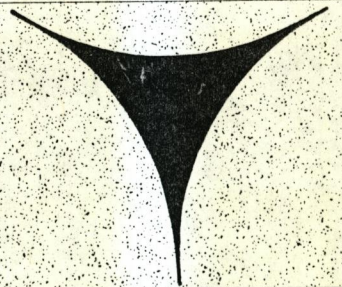


NEWSDART



Association of Arts: Natal Region: Quarterly Newsletter: October — December 1975

Editor: Marie O' Connor

MEMBERSHIP

At the A.G.M. of the South African Association of Arts, held in Pretoria recently, the Natal contingent compared notes with the representatives from other provinces.

The N.S.A. Gallery is one of the few in a central city commercial building paying a substantial rental, albeit subsidised by Anglo-American, the landlords. Our colleagues in Johannesburg have the use of the Carlton Hotel foyer, free of charge and the Northern Transvaal Region make use of the huge, historic Netherlands Bank Building on Church Square for the mere price of the electrical and water bill. Furthermore, the Pretoria City Council has donated a piece of land worth R50 000 for a new Association Gallery.

In spite of our role of promoting all aspects of Art in Natal, we receive no assistance from the Durban City Council whatsoever. The N.S.A. Council has also been obliged to vote against accepting a grant from the Department of National Educational because of onerous conditions which may affect our black members and artists.

At least two other regions have over one thousand members. At present the N.S.A. has barely 400 members — an increase in membership would ease the financial burden and help to make the Society more effective. We have therefore enclosed a new membership application form, because we are convinced that all of you have at least one friend or acquaintance who may be interested to join and help to promote art — one member has signed on over ten new people in less than two months!

The major projects undertaken by the Association would not be possible if it weren't for the generous support of our patrons listed below:

Aubrey Lurie & Co.
Beacon Sweets & Chocolates
Beares Limited
Dano Textile Industries
Durban Clothing Manufacturers
Mr R.G. Fulford
Natal Investment Corp. Ltd.
Shotlands Packaging
The Frame Group
Julius Robinson Charitable & Educational Trust
Unicorn Shipping
Woolworths (Pty) Ltd
Willjay Knitting Mills
Nedbank.



Woodcut by Clement Senéque.

N.S.A. SKETCH CLUB

Some of our newer members may not be aware that an adjunct of the society is a Sketch Club, which has had an unbroken existence for well over fifty years, dating back to the days of the founders of the society. The club was formed in the 20's largely due to the efforts of Clement Senéque, a Durban architect, who's work has gone into the annals of S.A. art.

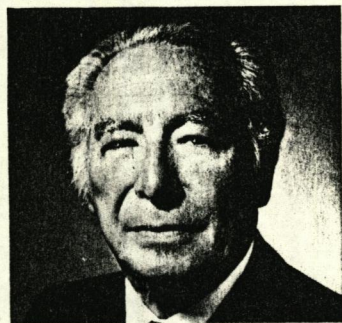
The Sketch Club has experienced many vicissitudes and changes of venue. Many ranking artists in Natal in the succeeding decades attended the club. Including stalwarts such as Nils Andersen, Nil Solberg, John Ferguson, Blennerhasset, and many others. During the war years the club served as host to many international artists who called at Durban with the troop convoys. It regularly conducted indoor and outdoor painting sessions, providing models, instruction and critiques of work.

For many years it was conducted in central Durban by Neville Coni but more recently it has been run by Meta Orton at Umhlanga Rocks.

In December of this year the club will come under the aegis of NSA in conjunction with the Highway Art Group, in premises at Westville.

Anyone interested in attending Saturday afternoon and other sessions should contact the Gallery Secretary for details and send in their name and address.

NEVILLE CONI.



Justice J.F. Marais

PRETORIA A.G.M.

At the A.G.M. of the South African Association of Arts held in Pretoria in August, Justice Kowie Marais was elected National President with Mr Hans Franssen, (Chairman of the Western Cape Region) as National Vice-President. Our new President has promised better communications between regions, for example the distribution to all members of "S.A. Arts Calendar" — a summary of forthcoming art events in the R.S.A.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN ASSOCIATION OF ARTS (NATAL)

The Natal Branch of the South African Association of Arts celebrates its Seventieth Anniversary this year and qualifies as one of the longest-established Art Societies in this country.

It was started as the Natal Society of Artists in 1905 through the efforts of Cathcart Methven, then chief engineer of Port Natal, and Wallace Paton an architect and painter. Methven was the first President of the Society and his committee included Miss K.W. Anderson and Miss Bertha Froome, both of the Technical Art School, and Miss Elaine Kirch, assistant art mistress at the Government Art School.

The Society set out to foster and develop art appreciation and education in Natal. It organised "The Annual Exhibition of South African Contemporary Art". During the first World War activity was naturally curtailed but by the 1920's the Society again flourished under presidents of the calibre of Leo Francois and Clement Senéque.

The annual exhibition was opened traditionally on the eve of the July Handicap and marked the beginning of the Durban "Season". It was as great an attraction and social event as the race itself. Old newspaper cuttings which describe the hundreds of visitors who came from all over South Africa to attend the opening, paid as much attention to the outfits worn on this occasion as to those at the race meeting the following day. The exhibition was invariably opened either by the Governor-General or the Administrator of Natal. The Earl of Athlone and Princess Alice, or Lord and Lady Clarendon always attended the opening and were included among the illustrious list of patrons.

It was the most important event of the South African Art Calendar and attracted artists from all over the country. Old catalogues include names like Hugo Naude, Timlin, Senéque, Francois, Bertha Everard, Tinus de Jongh, Battiss, Irma Stern and Lippy Lipschitz, and prices — often as little and fifteen and twenty guineas! The Society's Minutes show that often over 1 200 entries were received and several hundred were exhibited. The venue was the old Shaw Bros. Woolmart on the Esplanade.

With the second World War activity again declined but during this period, although flagging in spirit, the N.S.A. was kept alive by the efforts of people

like Perla Siedle Gibson, Jack Pieters, Venus Graham-Whitely, Nils Andersen and others. The annual exhibition continued but its adherence to conservatism lost it the premier place it had previously held in South Africa. The N.S.A. Sketch Club, which was formed in 1913, has continued to be active to the present day.

Early in the 1960's a few dedicated people revitalised the Society and recognised the need for their own gallery because Durban was by now completely neglected by even the most obliging of artists. At the 1964 A.G.M. of the Natal Society of Artists, two important resolutions were passed; first that the Society become affiliated to the National body, and second that a committee be formed to raise the necessary funds for the establishment of a gallery.

At about this time the Natal region of the South African Institute of Race Relations conceived the idea of holding an important biennial National exhibition and invited the collaboration of the N.S.A. 1963 saw the 1st "Art South Africa Today" exhibition (now in its twelfth year) and 1966 saw the opening of the first N.S.A. gallery in Hermitage Street (now in its third venue at 320 West Street). Durban had regained its place in the National Art scene.

It can be said that the 1960's saw the renaissance of art in Natal, and the 1970's its consolidation.

SYLVIA KAPLAN.

VIST TO SOUTH AFRICA OF DR A. HURWITZ VISITING LECTURER IN ART EDUCATION

When the airfare of this eminent art educationalist was kindly sponsored by the South African Association of Arts (NATAL), it was understood that his visit could stimulate, interest and encourage the advancement of art education in Natal and South Africa. I am pleased to report that the attendance and response to Dr Hurwitz's lecture presentations at schools, colleges and universities throughout the country, were well received and well attended. I understand, for example, that 200 teachers attended his address in the Teachers' Centre, Cape Town. The halls at Stellenbosch University, the Universities of Natal — Pietermaritzburg, Zululand and Witwatersrand, and the Johannesburg College of Education were equally full, and Dr Hurwitz enjoyed the responsive question-packed audiences. Throughout the tour he left a spirit of rededication and commitment to the concept of education through art. Through his public lectures, SABC broadcasts and newspaper interviews he stressed and explained the value of art as a basis for learning.

The Conference at the University of Durban-Westville on the 25th — 27th August 1975 was attended by 250 delegates drawn from Natal, with representatives from universities and colleges throughout the country. Some delegates from other Provinces applied to attend the Conference after hearing Dr Hurwitz speak in their own cities. The Conference was well attended throughout the three days and the resolutions passed by the Conference at its conclusion show clearly the impact made by Dr Hurwitz and the other speakers.

It was resolved that

- (i) a manifesto be drafted, which clearly sets out the Conference's commitment to the belief in art education as essential to learning and the Conference's recommendations regarding the place of art education in education — especially in a technologically orientated society,
- (ii) a National Art Education Association be formed (with due regard to the position of the



Jean Powell, A1 Hurwitz and Barry Lodge touring Zululand.

South African Art Teachers' Association).

- (iii) regional conferences be held, certainly annually, in Natal and that steps be taken to organize a conference in Natal every August.

The visit to South Africa of Dr Albert Hurwitz has been the central stimulus to a quickened pace in the advancement of the field of art education in every centre on his itinerary.

I am pleased to use this report to record my gratitude to those persons and associations that made his visit a success:

The South African Association of Arts (NATAL) are particularly to be thanked for generously sponsoring the airfare of our guest.

Those private persons, many unknown to me, who acted as his host, entertained him and offered accommodation.

The American Information Service.

The Conference Committee.

The S.A. Association of Arts, Pretoria, Johannesburg and Cape Town.

The Organization Committee for the visit of Dr Hurwitz, who gave freely of their assistance, time, support and invaluable advice.

Dr Hurwitz who gave of himself to us unstintingly in an exhausting 30-day programme.

B.J. LODGE

Chairman: Organization Committee
University of Durban-Westville
Faculty of Education.

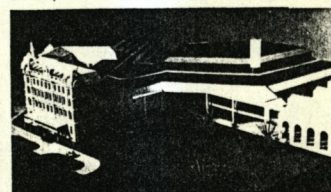


Buck Jones at work

STUDIO VISIT

The visit organised by Newsdart to Maurice Kahn's studio was well supported. To introduce members to different techniques the next visit will be to the studio of the well known Durban sculptor Basil (Buck) Jones, who has exhibited regularly at the N.S.A. Buck works in wood and stone in a pleasant studio in his garden.

Once again, space is limited to fifteen people per visit. Please phone the Gallery Secretary at 313557 and make a reservation for 3.00 p.m. on Sunday 16th or 23rd November.



Durban station revamped

CONSERVATION

This thesis project by Ivor Daniel, a final year student at the Natal School of Architecture illustrates how the local need for a Conference and Exhibition Centre could be reconciled with conserving a fine Victorian building. He states that most of the elements are already there, ranging from large exhibition halls (platform enclosure shed) to small rooms (the top of the station was designed as the N.G.R. Hotel).

Three other projects of the same nature were also displayed at an exhibition called, "Conservation of Buildings," mounted by the Natal Provincial Institute of Architects. The students demonstrated how existing public building, of great merit, could be "recycled" to conserve Durban's unique heritage and also to extend the economic viability of the building concerned.