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16 January 1995

Ms Elza Miles

3A Main Road East
Melville

2092

Dear ms Miles

We take pleasure in enclosing a review/# of the following title/s.
LIFELINE OUT OF AFRICA: THE ART OF ERNEST MANCOBA 9 ty

Yours sincerely

ar

Lilian Eyssen
REVIEWS

Member of the Nasionale Boekhandel Group

Directors: T. Vosloo (Chairman), J.F. Malherbe, D.P. de Villiers, H.G. Raubenheimer, L.
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A REVIEWED BY TIM COUZENS : TALKING OF BOOKS 6/11/94 & 10/11/94

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ELZA MILES, LIFELINE OUT OF AFRICA: THE ART OF ERNEST MANCOBA
Human & Rousseau, 1994, 95 pp.

Very slowly, a clear picture of the history of black South African art and literature is beginning to emerge. There were a number of significant black painters and sculptors of the 1930s and 1940s : Gerard Bhengu, George Pemba, Ezekiel Ntuli, Job Kekana, Ernest Mancoba, Gerard Sekoto. Of these, only Gerard Sekoto has been properly studied and given his due. Until recently, that is. Now Elza Miles has resuscitated the work of

---Ernest:-Mancoba:-in..her excellent book Lifeline out of Africa:

The Art of Ernest Mancoba, published by Human and Rousseau.

Ernest Mancoba is relatively unknown as a sculptor and painter. - His parents came from the Transkei but he was born in Boksburg in 1904. He was a product of Grace Dieu, an Anglican school near Pietersburg, one of those mission schools tragically destroyed by Bantu Education to the great detriment of our society. His earliest works were religious pieces, carved in wood. In 1938 like Sekoto, but before Sekoto, he went to Paris and has never returned. In Europe his painting took a very different direction and his development is meticulously examined by Elza Miles. I must admit that his painting was a revelation to me and I found Elza Miles' explication of it fascinating.

Mancoba's works are only indirectly political and are all the more refreshing for that. He suffered and benefitted from being out of the country for over half a century. At last though hÃ© has been rewarded by the unassuming, painstaking research of Elza Miles. Until now, he has not returned to South Africa but, this month, he is paying us a visit at the age of ninety. The exhibition of his work will be well worth going to. And Elza Miles' finely produced book - nice illustrations, short but insightful text - is a must for art students and a good read for the layman like myself. That's Elza Miles' book Lifeline out of Africa: The Art of Ernest Mancoba, published by Human and Rousseau.

TIM COUZENS