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Mohil, John Roenakeefe These grew out ef an ash pit ail on Canvas laid down on plywood 66,3x91,8 dohannesburg Aart Gallery John Boenakeefe Mahlâ\200\231s dictum as an artist can be summed up in the following etatements made by him. Ak an exhibition Qf his work, he replied to a well-meaning white admirerâ\200\231 s advice that he @hould not paint landstapes because Europeans Mad already refined the genre. "But I am an African and when God made Afrita, He algo created beautiful landscapes for Africans to admire." In an interview with Tim Cousens in 197S

heâ\200\231recalled how he had tried (in+vain) to convince Gerard

Sekota not to leave the country of his birth. Mohl appealed to

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him: "South Africa or Africa needs artists badly. you see, to

â\200\230aint our people, our life, Gur way of living, not speaking in

the Spirit of apartheid or submission, but there are no

artiste here and there are no black artists..."

Mohl practised what he stoad for. His landscapes which

have â\200\230a strong sense of the historical significance of place

and are windows on Bouth African life and scenery. He

portrayed the land with its inhabitants busying themselves in their daily tasks: going to work by bicycle aor an foot, critenine carn, ploughing, faghting veldfires.

Sone of Mohlâ\200\231s landscapes religqigusly reveal the marvel of life. He would discover the wealth of first fruits - pumpkins, mealies and sunflowers - which grow on an ash pit or uncover the warmth, of human existance in a distant homestead

in a winter landscape.

wZonn Koenakeefe (Little Crocodile") Mohl, was born at

â\200\234he

Dinokana near Zeerust an the Western Transvaal on 29 September

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1903.. 8s a child, herding his fatherâ\200\231s goats, he would use
pepa â\200\224 chalk-like limestone ~ to draw goats-and sheep. on
stones ar the smooath side of hides. He would lose himself in
these portrayals, mot maticang that same of theâ\200\231 goats wandered
off into people's gardens. For this he was punished, However
hig-grandfather, Chief Marogoe, tried to protect him and
frequently paid the fines.

At schoagl, in Mafikeng, he was reprimanded and severely
punished for this averwhelming desire to draw and paint uirtt tt
Reverend Hale of the Londen Missionary Society paid a visit to
the sehoaol. He listened to the complaints about Mohl and when
he wae ghown hig drawings, he recognised his exceptional
talent. Hale suggested that Moni be allawed one day a week to
practise his talent.

Consequently, Hale arranged for Mahi te attend Tigers
Kloot Training. Col leget Aften two yearsâ\200\235 stidy~at the collede,
Mohblowas gent to an art school in Namibia, from where he
advanced, with the aid of the London Missionary Seciety and
the Lutheran Church, to DGsseldorf, Germany. There he studied
cart foreÂcfQur on five,years.

Back in South Africa, Moni took part in the Empire
Exhibition of 1936 and had paintings selected far the Annual
South African Academy in L942, 1943 and 1946. In 1942 he
received the Academy Award far Magaliesberg in Mid Winter.

Pram L?4& until i9S9 Mohl was commissioned by the

gavernment and tribal administration of Bechuanaland to recard

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to the Bechuanas. According to
Se Mahi 25 bag

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. he painted among others, the ruins of Chief Ehamaâ\200\231s home at
aphical me

Art Gallery archives),

Shosoang and. the church built by Chief Khama at Serowe.

Mohl established an art echool, the

Studia, behin

hig home in Annadale Street, Saphiatown., in i944. When
Soaphiatewn was demalished he moved to Dube, then ta Rockville

and finally toa Moroka, He was a founder member af Artists

Uinder The Sun. He and the Belgian artist Frank van Halter

}, he @stablighed the Apollo Art Gallery.
Mohd died on Se January LOS at the age of BS after a

long iline