Joffe, NBI

Uit die Veld se Spens: rooiboekenhout

lank word, in die oksels van die blare of eindstandig gedra. Die manlike en vroulike blomme word gewoonlik nie aan dieselfde boom gedra nie.

Steenvrug

Die vlesige steenvruggies lyk soos klein niervormige boontjies en word tot 1,3 mm lank. Hulle is glad en blink en word ligpers wanneer hulle ryp is.

Die rooiboekenhout groei maklik van saad en steggies en is van tyd tot tyd by botaniese tuine beskikbaar. Dit aard veral goed in warmer dele, is redelik droogtebestand en sal ligte ryp kan weerstaan.

Eetbaar

Net die blare van die rooiboekenhout word deur mense geëet. Dit kan gekook word om te gebruik as noodvoedsel in tye van skaarste. Die vrugte word graag deur voëls geëet en word ook gebruik om parfuim van te maak.

Die melkerige wit vloeistof wat deur die bas afgeskei word, kan as ontharingsmiddel gebruik word omdat dit baie taai is en die hare maklik kan uittrek wanneer dit daaraan vassit. Dié gomagtige stof word ook glo deur die Zoeloes gebruik om assegaailemme aan stiele te heg, aldus die botaniste Watt en Brandwijk.

Volgens die botaniste Palmer en Pittman bestaan die geloof dat die boom giftig is en deur hekse gebruik word om die een kant van die liggaam te verlam. Die bas word dan weer gebruik as teenmiddel om dit te genees.

Rooiboekenhout se hout is van 'n redelike gehalte, maar is nie duursaam nie.



Kortliks/Briefly

Institute welcomes environmental scientists

MEMBERS of the South African Institute of Ecologists have voted by an overwhelming majority to change the constitution to include environmental scientists.

In future the institute will be known as the Southern African Institute of Ecologists and Environmental Scientists (SAIE&ES). Environmental scientists and ecologists are invited to apply for professional, associate or student membership.

Some of the benefits of membership include:

- receiving three bulletins a year that contain information on topical issues and discussions and
- professional members receive, and are included in, the professional register that lists their specialities. This register is widely distributed to professionals, academics and consultants.

For further information regarding the benefits and functioning of the institute, interested persons can contact the SAIE&ES Secretariat, Box 36718, Valkland 7878. Tel (012) 78-52056.

Van Wyk word opgespoor

IN die vorige uitgawe van *Conserva* (Maart/April Vol 9 No 2) is aangedui dat die Van Wyk na wie Vanwykshout (Boom van die Jaar) vernoem is, nie opgespoor kon word nie. Verkeerd. Daardie groot boomkenner van Suid-Afrika, dr Fried von Breitenbach, ken al die antwoorde.

Albertus Johannes

In die jongste nuusbrieff van die Dendrologiese Vereniging, skryf hy oor Vanwykshout: "Die Afrikaanse naam kom van ene Albertus Johannes van Wyk, 'n vroeë inwoner van die Ohrigstad/Lydenburg-distrik, ... wat die boom in die Laeveld ontdek en die bruikbaarheid van sy hout vir speke, asook verskeie implemente en heiningpale besef het."

Voortreflike diens

Terloops, dr Fried het gedurende November 1992 uiteindelik die eer gekry wat hom toekom. Hy het die Orde vir Voortreflike Diens van die Staatspresident ontvang. Baie geluk, dr Fried!

Die verwysing in die *Conserva*-artikel na die vervanging van die jakarandas in Pretoria met Vanwykshout, moet nie so ernstig opgeneem word nie. Dit is met die tong in die kies geskryf! Dit het nietemin reaksie uitgelok. (Sien brief op bl 21)

— Theuns van Rensburg



Die pragtige pers blomme van die Vanwykshout

Dikbas: Erratum

IN die Januarie/Februarie-uitgawe van *Conserva* (Vol 9 No 1) in die artikel *Uit die veld se spens: dikbas* (bl 16) is daar verkeerdlik gesê: "Die vrugte van die boom is tweehuisig". Dit moet wees: "Die boom is tweehuisig."

Die redaksie vra graag vir die outeur, mnr Dawie Strydom, om verskoning asook vir lesers wat hierdeur verwar of onder 'n verkeerde indruk gebring is.

ENVIR OK vir 1994 skop af

INSKRYWINGS word ingewag vir die jaarlikse omgewingskompetisie ENVIR OK. Hierdie gewilde nasionale kompetisie is oop vir alle leerlinge van standaard 3 tot matriek.

ENVIR OK word gekoördineer deur die Departement van Omgewingsake en geborg deur OK en Mazda. Dit is daarop gemik om 'n bewaringsbewustheid by die jeug te kweek asook om hulle te betrek by plaaslike omgewingsaangeleenthede.

Verlede jaar het sowat 150 spanne deelgeneem aan die kompetisie en daar word vanjaar selfs meer inskrywings verwag.

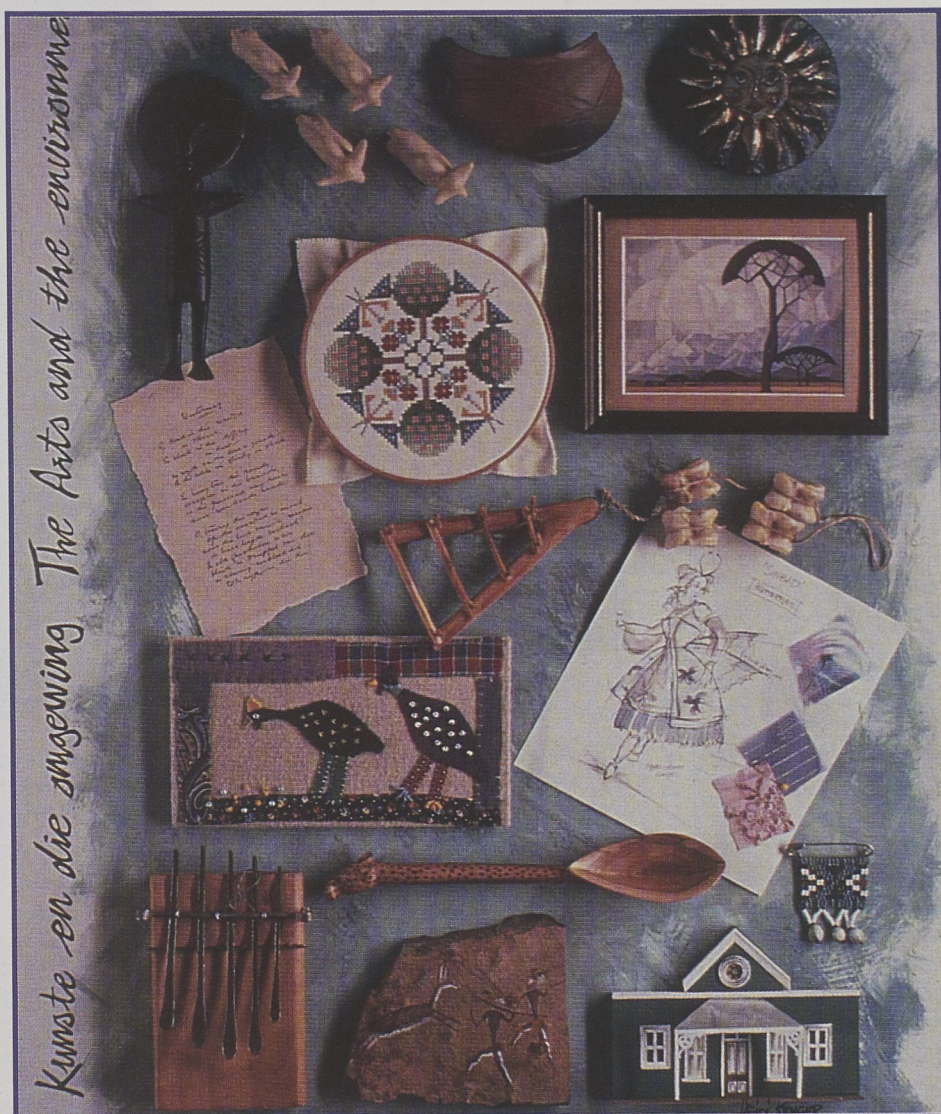
Die spanne mag uit 'n minimum van drie, maar nie meer as ses lede bestaan nie. Hulle moet omgewingsprobleme in hul onmiddellike omgewing identifiseer en dan moontlike oplossings daarvoor kry. Hierdeur word leerlinge aangemoedig om 'n praktiese bydrae tot die beskerming of verbetering van die omgewing te lewer.

Spanne moet sorg dat hulle voorstelle prakties toegepas word en dat hul onderskeie gemeenskappe by hul projekte betrek word. So het leerlinge in die verlede daarin geslaag om die samewerking van onder meer plaaslike sakeondernemings en stads- en dorpsrade te kry.

Die projekte sal in Augustus op streeksvlak beoordeel word en die wenspanne van die streke sal in Oktober in Midrand aan die 1994 ENVIR OK Nasionale Finale deelneem.

Die wenspan in die afdelings vir laer- sowel as hoërskole op streeksowel as nasionale vlak, sal fantastiese pryse ontvang. Die wenner van die nasionale kompetisie in albei kategorieë sal onder meer 'n 16-sitplek Mazda Marathon-minibus wen.

Meer inligting oor die kompetisie asook inskrywingsvorme is beskikbaar by Lindie Steenkamp, tel: (012) 310-3708 en Charmain Kruger, tel: (012) 310-3580 van die Departement van Omgewingsake of by OK-takke landwyd.



Hulde aan die kunste

Die kunste en die omgewing, vanjaar se tema vir Wêreldomgewingsdag (5 Junie), word in dié plakkaat van die Departement van Omgewingsake weerspieël. Dit beeld verskillende kunsvorme uit met die omgewing as tema of wat met materiaal uit die

omgewing geskep is. Daar is ook elemente in die plakkaat wat die mens se leefomgewing en kultuur uitbeeld. Die plakkaat is deur Heidi Kruger van die Departement van Omgewingsake ontwerp en is beskikbaar by die departement terwyl voorrade hou.

Nuwe datum vir Boomplantdag

NASIONALE Boomplantdag is van 1994 af amptelik verskuif na die eerste Vrydag in September. (Vanjaar val dit op 2 September).

Dié dag, wat voorheen op die tweede Vrydag in Augustus gehou is, is na 'n later datum verskuif deur die Departement van Waterwese en

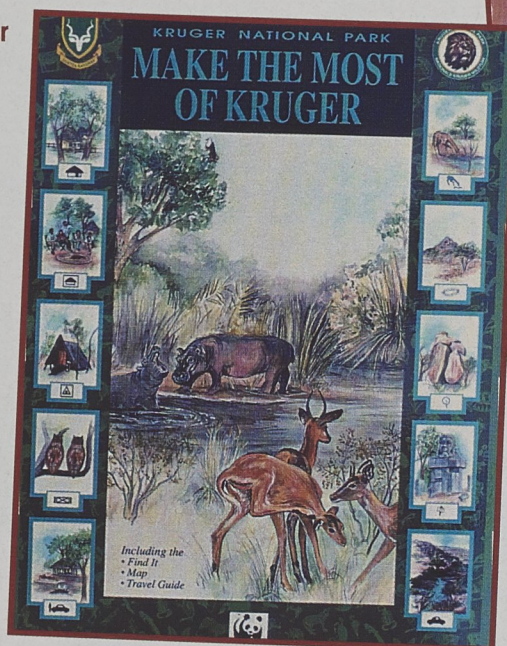
Bosbou op versoek van instansies soos Bome vir Afrika en die Suid-Afrikaanse Kwekersvereniging. September is 'n warmer maand met beter groeitoestande vir jong boompies wat op Boomplantdag aangeplant word.

Make the most of Kruger
Created by the Kruger
National Park and
Jacana Education
Published by Jacana
Education
Johannesburg 1993
84 pp
Price: R59,95

At last the first comprehensive, integrated visitor's guide to the Kruger National Park is now available. Unlike many previous guides to the park, it does not only cover the park's wildlife and birds. Its smaller creatures such as insects and spiders, tortoises, frogs and fish as well as its grasses and reeds, trees, history, geology and ecology are also given pride of place.

The book aims to enhance and intensify every visitor's practical experience and enjoyment of the Kruger Park. It is printed in full colour with over 300 original illustrations and maps. More than 125 people including scientists, educationalists, artists and writers worked on the project for two years.

The project is unique in its integrated approach. Cross-referencing between sections gives the reader a complete picture of what the Kruger Park offers. In the section titled *Map*, the park is divided into 16 natural areas (or ecozones), each with its own combination of geology, land shape, rainfall, pattern of vegetation and animals that occur there. By using this book visitors will be able to identify the ecozone through which they are travelling, discover which trees and grasses grow there and which specific animals are attracted by them e.g. kudu, roan antelope,

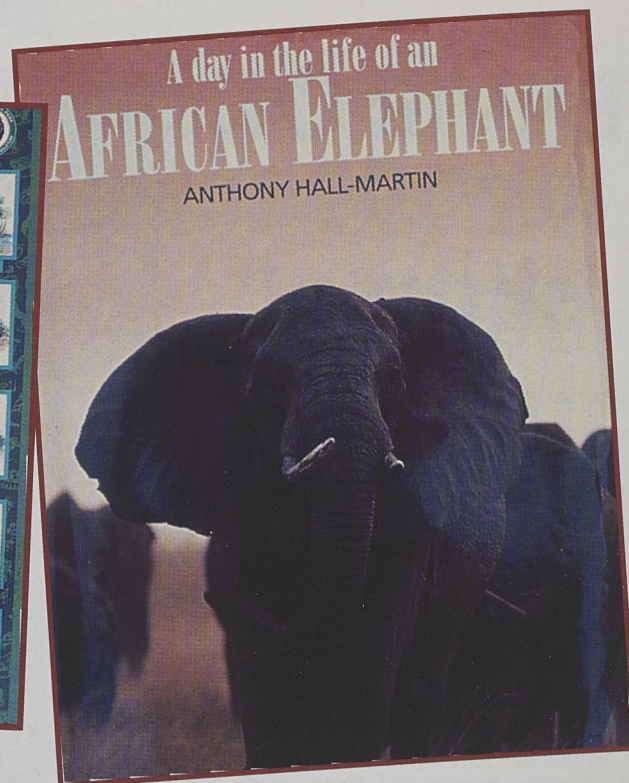


rhino, elephant, hippo, lion or wild dog.

The 48-page section titled *Find It*, is designed to be used closely with the *Map* section. It provides detailed information about species listed on the maps. Aided by illustrations and text, the visitor can create a mental picture of the most common birds, animals, trees and grasses and can then go out into the park and look for them.

Additional information in the guide includes practical hints such as how to spot specific animals, how to plan your day, animal census, how visitors are expected to behave in the park and some general camp requirements.

The book is aimed at all visitors — whether they are average South African tourists, overseas and local ecotourists, wildlife enthusiasts, school children or armchair travellers. It aims to teach them that all life is interrelated and to subtly encourage them to take co-responsibility for caring for the environment. — Louise van Niekerk



A day in the life of an African elephant
Anthony Hall-Martin
Southern Book Publishers
138 pp
Price: R79,99

This magnificent book by Africa's leading elephant expert is not an emotional plea for the survival of the African elephant. It is a factual, well-researched account of the elephant's social behaviour and communication, social system, reproduction, habitats, distribution, feeding habits, management and relationship with man.

The main feature is, however, the striking collection of elephant photographs. The large format of the book (33,5 cm x 26,5 cm) does justice to these images of Africa's biggest inhabitants. Most of the photographs were taken by the author and they depict elephants in a variety of habitats — not only in South Africa's national parks, but also in other parts of Africa such as Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Zaire, Togo

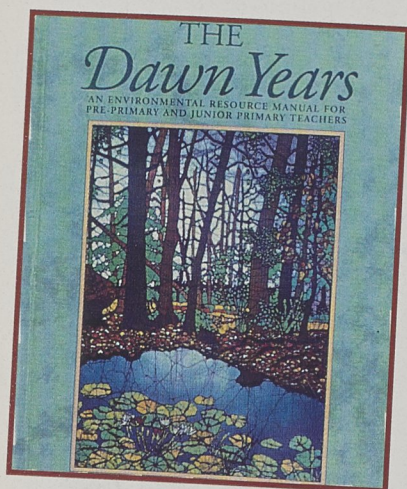
and Central Africa. Readers can feast their eyes on elephants of different sizes and in various situations and moods.

This book is a valuable addition to literature and photography on African wildlife and it will be enjoyed by many generations to come. — Louise van Niekerk

The dawn years
Frank Opie and Moreen Schuil
Maskew Miller Longman,
1993
137 pp
Price: R24,95

Imagination, sensory awareness and discovery through exploration: these are the characteristics of the dawn years both in life and in this book.

The dawn years, an environmental resource manual for preprimary and junior primary teachers, has been designed to do many things, ranging from teasing a palate to quenching an environmental thirst. It is a beginner's guide, a planner's framework and a doorway to further



development.

Each activity described in the book forms a link in a chain. It is part of a larger curriculum and a step in an ongoing process — accessible to the professional as well as the layman.

The user-friendly format of the book gives the teacher a choice of activities most suited to class, age, needs and experience, relating to both the built and the natural environments. The materials that are needed for the various activities have been simplified and reduced to a minimum.

Background information is provided to stimulate informal discussions between teacher and pupils. The *earth awareness* message bridges the gap between the theoretical base of the book and the applied activities.

The young learn attitudes and values very quickly. Adults are watched closely for guidance and for setting examples. Does your example teach them that life is precious? Are you working positively on the foundation stones of environmental awareness? If you are, *The dawn years* will be a valuable additional guide to improve your skills. If you are not, then *The dawn years* will open the door to a wonderland for you.
— Annalé Steinmann

Waar is beskermende oorklere?

Die projek van die leerlinge van die Hoërskool Merenky om die *Lantana camara* in hul omgewing uit te roei verdien hoë lof. Dit verbaas my egter dat 'n artikel, geskryf deur die bemerkingsbestuurder van een van ons grootste gifmaatskappye, geïllustreer word met 'n foto van 'n seun wat die gif toedien sonder om beskermende oorklere te dra.

Indien die foto tydens die werklike toedieningsaksie geneem is, bevraagteken ek die "wetenskaplikheid" waarmee die projek na bewering aangepak is. Uit die artikel lei 'n mens af dat die produk volgens die aanwysings op die etiket aangewend is. Indien die kinders nie beskermende oorklere gedra het nie, het hulle die aanwysings op die etiket beslis nie behoorlik gelees nie.

As 'n mens dink aan die

verskillende inligtingsveldtogte wat die onderskeie Landboudepartemente en ook u eie departement byna ononderbroke loods om mense in te lig aangaande die veilige en verantwoordelike gebruik van plaagdoders asook die verskeie SABS-gebruikskodes wat oor die onderwerp handel, is dit vir my heeltemal onverstaanbaar hoe so 'n foto kon "deurglip" in een van die populêre "vlagskepe" van die Departement van Omgewingsake.

Ek kan maar net hoop dat die boekie en die inligtingstuk wat deur die skoliere versprei is nie hul tekenlesers verkeerd inlig aangaande die toediening van plaagdoders nie. Die menseras wil graag bly voortbestaan in 'n *Lantana camara*-lose Suid-Afrika.

Petro Lemmer
Pienaarspoort

Not a street tree

Conserva: Vol 9 No 2: March/April. Please refer to the article on page 8, Vanwykshout — boom van die jaar.

Surely Mr Theuns van Rensburg was not being serious when he suggested that eventually the Pretoria jacarandas should be replaced with Vanwykshout. While this tree is beautiful and of course it is indigenous, it is not a very suitable tree for planting along street pavements — it will never really grow to the height required for a suitable street tree. The tree will also have to be carefully monitored to prevent excessive branching.

Despite my comments, thank you Mr van Rensburg for a most informative article on the Tree of the Year.

Keith Dally
Faerie Glen, Pretoria

See comment on p 19 — Editor

Dit is beslis so dat mense bewus gemaak moet word van die veilige en verantwoordelike gebruik van plaagdoders en dat hierdie departement dit ook doen. Mnr Kobus Meyer van Monsanto het Conserva die versekering gegee dat dié maatskappy hom ook streng bepaal by die kode vir die verantwoordelike gebruik van landbouchemikalieë en veemiddels.

Chemikalieë word in verskillende groepe van giftigheid geklassifiseer. Groep 1: uiters giftig, groep 2: skadelik, groep 3: versigtig en groep 4: skadeloos vir die mens met geen spesifieke waarskuwing nie.

Die prokuk Round Up wat deur die leerlinge van die Hoërskool Merensky gebruik is het 'n groep 4-klassifikasie. (Dit word ook beskryf as 'n groen klassifikasie.) Hiervolgens word geen beskermende oorklere vir toediening vereis nie en dit word ook duidelik gestel op die produk se etiket.

— Redakteur



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Briewe vir hierdie blad moet gerig word aan: *Conserva*-brieweblad, Privaatsak X447, Pretoria 0001

Desperate need to expand South Africa's national parks

Dr Ian Player is a legendary figure in South African conservation circles. He spent most of his career with the Natal Parks Board and is best known for his decisive role in saving the white rhino from extinction. He is also well known for founding the Wilderness Leadership School. He has been honoured for his work both locally and abroad and has written various books. *Conserva* spoke to Dr Player during the launch of the Audi Terra Nova Award (of which he is patron) at Geelhoutbos in the Baviaanskloof.

Your lifelong involvement with conservation started long before it was the "in" thing. How did it come about?

Yes, I have been involved with conservation for 42 years. When I was growing up my father was very interested in fishing and shooting. I used to go with him and from that my interest in nature began to develop and grow.

In 1952 when I began my career at the Natal Parks Board, people in conservation were strongly disliked. In Zululand it was hell. I was shot at many, many times; I had fights with magistrates, policemen, farmers, the general public — they just did not care. They considered conservation a nuisance and those of us who got in the way were an even bigger nuisance.

What is your philosophy as far as conservation is concerned?

I like to think that I have a holistic view. The word ho-

listic is linked to ecology. Ecology is derived from the Greek word for *house* and the house is everything. In Greek when one talks about the house, one also talks about the finances of the house. Everything that one deals with in the environment has to be approached from a holistic standpoint. I have striven to do that for most of my life.

You spent most of your professional life with the Natal Parks Board. Were you involved with conservation in any of the other provinces in South Africa or was your influence mostly concentrated in Natal?

I hope that I have had a wider influence. After starting the Wilderness Leadership School in 1957 many young people, and later older people as well, came out on trails. Between Magqubu Ntombela and myself (we have worked together for nearly 40 years) we took over

3 000 people from all over South Africa and, in fact from all over the world, into the wilderness. I was able to convey my environmental message to them — not only about game conservation and the necessity for parks, but also about the importance of wilderness of the human spirit. Magqubu was able to talk about the fundamental belief of the Zulu people and their history.

The first 22 years of my career, when I was with the Natal Parks Board, was concentrated in the parks. Since then I have been all over the world. I was involved in conservation in the United States and the United Kingdom with foundations that I have established there. All of them are struggling, but I believe if you do not struggle; if things go too easy, there is something wrong. I have also been writing a newspaper column every fortnight for the *Daily News* in Durban for the past 17

years. I write about environmental matters that I think are important; I write about poetry, prose, science.

Do you think your efforts in conservation are bearing fruit?

Yes, definitely. In 1955 when we fought for the first wilderness area in Umfolozi Game Reserve, which was then some 30 000 acres, no one knew what it was all about. When you spoke about wilderness in those days, people thought you were talking about a certain little village on the Cape coast. Since then Magqubu and I have led the first wilderness trail — that was on 19 March 1959. Today wilderness is a well known word in the conservation vocabulary and the wilderness concept is widely understood.

What about your white rhino success story?

The white rhino saga — the catching and the translocation of the rhino, the fight for the extension of the border of the Umfolozi Game Reserve, was the turning point in saving them from extinction. It was a turning point like the Battle of El Alemein was a turning point in the Second World War. From then on we really started to make progress. At the time I was in charge of the park (Umfolozi) where the rhino were. To claim all the credit would be morally wrong. It was a team effort and I had a wonderful team and a wonderful director — Colonel Vin-

cent. But yes, I pushed and fought because I considered myself to be an owner of that park. I was the manager, looking after it for you and for everybody else and for my children who were not yet born.

You have strong feelings about the St Lucia mining issue. Are you satisfied that the environmental impact study that was done was thorough enough?

My answer will have to be "no". While one would not quibble about the scientific input of the report, science is not the only thing that we deal with in our lives. We also deal with poetry. It might have been a sound scientific document, but it lacks any poetic content. When you go to a place like St Lucia there is poetry wherever you look — the flight of the fish eagle and its plaintive call, the moon rising over the sea, the noise of the sea on the one side, the noise of the lake on the other, the hippo, the mullet migration, pelican breeding ... these are the things that lift up the human spirit. This is what I found was lacking — it lacked feeling.

In the end the scientific analysis and the scientific submission is only hypothesis. We will never really know what the impact of mining on the area will be until it is done and when it is done, it will be too late. It is like a woman losing her virginity to the wrong person.

How would you rate conservation efforts in South Africa compared to the best in the world and compared to the rest of Africa?

I think it is very high. There are some excellent organisations — both non-governmental (NGOs) and government organisation like the National Parks

Board, Natal Parks, the KwaZulu Bureau of Natural Resources (they have set aside huge areas for conservation under the greatest of difficulties) and the Cape Nature Conservation Department. I think we have a very sound base on which to go forward in a new dispensation.

What has been lacking so far, however, is a minister who really cares. Whether he knows very much does not bother me, but he must really care in his heart about the land, he must love the land and be prepared to fight his colleagues in the cabinet when he feels strongly about a certain environmental issue — that is important.

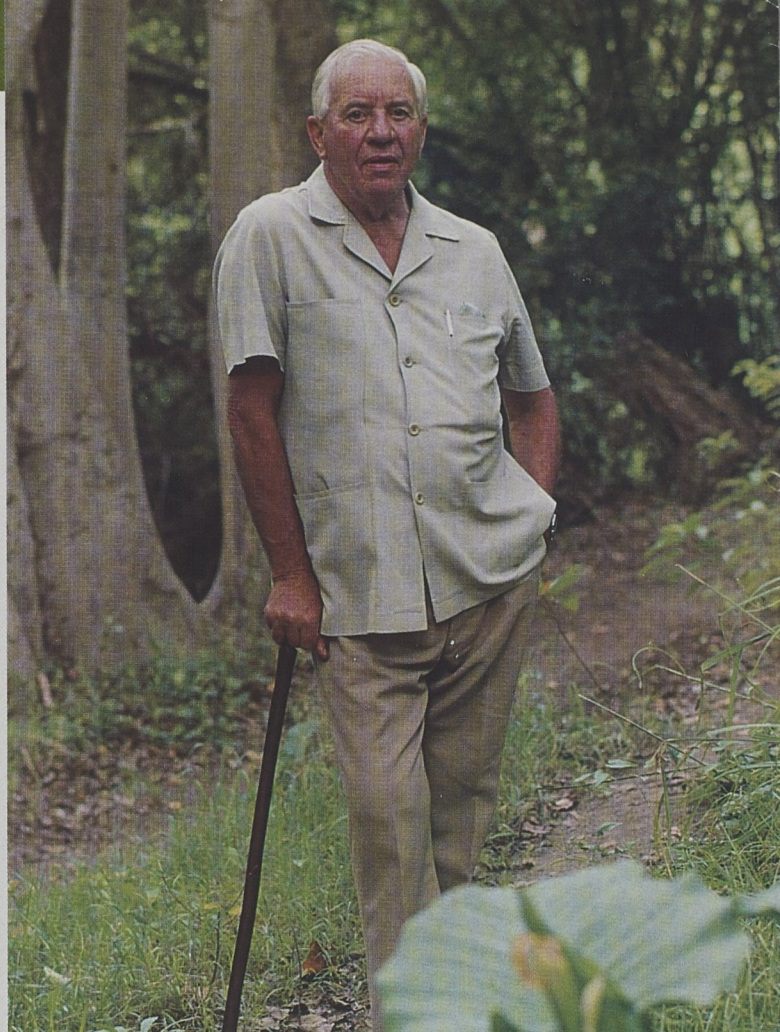
What issues should be addressed by a new minister of environment affairs?

One of the first things that desperately needs to be done in this country is to expand the national parks.

The national parks and game reserves belong to everybody. In the past, whether we like it or not, black people were not allowed in the parks as tourists and were not treated well. Now, with this country's growing urban population, these people will eventually, maybe not this generation, want to go back to their roots. They will want to see the kind of country that their forefathers grew up in.

In the past most of the parks were set aside, because nobody considered them of value for anything else. It was not out of the kindness of government's heart, with the exception of the Dongola Game Reserve, which General Smuts set aside and perhaps the Kruger Park.

The Kruger Park should, however, extend from its present borders right up to the Drakensberg. What is



Dr Ian Player at Geelhoutbos in the Baviaanskloof where the Audi Terra Nova Award was launched. As patron of the award Dr Player addressed members of the media during the launch

Photo: Margot Morrison, courtesy of Audi

happening now is that all the water is being extracted outside the park and pine trees are being planted in the catchments, drying it all up. These are the sort of things that a really caring minister of the environment is going to have to tackle. But he will always have to bear in mind that there must be communal land. Apart from the parks we do not have anywhere near enough wild land in South Africa for our own people to go to, let alone the millions of tourists we would like to come here in future.

You seem to attach great importance to communal land and the fact that people must have the opportunity to experience nature first hand?

Yes, definitely. Being divorced from the natural

world has done terrible things to us. It was the communal land that saved industrial Britain. As people moved into the cities they started to go crazy — they just had to get out and get rid of that pent-up feeling. They walked in their thousands, and still do, on the moors. I saw it recently on a trip abroad.

Coming into the wilderness is a spiritual journey. Not spiritual in the conventional religious sense, but coming to an understanding with yourself. This is what happens in wild country. If you look at all the prophets — Christ, Mohammed, Buddha — all of them went into the wilderness. In T.E. Lawrence's book *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, he talks of 40 000 prophets who went into the bush and came back with their visions.

ROTSKUNS: Die eland in San-geloof

Die eland is die grootste boksoort in suidelike Afrika. Volgens die San (Boesman)-geloof, is die eland die eerste dier wat deur /Kaggen of die hotnotsgod ('n godheid wat verskillende vorme aangeneem het) geskep is en wat /Kaggen se gunsteling gebly het.

Die San het 'n besondere liefde vir die eland gehad en het geglo dat "alle ander diere soos dienaars vir die eland is". Een van die kenmerke van die elandbul is die buitengewone dik vetlaag om die hart, 'n verskynsel wat gewoonlik net onder koeie van ander boksoorte voorkom. Die vet het 'n besonderse geur wat veral gesog was vir gebruik tydens die San se huwelikseremonies. Die eland het ook 'n prominente rol gespeel in die sosiale en godsdienstige seremonies van die San, byvoorbeeld nadat 'n seun sy eerste eland doodgeskiet het, het hy die oorgangsfase van 'n seun na 'n man betree. By dogters se puberteitsrituele is die Elandbuidans gedans asook tydens transdanse wanneer die sjamane of toordokters hulle god versoek het om aan hulle krag te gee om siekes te genees, wild te beheer en reën te bring.

Met hierdie kennis is dit moontlik om sekere simbole en metafore wat in rotstekeninge en -gravures van die eland gebruik is, te verstaan. Navorsing wat in die 1960's en 1970's in die Drakensberg gedoen is, dui daarop dat die eland meer as enige ander dier geteken is en dat die kunstenaars spesiale aandag aan die eland gegee het. Met behulp van verdere inligting wat verkry is uit onderhoude met die San in die Kalahari, wat van hul transervarings vertel het, is dit vir die ingeligde kyker moontlik om uit die houding van die getekende eland te bepaal wat die eland se geslag was, watter tydperk van die jaar dit was (bv tydens die paartyd, of nie), asook die eland se gesondheidstoestand.

'n Sterwende eland is 'n metafoor vir 'n sjamaan onder beswying. Die woord vir beswying is in die San-tale dieselfde as dié vir dood. Wanneer die sjamaan in diepe beswying gaan, verlaat die gees die liggaam en die persoon sak inmekeer asof hy dood is. 'n Sterwende eland en 'n sjamaan onder beswying beleef verskeie simptome wat dieselfde is, byvoorbeeld albei sweet uitermatig baie, die neus of mond bloei, die liggaamshare staan orent en die sjamaan se vel tingel, en albei wankel met die kop wat vooroor hang. Hulle val dan uiteindelik op die grond neer. 'n Sjamaan onder diepe beswying voel dikwels asof hy 'n dier word waarvan hy krag kan trek. Die eland is die algemeenste transformasie vir 'n sjamaan.

Rotstekeninge en -gravures beeld al bogenoemde kenmerke uit. Daar is tekeninge van die eland waarvan die kop hang, die hare regop op die rug staan en waarvan die neus bloei. Daar is ook fyn gedetailleerde tekeninge van elande met mensebene, of van mensefigure met 'n elandkop en pote, of mense en elande wat met wit kolle bedek is wat op sweet dui, en met bloeiende neuse. Ander tekeninge en gravures beeld weer die eland baie realisties uit.

Dit is duidelik dat hierdie tekeninge nie bloot uitdrukking aan die kunstenaar se skeppingsdrang gegee het nie. Elande het 'n diep religieuse en metaforiese betekenis vir die San-kunstenaars en -kykers ingehou. — *Janette Deacon, R N G*

ROCK ART: The eland in San beliefs

The eland is the largest antelope in southern Africa. In San (Bushman) beliefs, the eland was the first animal that was created by /Kaggen or the mantis (a deity that took many forms) and it remained /Kaggen's favourite. It was much loved by the San, who believed that "all other animals are like servants to the eland". One of its characteristics is the unusual amount of fat that the male eland has around its heart, a feature usually found in females of other antelope species. This fat has a certain fragrance that was particularly sought-after for use during the marriage ceremony. The eland also played a prominent role in the social and religious ceremonies of the San, e.g. a boy's entry into adulthood when he killed his first



*Eland en mensefigure, Noordkus Kaapland/Eland and human figures, North-Eastern Cape
Foto/Photo: Janette Deacon*

eland. In girls' puberty rituals the Eland Bull Dance was performed as well as during trance dancing when the shamans or medicine people asked their god to enable them to heal sick people, control the game and make rain.

With this knowledge it has been possible to decipher some of the symbolism and metaphorical uses of the eland in rock paintings and rock engravings. Studies done in the Drakensberg in the 1960s and 1970s first alerted researchers to the fact that the eland is painted more often than any other animal and is also given special treatment by the artists. With further information from interviews with San in the Kalahari, who described their experiences in trance, it was apparent that the posture in which the eland is painted or engraved will tell the informed viewer about such details as its gender, the time of year it was painted (i.e. during the mating season or not) and its state of health.

A dying eland is a metaphor for a shaman in trance. The word for trance in San languages is the same as the word for dying. When a shaman enters deep trance the spirit leaves the body and the person collapses as though dead. A dying eland and a trancing shaman experience many similar symptoms: both sweat profusely, both may bleed from the nose or mouth, their body hair stands erect and the shaman's skin tingles, both stagger with the head down and eventually fall to the ground. A shaman in deep trance will often experience the sensation of 'becoming' an animal from which power can be drawn and the eland is one of the most common transformations.

Rock paintings and rock engravings show all these features. There are illustrations of eland with the head down, erect hair on the back and blood coming from the nose. There are also finely detailed paintings of eland with human legs, or of people with eland heads and hoofs, or people and eland covered with white dots representing sweat, and blood coming from the nose. Other paintings and engravings will show eland realistically. It is clear that these paintings are not mere expressions of metaphorical and religious meaning for the San artists and viewers. — *Janette Deacon, N M C*