

EUROPEAN STYLISTIC INFLUENCE ON EARLY  
TWENTIETH CENTURY SOUTH AFRICAN PAINTERS

THESIS

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#### ABSTRACT:

South African artists, dissatisfied with the staid environment in local circles, felt the need to travel abroad for fresh stimulation. This need allowed for a historical investigation into the results, beneficial or otherwise, of the influence of European modernism on early twentieth century South African painters.

Because of the numerous practising artists in South Africa at the time, it was found necessary to give cohesion to the artists discussed and, therefore the most pertinent were grouped into artistic movements. Thus, H. Naudé, R.G. Goodman and H.S. Caldecott are discussed in conjunction with Impressionism. B. Everard, R. Everard-Haden and J.H. Pierneef are compared to the Post-Impressionists and finally, I. Stern and M. Laubser are equated with the Fauves and Expressionists.

To ascertain the true effect of European stylistic influence, a comparative analysis of work executed before European visits and upon the artists' return was imperative. Simultaneously, as part of the analysis, reference was also made to any work executed by these artists while in Europe.

European movements of the period are also reviewed, enabling precise grouping and better understanding of the styles adopted by the chosen group of early twentieth century South African artists.

Some attention is given to the impact these artists had on South African art upon their return, as this confirms the degree of European influence and facilitates the classification of styles adopted by the selected group.

In conclusion, to establish the extent to which European art was influential, a brief synopsis shows the changes in local groups, once these artists had re-established themselves in South Africa.

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Dedicated to my parents, Bea and the late Charles Mannering,  
who encouraged me to follow my heart.

## INTRODUCTION:

There is no progress unless one researches and learns from the successes of the past and by studying the History of Art, one can learn from the achievements of other artists. Dr C.L. Stals wrote: "The visual arts have served an extraordinary purpose in man's history. Besides the aesthetic pleasure they give, paintings and sculptures also capture and preserve the unique insights particular artists have had into the circumstances of their times" (Meintjes, Pritchard, 1991, p.7). Therefore, by critically analysing work by selected artists, one can learn the origin and circumstances which led to particular styles. This study is an attempt to determine the extent of European influence on early 20th century white South African artists. By determining such an influence one should be able to recognise the motivation behind styles adopted by leading white South African artists of the past, thereby possibly clarifying the origin of styles adopted by present artists.

During the late c.1980's and early c.1990's, while completing a basic artistic training at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, an increasing awareness of South Africa's relative isolation from European cultural developments began an enquiry, on my part, into the benefits, or otherwise, of cultural contact beyond South Africa. This, in turn, led to my present enquiry, namely, to what extent had earlier South African artists been affected by first-

hand experience of European trends?

Through this research the limitations concerning the availability of material regarding the developments towards a South African style became apparent. Through a critical analysis, it is evident that South African artists were indeed influenced by European experiences, but the details involved and extent to which this is true is not readily available. Information, as it exists, is scattered throughout the few existing South African Art History books and exhibition catalogues. The travels, developments and resultant stylistic changes of South African artists are mentioned, but these are spread scantily throughout the literature as pieces of interest. In this mini-thesis, I hope, where possible, to synthesise the available information regarding selected early 20th century South African artists, as well as to analyse their artistic developments in the context of European influence through an examination of a selection of their work. In order to do this, as an introduction, a study of South African artistic developments by individuals or groups, as well as the type of training available just prior to the 20th century will explain why South African artists found it necessary to travel to Europe for artistic guidance.

A discussion of British and Dutch trends as well as artistic environments available to early 20th century artists will establish reasons for the development towards the stylistic

influence of Europe in South African artistic circles. An assessment of particular South African artists' sojourns abroad, including where they travelled, what they were likely to have seen as well as the extent to which they were influenced by what they encountered through their contacts with paintings elsewhere, will be of particular importance in this study. This analysis will also determine the extent of Europe's stylistic influence on South African artists of the early 20th century.

This thesis is also a historical investigation into the results, beneficial or otherwise, of the influence of European modernism on selected South African artists who travelled to Europe during the early 20th century. In order accurately to determine specific influences on their work, reference will have to be made to particular European artists and movements of the period. The most influential artistic trends of the late 19th and early 20th centuries have to be understood in order successfully to understand the resultant changes in South African artists' choice of techniques and trends.

South African artists whose careers and work will receive attention will be those where an European influence is most apparent. Particular artists have been selected for distinct changes in their style, availability of information due to their popularity, and resultant influence on South African art of the European tradition. The choice of paintings was determined by the



periods from which they came and the distinct change in style between paintings completed early in the artist's career and after European encounters.

Those influenced by Impressionists such as Monet, Sisley and Pissarro will include H.Naudé (1869-1941), G.Goodman (1871-1939) and H.Stratford Caldecott (1886-1929); Post-Impressionist influence, including that of Van Gogh, Gauguin, Seurat and Cézanne, will be discussed in the work of the Everard Group and J.H. Pierneef (1886-1957); and Fauve and Expressionist inspiration including that of Nolde, Pechstein, Van Gogh and Matisse shall be determined through the work of I. Stern (1894-1966) and M. Laubser (1886-1973).

A critical analysis of selected work of each of these South African artists, before and immediately after their European experiences, will form a connecting link. They will be discussed in period categories - pertaining to the styles they seem to have adopted. Artists' early style will be established first. This will be followed by a discussion determining their travels and analysing work executed after European visits. Through such an analysis I hope to establish the extent of European influence and clarify which styles were most attractive to these South African artists. Finally it is hoped that by studying and establishing the roots of South African art in the European tradition, present and future trends will be better understood.

## CHAPTER 1.

## DEVELOPMENTS TOWARD A SOUTH AFRICAN STYLE:

The first pictures rendered by Europeans at the Cape were crude sketches by sailors, ship's passengers and passing missionaries (Gordon-Brown, 1952, p.13; Hendriks, 1968, p.1). Drawings and paintings, once seen in Europe, whetted the appetites of explorers to travel to the unknown exotic land hinted at in the illustrations (Alexander, Cohen, 1990, p.12; Brown, 1978, p.29). In the 18th century the excitement of the untamed, unknown land suggested in the images also attracted western "artists" in the form of explorers (Gordon-Brown, 1952, p. 153-154). Also in the 18th century this enthusiasm brought in Geologists, Anthropologists and Ornithologists.

Hunters and chroniclers also joined the list of those who were to make sketches and paint what they encountered on the southern tip of Africa (Berman, 1983, p.1). Missionaries were great travellers too, and most of them drew the country into which they spread the Christian religion. They sent informative material in the form of engravings and sketches to Europe. These served as a means of information for their churches, and were, in turn, to inspire professional artists to explore the unspoiled landscape evident in what they saw in chronicals and journals (Brown, 1978, p.4-6,24).

The early to mid 19th century brought to the Cape explorers and artists who ultimately became recognised as the pioneers of South African art of the European tradition. These forerunners included Frederick I'Ons (1802-1887), Frank Oates (1840-1875), Thomas Baines (1820-1875), who was predominantly self-taught, and Thomas William Bowler (1813-1869), who was born in England and lived and worked in the Cape for 34 years (Brown, 1978, p.50-54; Hattersley, 1973, p.145-146). All these artists worked in the European, specifically English tradition and encouraged its practice. Also of importance was their influence on South African artists. Works by these artists were often included in local exhibitions and therefore seen by fellow artists, aspiring craftsmen and young student artists. Bowler taught art and initiated a sense of dedication and enthusiasm for art amongst the citizens of the fast developing Cape Town and I'Ons taught privately in Grahamstown after c.1850.

In c.1850, under Bowler's direction, the South African Fine Art Association was founded to stimulate art sales, exhibitions and some form of artistic training. In c.1851, through the guidance of this group, he was one of the first artists to exhibit at the first formal annual exhibition held in the Cape. The show was also established because of the formation of the South African Fine Art Society, which naturally encouraged artistic activity (Berman, 1983, p.376; Ogilvie, 1988, p.82).

This much needed c.1851 exhibition was also made possible by the changed social circumstances of those living in the Cape (Fransen, 1982, p.29). The colonists, by now mostly third generation settlers, had more leisure time in which to express their talent and explore their surroundings. Previous generations of settlers at the Cape had been unable to explore their potential artistic talent because of the necessity to survive from the land in their new hostile environment (Berman, 1983, p.1). Most of the more leisured, older generation were hobbyists who predominantly explored the watercolour medium. At the c.1851 exhibition "most of the (local) works were watercolours (the amateur medium *par excellence*)" (Fransen, 1982, p.191).

This first exhibition was viewed by as many as 3000 art enthusiasts who were impressed by the 509 exhibits on show (Fransen, 1982, p.204; Gordon-Brown, 1952, p.65). Apart from works by local artists, many works on show came from the homes of wealthy European settlers. These included paintings by old European masters brought in during the British settler occupation of c.1795. Also of importance is the importation into South Africa of works painted by Dutch masters during the 17th and 18th centuries. There is no doubt that Dutch genre paintings, still-lives and portraits, as well as work of the British tradition were on display in South Africa in c.1851 (Gordon-Brown, 1952, p.15; Brown, 1978, p.58;).

The traditional and therefore conservative style of most of the works at this c.1851 presentation meant that potential craftsman, seeking inspirational guidance, did not see current European stylistic trends. Even the style of early 19th century British painters who were concerned with the ever changing qualities and conditions of sky, light and atmosphere, as well as the French plein air landscapists, were not on view at this exhibition. This, in turn, meant that South African artists frequenting this show, who were unable to travel to England and Europe, had limited knowledge of these new European trends.

The work shown in c.1851 reflected little of current trends overseas. Instead exhibitors such as Bowler and Baines reflected older traditions. Like their British academic leaders, including James Duffield Harding (1798-1863), they took liberties with subjects in order to conform to traditional qualities like formal composition and ideal scenery. Like academic painters in Europe, some South African artists adapted the topography of scenes to their compositional requirements. South African artists were also limited by the fact that photographic and optical science developments in Europe, which directly influenced subject matter like landscape, specifically where light and space were concerned, were also not yet even hinted at in local circles. However, the work seen at this first exhibition was innovative, new and exciting to the settlers who knew little about events occurring in art circles elsewhere (Berman, 1983, p.1-2; Fransen,

1982, p.191).

Too often paintings from Europe that were seen were essentially Dutch genre scenes of ideal everyday interiors, still-lives and academic portraits and landscapes. These motivated the artists who saw them on show, but limited their scope regarding themes, subject matter and technical diversity. The local landscapes on show, of the Cape area, were executed by partially academically trained explorers and travellers like Baines and Bowler.

Therefore, the most splendid examples on show were neither the best nor the most recent by European standards of the time (Berman, 1983, p.1-2; Van Eyssen, 1989, p.48-50). However, through this exhibition, aspiring craftsmen indirectly turned to traditional Europe for guidance to help them record their surroundings with some degree of confidence and accuracy (Berman, 1983, p.1-2; Franssen, 1982, p.29-31).

European ideas and influence came not only from what was known of its art through documented Art History and exhibitions such as the c.1851 example, but also entered through its draughtsmen and teachers who visited or settled in South Africa.

The first "formal" art lessons in South Africa were given in c.1805 by Anton Anreith, who taught draughtsmen and surveyors artistic craftsmanship and organised a few private, unofficial exhibitions. He also formed an Institute of Art of which he became head from c.1814-1822. While there, in c.1816, Anreith

held a small exhibition "thought to be the first art exhibition held in South Africa" (Ogilvie, 1988, p.20-21). The first advertised art lessons were offered in c.1806 by a surveyor, J.H.Voorman, who also helped bring about an unofficial art exhibition in c.1816 where he exhibited work by his students (Fransen, 1982, p.30-31,191).

In c.1857 Thomas Bowler further encouraged artistic interest when he published a pamphlet entitled "The Student Hand Book Intended For Those Studying Art On The System Of F.D. Harding". This encouraged European traditional work because Harding was the master of an academic school Bowler had attended while in England (Hattersley, 1973, p.249). This circular was one of the first readily accessible study aids available to South African citizens with artistic aspirations (Gordon-Brown, 1952, p.45-50).

South African art training continued in an unofficial manner, with few innovations, until c.1864 when an official Art School was formed in Cape Town by William Foster. It was named "The Roeland Street School of Art and Night Classes" with British born Thomas Mitchener Lindsay, who had studied art in London, as principal. At a later stage it was this school which would attract students like Irma Stern (1894-1966), Maggie Laubser (1886-1973) and Gwelo Goodman (1871-1939) (Berman, 1983, p.124).

Meanwhile, another formal school was formed in c.1881, this time in the Eastern Cape under the auspices of the recently formed official Art Association in Grahamstown, intended as a more coherent body for artists. Prior to this I'Ons had regularly taught privately, but artists needed an established school in which to study artistic mediums. This Grahamstown Art School was formed by a British settler H.W Simpson (1843-?) who had studied at the Royal Academy Schools in Britain. While teaching in South Africa, Simpson continued to exhibit with the Royal Academy in England. He was therefore aware of the accepted Traditional style, as well as more recent styles in Europe until his departure (Berman, 1983, p.129,131; Ogilvie, 1988, p.609).

Both these South African schools were guided by principals with British art education, and were therefore governed by traditional British ideas, style and philosophies (Brown, 1978, p.52-57; Fransen, 1982, p.253). This conservative approach by teachers, artists and settlers, including those joining associations, continued until into the 20th century. Such conservatives were active in the formation of the South African Society of Artists in c.1902 and were devoid of much personal or recent contact with artistic trends and movements in Europe (Brown, 1978, p.52). They were either trained and advised by family, self-taught or instructed by European trained masters. These masters had studied many years previously in orthodox British and continental schools, where their perceptions of light and colour were



encouraged to be conventional and unchanging. This established style extended throughout their careers because it was accepted and acknowledged by academics and novices as a distinguished and competent way of expressing oneself artistically. Even while in South Africa, European teachers seldom adapted their interpretations to the African characteristics of bright light and colour within predominantly flatter landscapes (Berman, 1983, p.2-3). Work also remained conservative because of commercial incentives. Artists had to paint what was publically acceptable, including realistic landscapes and formal portraits.

The bulk of artistic influence on white South African artists was through the work brought into the country by British settlers and explorers between the 17th and 18th centuries (Fransen, 1982, p.37-39, 145-147, 253). Those who came to South Africa to teach during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and had studied art in their home country, would certainly have been trained in the British tradition. Because of the close geographical and cultural proximity which European countries enjoy, the developments of 18th and 19th century British art followed earlier French examples, such as that of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture in Paris, founded in c.1648, where limited deviation from set classical rules was permitted. This style also pertained to British academic artists of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries where academicism continued to be the underlying factor, even in the face of new developments like plein-airism

(Vincent, 1989, p.7).

Artists who practised and learned the British traditional style painted subjects of varying categories. "The subject matter was unimportant so long as it conformed to the well-established (or traditional) rules laid down by the then rigid tastes of the Royal Academy and other bodies" (Vincent, 1989, p.7). The styles deemed acceptable by the establishment included painting formal portraits, ideal landscapes, attractive still lifes or romantic narratives on dark prepared surfaces in a smooth and controlled manner. Even English Romantic artists of the 18th and 19th centuries were first and foremost students of the academic system under which they had originally studied and were therefore loyal to trends it supported (Rothenstein, 1966, p.7).

The Academies in Britain include many important figures but those included in this discussion were chosen for their direct connections with South African art. One such was the sentimental and conservative Dutch artist Sir Hubert Herkomer (1849-1914). He became a leading figure in the British traditional art training system. His opinion regarding the arts is therefore important to this discussion. He said "that it was in England he learned that 'truth in art should be enhanced by sentiment'" (Vincent, 1989, p.8). He first exhibited as part of the Royal Academy in c.1869, aware of the typical accepted traditional style. Herkomer's subject matter is typical of the British tradition. If these are

not formal portraits such as his Self Portrait (n.d.) (fig.1), they are subject pieces made up of a combination of ideal realism and sentiment. The academic school Herkomer established in England would later be an institution some South African artists would attend (Vincent, 1989, p.8-9).

Narrative paintings were also considered acceptable by the establishment and these were popular amongst the public. But, the subjects chosen were primarily dictated by the academies and results were therefore often of ideal views and circumstances. "Paintings of the rural scene were often little more than pretty postcard pictures that gave no indication of the true social conditions of their subject matter" (Vincent, 1989, p.10). Some paintings of this type such as The Last Assignment (n.d.) (fig.2) painted by John Yeend King (1855-1924), although purely sentimental and ideal, are an indication of the superb draughtsmanship encouraged by the academies. Vincent's description of this painting aptly describes this sentiment: "Posing gracefully against a fence, this young woman gazes sadly into the distance while she waits to keep her last tryst with her lover. Nearby, a sluggish stream bedecked with water-lilies meanders into the distance where the sun is beginning to set behind the trees" (Vincent, 1989, p.47). The painting, although ideally Romantic, is a masterfully exact execution with painstaking observation and draughtsmanship.



(fig.1) Self Portrait (n.d) H. Herkomer



(fig.2) The Last Assignment (n.d) J.Y. King

Landscape was a favoured subject by those who were loyal to the academic style. These were usually detailed paintings with the fore-, mid- and backgrounds painted in a similar intensity. The painting By The Haystacks (1866) (fig.3) by George Vicat Cole (1833-1893) is the epitome of the style in which landscape had to be painted at this time. Cole had been nominated as an Academician in c.1880 and his work is therefore like that which was taught and revered by the Royal Academy. The foreground and background have received equal treatment. The middle ground is highlighted, especially the haystack, which is the focal point. The background is darker, enhanced by the traditionally dark brown prepared canvas, and the hills to the left disappear into the far distance. The ideal tranquillity of the scene is enhanced by the inclusion of characterless, seemingly superimposed figures (Vincent, 1989, p.53).

Henry Tonks (1862-1937), also a British academic artist, taught at the Slade School of Art where many early 20th century South African artists and their teachers started their European training. His attitude toward modern movements and women artists were typical of the British traditional schools. He was often sarcastic to his women pupils and his conservatism is further enhanced in his uncompromising opinion that an artist had to find poetry in ordinary things and ignore modern tendencies. He discouraged his students' exploration of other artistic trends, teaching the tradition under which he had trained. He, as an

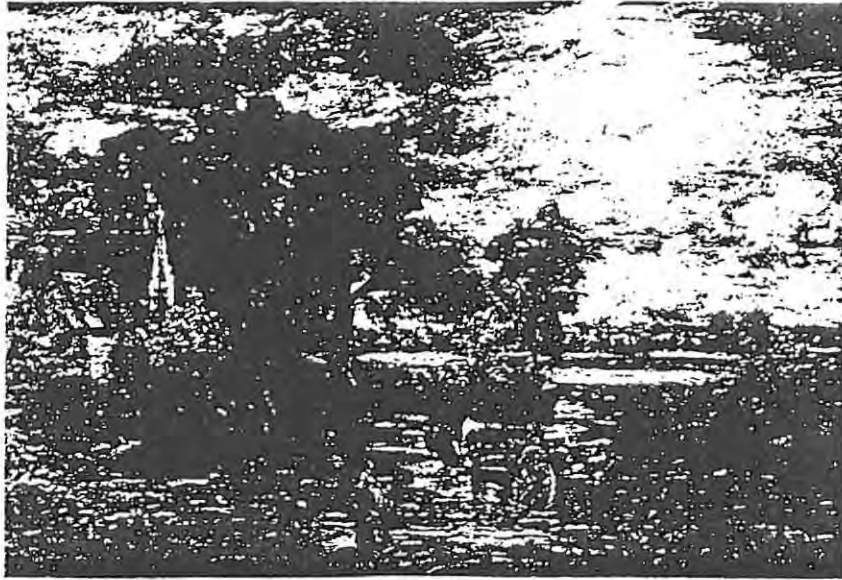


(fig.3) **By The Haystacks** (1866) G.V. Cole

artist, with his roots in "eighteenth- and nineteenth-century art, ... hated Impressionism and Post-Impressionism" (Vincent, 1989, p.9).

Little plein-airism was permitted by the academies, other than in studies and sketches, only studio paintings were those which were deemed as exhibition-worthy. The creative advantage of plein air sketching offered by traditional schools in the field of skilled watercolour painting and oil sketches or studies en plein air, helped artists capture the landscape as it was, immediately, which was often lacking in the final work. The majority of the works produced en plein air were considered to be just sketches by the academies and therefore unworthy of being exhibited. The loss of direct interpretation is evident if the "sketch" for The Haywain (before c.1820) (fig.4) by John Constable (1776-1837) is compared with his completed studio painting (1820-1821) (fig.5). Even though the studio version is splendid, the sketch is far more fresh and immediate, enhanced by the expressive dark colour, variation of mark and all over touches of light (Cavendish, 1993a, p.44-45,48; Cornell, 1983, p.318-320).

British artists who settled at the South African Cape from the early 19th century onwards, including artists like Bowler in c.1833 and Baines in c.1842, were such conventionally traditional artists. These immigrant European artists' styles, subject matter and approach to painting were established according to British



(fig.4) The Haywain study (Before 1820) J. Constable



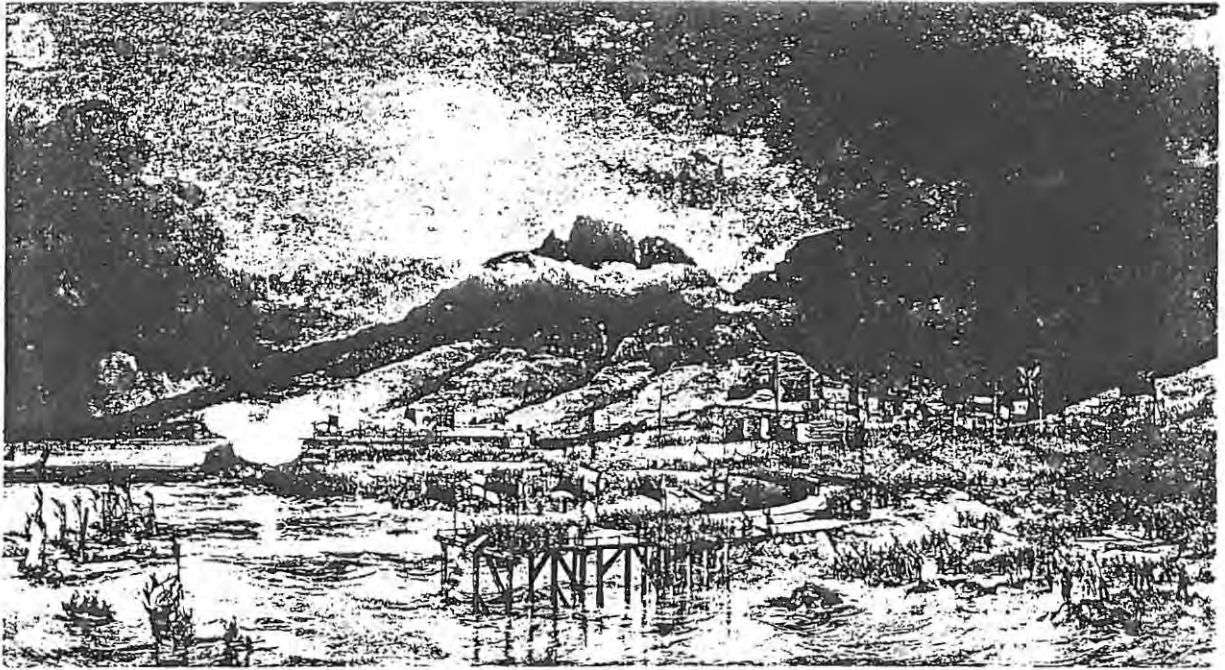
(fig.5) The Haywain (1820) J. Constable



Academy trends (Berman, 1975, p.2-3; Fransen, 1982, p.253-254). The atmosphere produced in their paintings was seldom adapted to South African conditions, probably due to the lack of change the artists made to their palettes. This lack of colour modification was also prevalent in Europe, especially England, prior to plein-air painting and therefore illustrative of the continued influence of the academic style of Europe on South African artists.

South African artists of the 19th century used the soft, subdued shades and consistent, unreal studio lighting pioneered in Europe and encouraged by its' academicians and students. This lack of adaptation to real conditions is evident in Bowlers' Prince Alfred inaugurating the Breakwater (1860) (fig.6). The painting has an unnatural, idealised setting and the colours are subdued and mono-tone which is neither a factual nor expressive portrayal of the sea in Table Bay. The Cape that he has portrayed has a stage-like quality which was also encouraged by the English academies. Baines' and Bowler's work, which is ideal and academic, reinforces the claim that 19th century South African artists had romantic academic tendencies and ignored developments such as those of the Barbizon School and Realism in Europe.

The British traditional style, with its emphasis on draughtsmanship, did assist young artists in their pursuit of becoming competent painters. But South African artistic style did



(fig.6) Prince Alfhred inauguration the Breakwater (1860)  
T.W Bowler

not develop consistently because there were very few available channels for sustaining the possible influence, inspiration and new ideas from Europe (Fransen, 1982, p.253-257). Local art schools, their teachers and exhibition opportunities available to South African art students had the most impact on their style. Tutors who came to South Africa were predominantly of European origin, specifically from Britain and Holland, because these countries had direct ties to South Africa through colonialism and immigration.

#### **BRITISH TUTORS:**

South African artistic trends changed and developed slightly with the arrival of new, contemporary visitors and settlers during the second half of the 19th century and first decade of the 20th century (Fransen, 1982, p.253-257). During this period the predominant discipline accomplished by hobbyists and professional artists in South Africa was landscape painting. This is not surprising because the exotic land they now lived in was unspoilt and awe inspiring. The majority of these artists were also accomplished portraitists, primarily because they could earn an income from this genre. Landscapes and portraits were pertinent to those who commissioned paintings while living at the Cape. Family portraits and views of the lands and surrounding areas owned by these families were subjects with which the patrons could identify. Some works were sold to visitors sailing between Europe and India. Being travellers, they only wanted small

landscape-type watercolours as keepsakes to indicate the African country they had had the chance to visit (Hattersley, 1973, p.146). The traditional British style with its conservatism and popularity was a perfect manner in which to express these small studies. Therefore, because of financial necessity, public demand and traditional training, the prevailing influence on South African arts remained predominantly Traditional European conservatism (Berman, 1983, p.3).

Academically trained tutors from Britain were expected to ignore the more progressive methods of the Paris ateliers, including Impressionism. Instead, they studied casts, clothed figures and then the nude, and were limited to romantic, ideal themes, which did not include more modern themes until the 20th century (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.32). In South Africa, the few art schools which did exist at the turn of the 19th century, were directed by English masters from this background, most of whom had been trained at or had strong connections with the Royal College of Art in London and other traditional schools (p.25) One such artist and tutor was **J.S MORLAND** (1846 - 1921).

Morland, predominantly a landscapist, was one of the first British tutors to become actively involved in formal South African artistic training. Born in England, he studied at various academies, including the Liverpool Academy of Arts, and advanced drawing at the Government District Art School. In Wales he became

a professional landscape watercolourist and this proved to be his forte, hardly deviating from this or from his formal British training.

Morland came to South Africa in c.1888, establishing himself as an art teacher at the Cape (Fransen, 1982, p.253). Although the light, colour and atmosphere found in South African landscape and settlements differed from those of England, he never abandoned the European conventions of using subdued light and tones in order to enhance ideal romantic themes. Furthermore, the European landscape had more vertical features, closer together, and more successive planes in subjects like forests of tall trees and broad stretches of water. The South African landscape Morland would have encountered at this time was more open and had fewer of these features, consisting of wider, empty expanses with mountains rising abruptly from moderately flat plateaus. Had Morland taken these differences into account, he would have worked within different concepts of space. But, his training would have encouraged the use of the classical formula of dark foreground opening into light middle ground, constituting the focal point, which, in turn would disappear into a distant plane. He seldom adapted his European ideas to South African conditions and was known to paint "scenes of England from memory" (Ogilvie, 1988, p.459).

Morland was a founder member of the South African Drawing Club in c.1889 and therefore became one of the judges, an examiner and tutor for the group (Berman, 1983, p.3). This important position enabled him to spread his conservative ideas and thoughts on art to South African artists. His potential for traditional stylistic influence expanded in c.1897 upon becoming inaugural president of the South African Society of Artists (Berman, 1975, p.3-4; Fransen, 1982, p.253-254). By being an influential figure who had not broadened his training and hardly adapted his palette, Morland would pass the shortcomings of conservatism on to his students (Berman, 1983, p.289). Morland was not the only tutor to do this. Teachers like GEORGE C. ROBINSON (1858 - 1930) had similar British training and resultant conservatism.

Robinson became a great influence in South African artistic development when, during his second visit to South Africa in c.1895, he became head of the Cape Town School of Art (formerly the Roeland Street School). While there, he enthusiastically spoke out against the uncompromising, unchanging quality of the English-inspired, essentially traditional, South African art. These opinions made him more progressive than Morland, but Robinson's work rarely reflected his views (Fransen, 1982, p.256-257).

At the turn of the 19th century in South Africa, there were three varieties of accepted professional subject matter: landscape,

portraiture and subject pieces (exhibition work). Robinson, with his English training in London, remained faithful to these genres, but his style of painting, when it came to most of his non-exhibition pieces, was often new and dynamic. If one compares two of Robinson's portraits, Paul Kruger (1904) (fig.7), a commissioned piece, and Native Woman (later) (fig.8), his stylistic and technical diversity, becomes apparent. A more formal academic, smooth blended finish is apparent in the one, and Impressionistic, more direct observation characterises the other. The painting of Kruger is formal, precise and traditional with consistent light source and blended tones. The portrait of the woman is expressively immediate, with light tones speckled over the entire surface. The more relaxed handling of paint in Native Woman (fig.8) lends itself perfectly to the subject, it seems to hint at her character. This change in style was probably due to Robinson's interest in new trends in Europe, ranging from Impressionism to the beginnings of Expressionism (Berman, 1983, p.363; Fransen, 1982, p.254).

Robinson's subject pieces (his exhibition work) were Victorian romantic pieces, with historical subjects and exaggerated, stereotyped poses. Exhibition frequenters were therefore unlikely to see much of his more Impressionistic work, but rather his traditional work. Robinson's landscapes and some portraits, which often contain innovative tendencies, were executed almost exclusively for his own enjoyment and practice. The resultant



(fig.7) Paul Kruger (1904) G.C. Robinson



(fig.8) Native Woman (After 1904) G.C. Robinson



lack of exposure to these pieces is disappointing because they contained the innovative qualities that artists needed to see, such as pure bright colours, free handling of paint with expressive brush-strokes. Such qualities, as found in his Portrait of a Woman (n.d.) (fig.9), are reminiscent of Impressionism, a style he is often credited with having brought into South Africa. The woman is sitting in a formal pose, but the application of paint is, at times, thick and expressive, illustrating his disregard for alternating layers of glaze and impasto painting which was encouraged by European academies. Robinson has taken great care in his Impressionistic observations of the play of light and dark and the effect it has on texture (Alexander, Cohen, 1990, p.37). This was unusual in South African artistic circles at the time. Robinson's contribution to the development of South African art was therefore occasionally new and inspiring and, at times, traditional and conservative (Berman, 1983, p.363). This inconsistency was also prevalent in the teaching of **GEORGE S. SMITHARD** (1873 - 1919).

Smithard, an English born art teacher, took great advantage of South African subject matter upon his arrival in c.1901. Prior to this he had received a varied training - having studied at the Julian Academy in Paris, a studio in Antwerp, and, finally, at The Slade School in London. This education made Smithard aware of different attitudes and environments. The South African art he encountered was conservative and academically romantic. The



(fig.9) Portrait of a Woman (n.d) G.C. Robinson

revered utopian and traditional style was snubbed by Smithard and he soon got involved with art circles in the Cape. His first objective was to change peoples' predominantly conservative approach to art. From the outset he was intrigued by the strange landscapes, Malay people and harsh light of his new environment and believed that these should be painted. In c.1905 he further broadened the scope of South African art by introducing etching to artists such as J.H. Pierneef (1886-1957) (Berman, 1983, p.430).

Smithard's first few years in South Africa were dominated by his determination to capture the Cape scenery. He was aware of the new challenges the South African landscape offered, especially its atmosphere and predominantly flatter vistas. With his traditional training, he found the necessary adaptations difficult because he often adhered to traditional compositional procedures, pale palette and European ideas he had learned to maintain (Berman, 1983, p.430-431). But, Smithard's Autumn in the Cape Peninsula, Tokai (1918) (fig.10) illustrates his passion for the Cape Dutch homes as well as his attempted stylistic adaptation. The scene is set on a peaceful sunny day on a wine farm. The setting is somewhat traditional in its stage-like appearance, but the Cape Dutch house is framed by colourful trees which create filtered patches of bright light and coloured shade on all elements of the painting (Berman, 1983, p.430).



fig.10) Autumn in the Cape Peninsular, Tokai (1918) G.S.Smithard

Even though Smithard was passionate about encouraging a South African style, he often reverted back to his traditional one. But his training allowed for preparatory sketches executed on site. This, in turn, encouraged his students to paint their landscape sketches en plein air, and this had the effect of weaning them away from pure academicism toward an Impressionistic fascination with the transient changes in nature and effects of light.

During c.1909-1917, Smithard settled in Johannesburg where he found no governing body of artists or official art establishment. He soon involved himself in artistic affairs and became a prolific, progressive artist and therefore an influential leader while teaching at the Johannesburg and Heidelberg Colleges. While lecturing publicly, he also painted, lectured privately and wrote reviews and articles about art (Berman, 1983, p.430). His comprehensive knowledge and philosophy about matters regarding art, brought from Europe or studied and read about in South Africa, encouraged enthusiastic study and practice in his students.

Smithard's later Transvaal paintings show an adaptation to the South African atmosphere and flatness, apparent in his new, cleaner, purer, brighter palette and awareness of remote distances predominant in the clear Transvaal landscape. He also ignored academic subject choices, like posed portraits and unrealistic, romantically ideal landscape scenes and, instead,

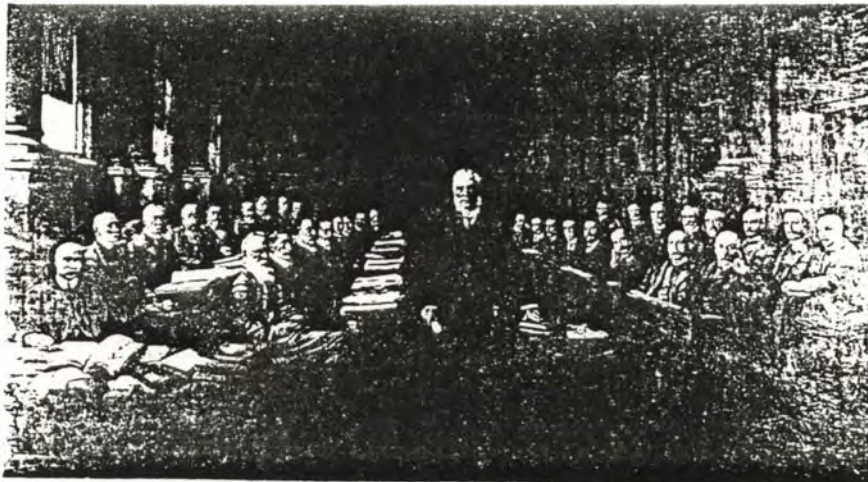
painted real landscapes, Afrikaners and Malay people (Berman, 1983, p.430; Fransen, 1982, p.254-257). Apart from his innovative ideas on light, he became progressive in his invigorating manipulation of paint, applying powerful colours in a looser, more expressive fashion.

Smithard's Holy Communion, Heidelberg (n.d.) (fig.11) is a painting which aptly illustrates his new manner. The play of light, colourful shadows and the secondary importance of fine detail, which he has created throughout the scene, is Impressionistic and therefore innovative by South African standards. The rough textures, thicker application of paint and colours are expressive and suggestive of mood. Even the distinctly silhouetted figures are coloured. The foreground space is well observed, giving a good impression of the flat scenery he had before him (Alexander, Cohen, 1990, p.47). The full range of work in this new method of observation and application of colour, light and texture, coming late in his life, was, unfortunately, rare.

Not all tutors came to South Africa with the intention of teaching. One such artist was **EDWARD ROWORTH** (1880 - 1964), a British born artist, who had studied at art institutions like Heaton and The Slade School. Having studied under the tutorship of figures such as Tonks and Herkomer, Roworth was an inspiring tutor. He originally had no intention of teaching art in South



(fig.11) Holy Communion, Heidelberg (n.d) G.S. Smithard



(fig.12) National Convension, Cape Town - 1908 E. Roworth

Africa. He came with the British troops who were involved in the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), after which he decided to settle in Cape Town and teach art (Berman, 1983, p.XVI,368; Ruijsch van Dugteren, 1917b, p.49). He started a studio in Burg Street and once it was established, was determined to initiate a South African painting style, because he was aware of Africa's bright, harsh sun-light and flatter space usually avoided by local artists. He later joined the South African Society of Artists and began expressing his attitudes about the advantages of a freer use of paint, colour and dynamic subject choice. In c.1908, as a well known portraitist, Roworth succeeded Robinson as president of this society. Roworth was a respected figure in these artistic circles, a success attributable to his thorough European training in academic institutions which often lent his portraits and landscapes a Romantic quality. His talent and dedication ensured him of many commissions, but did not allow for much experimentation (Anderson, 1968, p.55-56). Roworth was unable fully to accomplish his desire to paint South African subjects realistically because of his academic training which did not allow for the exploration of newer trends.

Throughout his teaching career Roworth was opposed to some of the more modern movements that he felt could hinder the development of a South African style. He did not want trends like Post-Impressionism and Expressionism to permeate South African ideas. He felt they would encourage artists not to observe and study

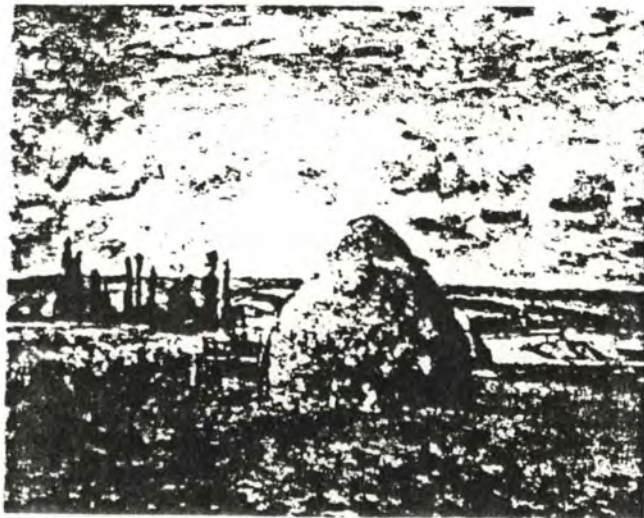


nature in order to portray it realistically, persuading them rather to be expressive at the expense of realism. Roworth himself did not always succeed in creating a South African style. Instead his traditionalism hindered this development. His style, especially in his approach to portraiture, remained traditional, with its conservative, idealised view and subdued colour. This contrived style is clear in his National Convention, Cape Town - 1908 (fig.12). Each figure, a portrait on its own, is isolated from the others and lacks interaction. This detachment is enhanced by the dark brown glazes, particularly in the background, which, in turn, create an overall traditionally smooth surface (Berman, 1983, p.369-370; Ruijsch van Dugteren, 1917b, p.49).

Through his landscapes Roworth did, however, manage to relax his technique, experimenting with brighter, purer colours applied in brisker brush strokes. His painting, Mostert's Mill, Cape Town (1907) (fig.13), is a little Impressionistic as the scene appears to be transient and immediate. The setting is of no apparent moral or ideal significance. It is only painted for its real, imperfect beauty. The light source illuminating one side of the subject enhancing the form, composition and colour, is reminiscent of the work of many Impressionists, especially The Haystack, Pontoise (1873) (fig.14) by Pissarro (1830-1903). Although the background areas of the mill painting show tell-tale traditional brown under-paint and use of glazes, Roworth's



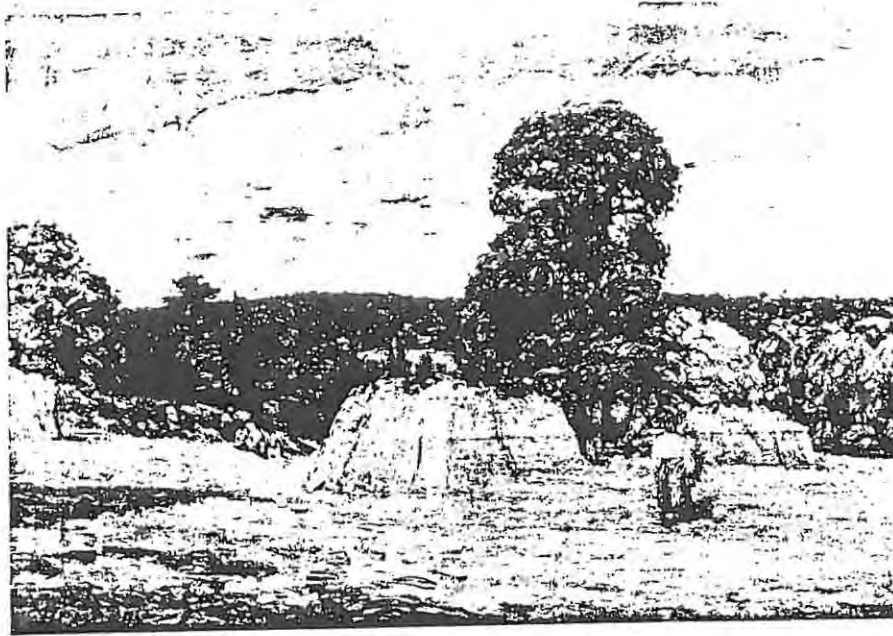
(fig.13) Mostert's Mill, Cape Town (1907) E. Roworth



(fig.14) The Haystack, Pontoise (1873) C. Pissarro

technique is much freer than the sanctioned disciplined rendering of South African academicism. His use of some complementary colours, like the mauve and pale yellow throughout the painting is similar to the Impressionistic qualities found in Pissarro's The Harvest at Montfoucault (1876) (fig.15). In these paintings the foregrounds and trees are realised in very similar colours. The painting technique found in both is quick and varied, both artists trying to simulate textures through this rendering, never forgetting the forms depicted (Alexander, Cohen, 1990, p.52; Thomas, 1988, p.126).

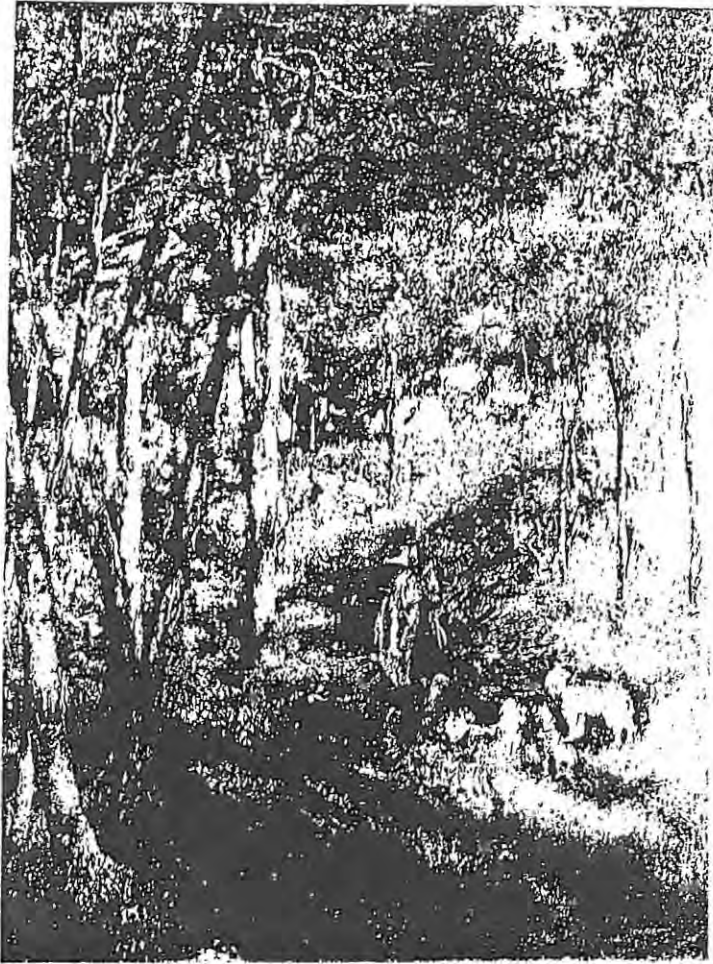
Roworth's landscape paintings were the only genre in which he experimented with dappled light and shadow. His Springtime at the Old Mill (1949) (fig.16) and Jules Le Coeur in Fontainebleau Forest (1866) (fig.17) by Renoir (1841-1919) are very similar in their use of speckled patches of paint to imitate filtered light (Berman, 1983, p.368-369; Thomas, 1988, p.90-91). Even though Roworth was adamant about trying to change ideas and never gave up his hope of creating an individual style, he never turned totally from romantic themes and academic procedure (Berman, 1983, p.369-370). This is illustrated in his Farmhouse and Slave Bell (n.d.) (fig.18). Even though the subject is South African, the scene is stage-like, flat, formal and romanticised by the ideal environment with little true organic naturalism (Meintjes, Pritchard, 1991, p.26).



(fig.15) The Harvest at Montfoucault (1876) C. Pissarro



(fig.16) Springtime at the Old Mill (1949) E. Roworth



(fig.17) Jules le Coeur in Fontainebleau Forest (1866) A. Renior



(fig.18) Farmhouse and Slave Bell (n.d) E. Roworth

In c.1917, Roworth wrote an article for an international periodical entitled "Art of the British Empire Overseas", including artists like Morland, himself, Smithard, Goodman and Wenning (1873-1921) from Holland. The title of the article not only reinforces the idea that these artists were of the British tradition, but also that, even though they were settled in South Africa, they were still to be considered artists of this tradition. The common ground in the 25 works chosen to accompany the article was that they were all similarly executed in the approved "academic, romantic naturalism" style (Berman, 1983, p.243). This demonstrates Roworth's appreciation for and support of academic style.

Roworth dominated the South African art scene for fifty years and his outlook towards once new movements like Impressionism, Expressionism and Post-Impressionism seldom changed. During the early 20th century, he publically spoke out against an Impressionistic influence on South African art, saying that he doubted whether " ... the influence of the more modern French schools would be a good one for the South African art student of the future to come under," (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.25). He felt Impressionism to be decadent (p.25). Even in c.1940 he continued publicly to oppose newer conventions. At a lecture he gave in Cape Town, he maintained that art from France "poisoned" the art of countries following its example. During his lecture entitled "French Art: a study of downfall", he stated

that artistic influence from France, especially that of the previous 40 years, was decadent and to be avoided. He also added, "... Degeneracy in Art eventually means degeneracy in a whole life of a nation; that a people who weakly allow themselves to be misled by the ballyhoo of modern art and had not the moral courage to cleanse their art and their country from this vile corruption were ripe for national downfall" (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.54).

Roworth never wavered from this passionate viewpoint. Therefore, at a later stage in his career, his outlook and ideas on modernism, new when he had started out, became old fashioned (Berman, 1983, p.369-370). As with most prolific academics (like Robinson and others mentioned) his work, influenced by his European traditional training and its conservative stylistic tendencies, influenced South African art, especially young artists. This conservatism would take a long period to be outgrown in South Africa, the accepted norms reinforced by teachers, themselves taught in the Traditional style (Berman, 1983, p.368-370). Later, this conservatism would prove to be too stifling for young artists and would ultimately be a driving force behind their need to travel abroad, especially to Europe.

South African artists who studied in their home country also had tutors of Dutch origin. Having a different source, the Dutch traditional style which came to South Africa was unlike that

experienced through British tutors. 19th and 20th century Dutch painting trends had developed out of styles established during the 17th century, when the Dutch public came to regard landscape and still-life painting as dignified and important subjects, not just as backgrounds or scenes for classical subjects (Leymarie, 1956, p.103).

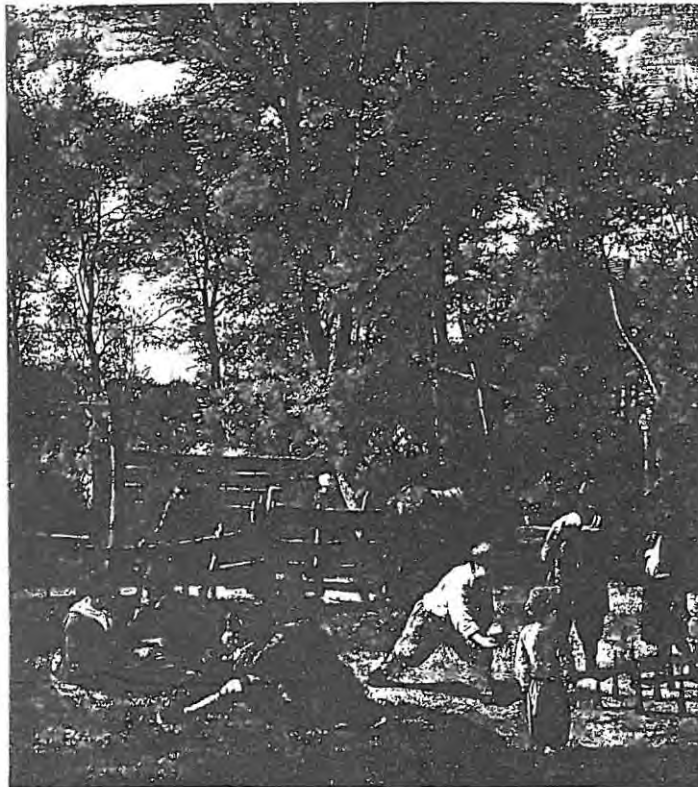
Dutch painting, after the 17th century, also took on new forms due to the fact that academic paintings were now seldom being commissioned. Protestantism, and the lack of a grandiose Dutch monarchy, did not allow for frivolous decoration or luxurious commissions. Also, the Burger society, which had become wealthier, wanted paintings of various genres, especially portraits and still lifes. Therefore, in order to continue being independent, artisans had to learn to work for a free market and paint subjects with which the varying Burger society could identify. This need brought about the demand for good quality landscape painting as well as masterful still-life and everyday genre painting. The paintings of the time had one criterion: they had to be imitations of the real. The work had to be an organised representation of real circumstances and scenes.

The pinnacle of this style can be seen in Woman with a Water Jug (1660-1665) (fig.19) by Vermeer (1632-1675) and The Skittle Players (1660-1662) (fig.20) by Jan Steen (1625-1679). These pieces consist of a precise, articulate representation of





(fig.19) Woman with a Water Jug (1660's) J. Vermeer

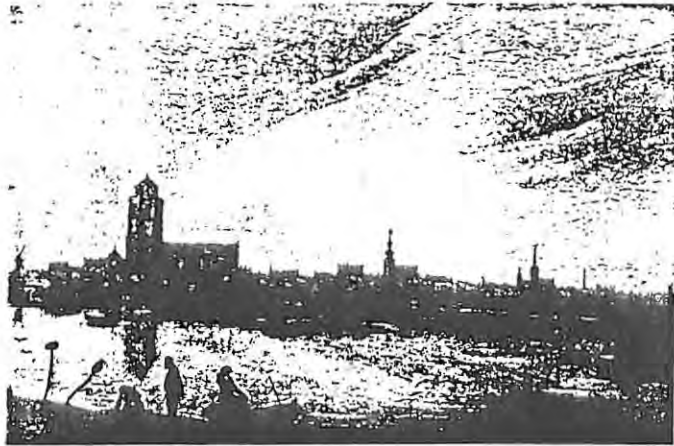


(fig.20) The Skittle Players (1660's) J. Steen

everyday subjects. Special care was taken in the observation of detail and the qualities of light on objects, textures and the creation of mood (Fuchs, 1978, p.43,50-61). Landscapes were popular too, View of Zierikzee (1618) (fig.21) by Van de Velde (1591-1632) and van Goyen's Windmill by a River (1642) (fig.22) illustrate the classic, Renaissance derived, Dutch style which dominated this subject matter. While painting these subjects the artist had to remain devoted to nature, in the sense that they had to look authentic, closely resembling the original. The most esteemed pictures were those considered to be "Artificial Miracles" (Fuchs, 1978, p.103-104,167).

In Holland this precise style, labelled Pictorial Realism, was expected to reflect the dignity and moral values demanded during this period, although, as long as likenesses were faithful, individual expression was accepted. The type of workmanship readily accepted was therefore a relatively individualistic depiction of everyday situations. The artists were not entirely bound to one process or style, they could experiment to a certain degree, the only regulation was that work be of moral value (Fuchs, 1978, p.104).

During the 17th and 18th centuries the Dutch tradition of moralistic, realistic work was enthusiastically taught at the prestigious Hague school, and later periodically revived in Holland by this school's teachers. It was a style with which



(fig.21) View of Zierikzee (1618) E. van der Velde



(fig.22). Windmill by a River (1642) J. van Goyen

people could identify, as subjects could easily be recognised. The acceptance of this style in schools continued well beyond the 18th century and mid-19th century and Realism in France reinforced the value of painting everyday themes (Fuchs, 1978, p.163-165).

Even though Impressionism was initiated by the French, cross-pollination had long occurred between Holland, England and France due to their close proximity and resultant cultural ties. As Dutch schools adopted and selected French Impressionistic trends, so their disciplines became a mixture of Impressionist style and popular Dutch subjects which were a celebration of everyday life, circumstances and possessions. In Holland during the 19th century "... near The Hague - atmospheric painting was a speciality. ... The concern of the 'Haagse School' painters was totally with pictorial aesthetics: and that is how they chose their subjects" (Fuchs, 1978, p.165). Dutch art came to be accurate, but individual and atmospheric renditions of genre subjects (Berman, 1975, p.15; Fuchs, 1978, p.104,163).

#### DUTCH TUTORS:

The European exhibits which had been viewed in South Africa since the c.1850's had always included works by Dutch masters such as Frans Hals (1581-1666) and, because of their tradition, probably included an overwhelming number of still life and genre images (Ruijsch van Dugteren, 1916, p.121). Nevertheless, because of

financial feasibility, the only professional South African still life painter of this era was Beatrice Hazel (1864-1946) (Berman, 1983, p.3). The direct influence of 18th and 19th century Dutch paintings, including still lifes and everyday genres, reached South African students, eventually becoming more popular and practised, through Dutch teachers who had experienced training which encouraged this type of painting (Berman, 1983, p.3; Berman, 1975, p.17).

Such an artist, trained in the traditional Dutch manner, who taught South African students, was **FRANS OERDER (1867 - 1944)**. Oerder reinforced the 17th century Dutch link with South African artistic circles with his arrival in Pretoria in c.1890, coinciding with the beginning of new approaches concerning the capturing of the South African atmosphere, especially in landscape. His formal training in the Dutch tradition, being relatively unconventional compared to South African training, certainly helped him to be progressive, observe realistically and experiment. His contribution to South African artistic development, through his teaching and painting, helped solve many problems concerning the capturing of the untainted South African surroundings (Berman, 1975, p.17-18; Berman, 1983, p.3).

Before coming to Africa, Oerder had studied at the Academy of Art in Rotterdam and was a skilled still-life and genre artist. One contribution of his was in the discipline of still-life painting,

his enthusiasm for the subject proving inspiring and influential to South African artists because it seemed innovative. (Berman, 1975, p.19; Scott, 1968, p.85). Oerder's prestigious Rotterdam training, where new artistic trends were not ignored, must have brought him into contact with new artistic trends like Impressionism. An example of 19th century French-Dutch contact can be seen in the work of the Dutchman, Jongkind (1819-1891), who had moved to France in c.1846 and met and worked with Monet after c.1862. In turn, his "quick, bold attack and direct response to light," (Thomas, 1988, p.84) was an inspiration to those in his homeland. Van Gogh's c.1886 move to France provides a similar and continued contact between Holland and the French Impressionists (Alexander, 1962, p.16-17; Thomas, 1988, p.240).

Like most Dutch artists of the time, Oerder was sceptical about the Impressionistic style, extracting aspects of this and localising them. He inspired young South African artists, like J.H. Pierneef, to depict everyday themes and emphasise the transient qualities of light and therefore colour (Berman, 1983, p.312-313).

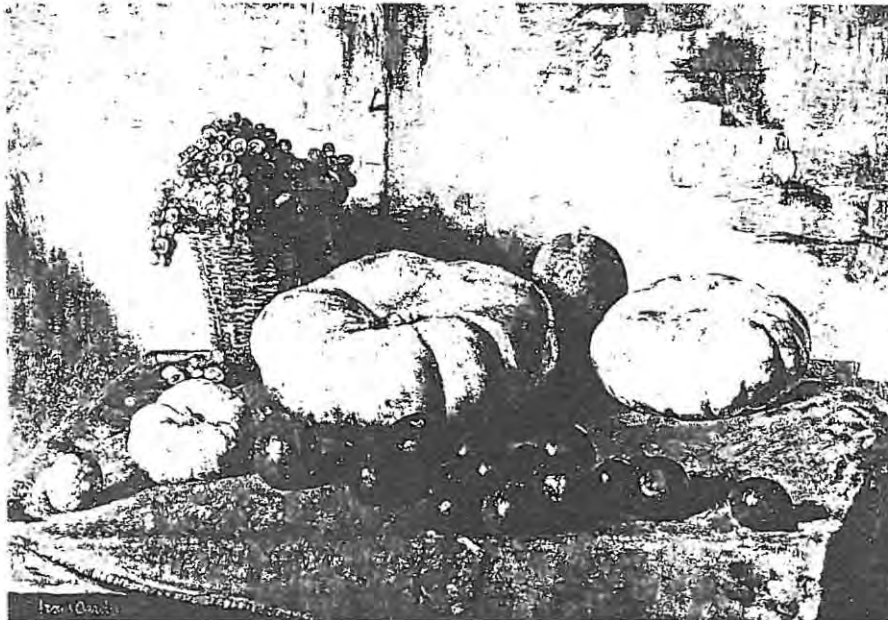
In c.1894, Oerder became an art teacher at "Girls' Secondary School" in Pretoria, giving him the opportunity to mingle with local art groups. While teaching, he also had a private studio to which he invited visitors, conversing and enthusing freely about artistic issues (Berman, 1983, p.312-313).

Oerder's skilfully realised still-lives have an extremely accurate likeness to the subjects, a result of his Dutch instruction. His painting Still-life with apples and white snowballs (n.d.) (fig.23) is a good blend of this training together with other European trends. It is a skilful realistic study of texture, shape and colour and is therefore a Dutch masterpiece. But, it also has fresh Impressionistic insight into the effects of light and freer, expressive brush strokes and purer colour. The contents of the vase have been treated in a free, immediate fashion, evident by the expressive brush work. The tray's sparkling edge reflects a precise study of light. The entire scene has a consistent light source derived from traditional studio painting, but there is a distinct mood, a corner of deep rich colour full of presence, provided by the immediacy of his style (Berman, 1983, p.313; Harmsen, 1985, p.199; Welz, 1989, p.150).

Some of Oerder's still lifes are too precise and this distracts from their reality because it makes them seem idealised. His obsession with the accurate rendering of light and reflections can be seen in his A Basket of grapes surrounded by pumpkins, squash and ripe tomatoes (n.d.) (fig.24). In this image Oerder depicts every day objects rendered in painstaking detail, but on closer inspection, the elements are too perfect. The grapes are so shiny and full of liquid that they look like glass and the tomatoes virtually waxen (Harmsen, 1985, p.199; Welz, 1989,



(fig.23) Still life with apples and white snowballs (n.d)  
F. Oerder



(fig.24) A Basket of grapes surrounded by pumpkins, squash and  
ripe tomatoes (n.d)  
F. Oerder



p.112).

As a well respected teacher in the Transvaal, Oerder influenced and inspired local artists and school leavers (future artists). Oerder, not entirely committed to the Impressionist "attractions of scintillating hues and the sparkle of divisionist techniques", preferred a fusion of the new, the traditional and the South African, bringing about a conservative, localised variation of the Impressionistic style (Berman, 1983, p.313). His landscapes, particularly those executed after c.1905, retained Traditional Dutch qualities of realism. This was not a drawback but an aid in the correct depiction and problem solving of the hitherto considerably inaccurate depiction of the South African landscape. Oerder practised the typically Dutch conservative version of Impressionism, ignoring older conventions like subdued colour and vertical emphasis like tall trees which had been encouraged in South Africa. He painted South African landscapes in a local manner, observing and painting the typically wide expanses of Transvaal surroundings which were more like the Dutch space he was used to.

Oerder's painting Landscape near Pretoria (n.d.) (fig.25) indicates the horizontal lines he now observed in these wide South African spaces, illustrating his realisation of the African atmosphere and its colour potential. He has replaced the soft romantic greens, typical of European scenes, with bleached browns



(fig.25) Landscape Near Pretoria (n.d) F. Oerder

offset by deep blues. His use of complementary contrast echoes Impressionist convention (Alexander, 1962, p.17). In this unromanticised scene, Oerder has depicted a harsh landscape on a hot day by meticulously recording the light and shadow, accentuating near and far planes. This grasp of the South African landscape would later enable his students, including a young J.H.Pierneef, to capture the landscape in a local manner (Alexander, Cohen, 1990, p.39; Scott, 1968, p.85).

Oerder's European Impressionistic tendencies are more apparent in his genre scenes like Women in a Garden (n.d.) (fig.26) clearly indicating his study of everyday genre and nature, particularly in terms of colour and light. The quick, expressive use of paint and clear observation of light in his garden painting is comparable to Impressionistic paintings like Morisot's Butterfly Hunt (1873) (fig.27) or Monet's Poplars on the Epte (1891) (fig.28). In Oerder's and Monet's paintings, the free brush strokes, unblended tones, deliberate observation and depiction of light and its influence on colour is so similar as to suggest an Impressionist influence on Oerder's work. The rendering of colour and dappled light in Oerder's painting is remarkably similar to that of Morisot's. Even though the colours they have chosen are quite different, their use of paint is parallel. In both paintings, the clothes and faces of the ladies are similarly indicated, with quick, large broad strokes, both immediate depictions of everyday scenes. Both artists have used speckled



(fig.26) Women in the Garden (n.d) F. Oerder



(fig.27) Butterfly Hunt (1873) B. Morisot



(fig.28) Poplars on the Epte (1891) E. Monet

light effects and sparkling, relatively pure colours. White has been employed to lighten intense colours. Neither artist has mixed colour with black, instead mixing pure colours to obtain dark shades. The thick textured impasto in Oerder's painting is not only similar to the work of Monet, but also suggests his Dutch training (Alexander, Cohen, 1990, p.38; Berman, 1975, p.20; Thomas, 1988, p.33,90).

Oerder's contribution to a South African style was exceptional. He brought what he learned in Europe to South Africa and tried to spread and localise it (Scott, 1968, p.86). He was not intimidated by the British traditional schools and teachers of the time and encouraged a style he believed to be more suited to South African conditions. From c.1899 he had many exhibitions throughout South Africa and, being an artist and teacher of note, inspired artists to turn to Europe for guidance and encouragement. He persuaded young artists, including Pierneef, to paint en plein air and to travel abroad to learn styles which would help capture the South African landscape with flair and individuality. In South Africa, the Dutch tradition of realistic representation of still-life and more expressive rendering of portraiture, still-life and landscape became well supported, taught, and upheld, thanks to popular practising artists like Oerder and fellow Dutch artist, **PIETER WENNING (1873 - 1921)**.

New tutors, such as Pieter Wenning, reinforced new modes of painting and subject choice well into the 20th century in South Africa (Harmsen, 1985, p.199). Dutch influence on South African art was strengthened in c.1905 with Wenning's arrival, accompanied by an extensive knowledge of artistic trends in Europe. This was derived from his interest in the history of art and its styles, encouraged by his father's dealership in the Hague in art prints, books and materials. While working there, Wenning had ample opportunity to study and read current books and articles on new European artistic movements. His High School teacher, Mr. Bubberman, also encouraged his interest in art (Department of Education - C.P.A, 1979b, p.130). Later, Wenning's involvement in a book selling firm in Pretoria, made available to him similar relevant information (Berman, 1975, p.24-25; Berman, 1983, p.494-496).

Wenning's training, primarily as a draughtsman, but also as a painter, was rooted in the Hague and Amsterdam schools. His style, like that of Oerder, was therefore a traditional Dutch style combined with newer European trends (Ruijsch van Dugteren, 1916, p.118). Like Oerder, Wenning was essentially a still-life and landscape artist. His strong, fresh, unorthodox approach gave South African art a new impetus (Boonzaaier, 1968, p.13-14).

The first decade of Wenning's stay in South Africa was a period of experimentation and adaptation. While painting landscape, he

did not avoid the new atmosphere before him, and continually strove to capture this (Berman, 1975, p.25). His landscapes were influenced by his knowledge of various styles, ranging from the plein-airism of Boudin (1824-1898) to the start of Post-Impressionism in work by artists like Cézanne (1839-1906).

Wenning's Location, Pretoria (n.d.) (fig.29) is moody and vigorously painted. It is rather reminiscent of Boudin's early Impressionistic style in The Jetty at Deauville (1869) (fig.30). Their brush strokes are similar and both use the paint marks to indicate an atmosphere or mood. Their relatively clear palettes and descriptive rendering of shapes, as found in the grass and houses in Wenning's painting and in the sand and boats in Boudin's sea-side scene, also correspond. Both artists have divided their formats into compositions in which half is blue sky, a quarter contains the scene's activity and a quarter the foreground. These successional planes are derived from their European traditional roots. The way in which the houses in Wenning's painting break up the horizontal lines is reminiscent of the role of the boats in Boudin's piece. This scheme of dividing the canvas into horizontal zones is often both Wenning's and Boudin's preferred structure (Berman, 1983, p.498). The placement of the cow in the one and the dog in the other, being just off centre in the middle ground, is also alike.





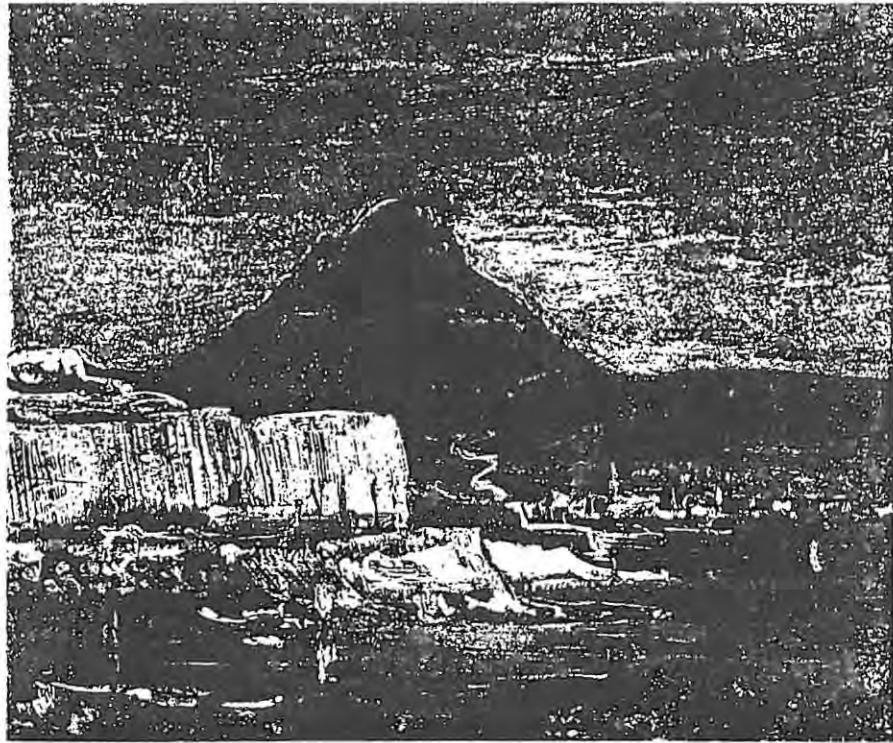
(fig.29) Location, Pretoria (n.d) P. Wenning



(fig.30) The Jetty at Deauville (1869) E. Boudin

Other Boudinesque qualities in Wenning's paintings can be seen in his use of descriptive brush strokes and attention to light. His plein-air paintings are particularly like those of Boudin and the Impressionists. His The Beach and Fort at Woodstock (1918) (fig.31) is remarkably similar to Boudin's The Port, Trouville (1884) (fig.32) in subject, composition and colour. Wenning's numerous harbour paintings resemble Sisley's Boats on the Seine (1877) (fig.33) in their like style and mood.

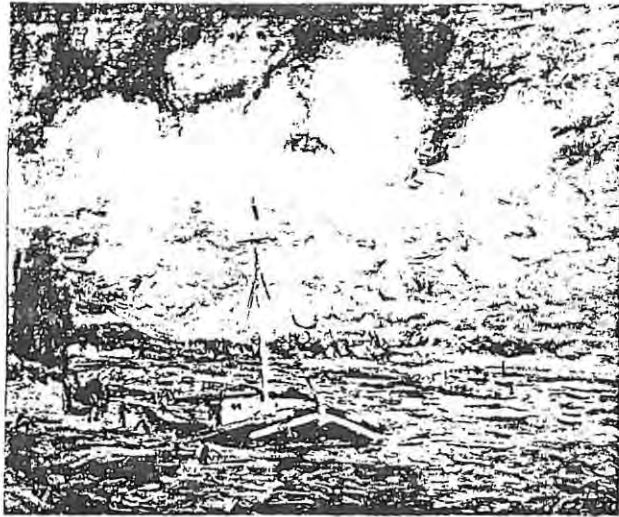
Although there are marked similarities between Wenning's free, expressive style and that of most European Impressionist paintings, he often managed to give his paintings a local flavour through the colours and tones he used. This change was probably due to his awareness of light, its effect on colour and his traditional training which encouraged him to observe nature (Boonzaaier, 1968, p.14). But, he also shared ideas with those who deviated from Impressionism. The constructive brush strokes found in his Wonderboomspoort (n.d.) (fig.34) are comparable to Cézanne's brush strokes in Mont Sainte-Victoire (1904-1906) (fig.35) and his Paysage au bord de l'oise (1875) (fig.36). Like Cézanne, Wenning has utilised aspects of Impressionism such as the importance of observation and immediate rendering, but he has also used his own interpretation of colour and form. Where Cézanne has employed faceted flat forms, Wenning has broadened these flat nuances. Neither attempt to establish an illusion of distance, instead concentrating on the shapes of the landscape



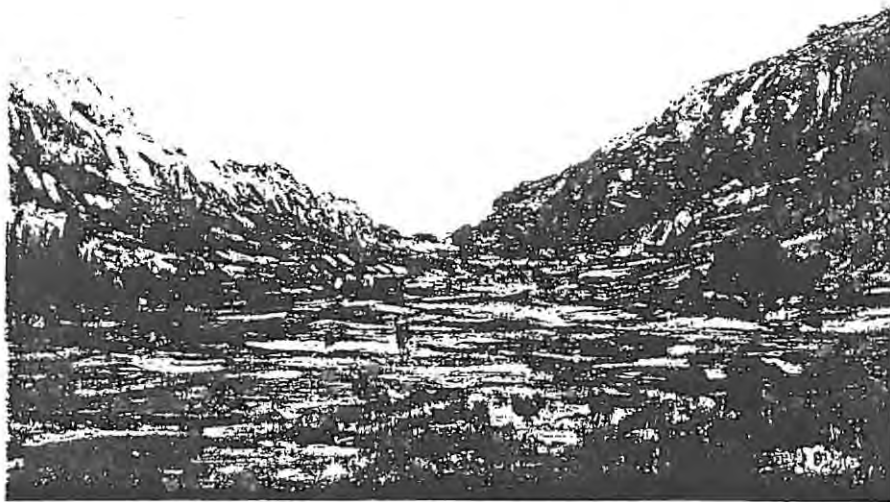
(fig.31) The Beach and Fort at Woodstock (1918) P. Wenning



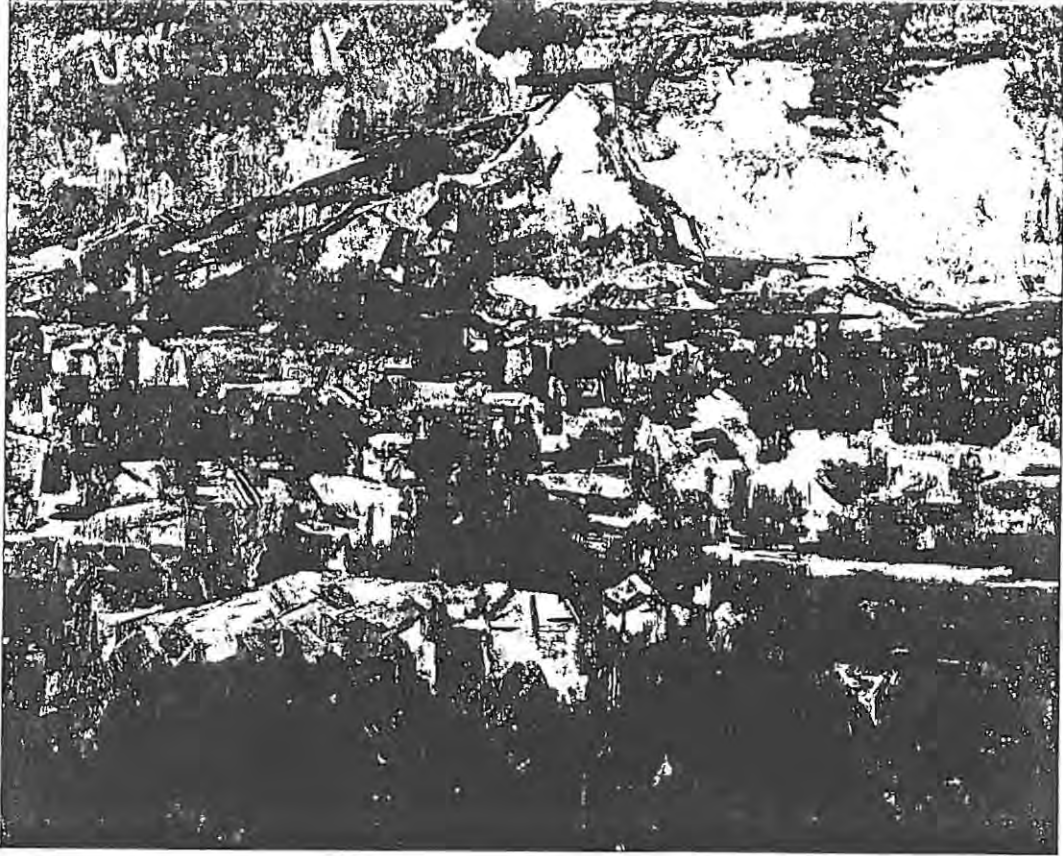
(fig.32) The Port, Trouville (1884) E. Boudin



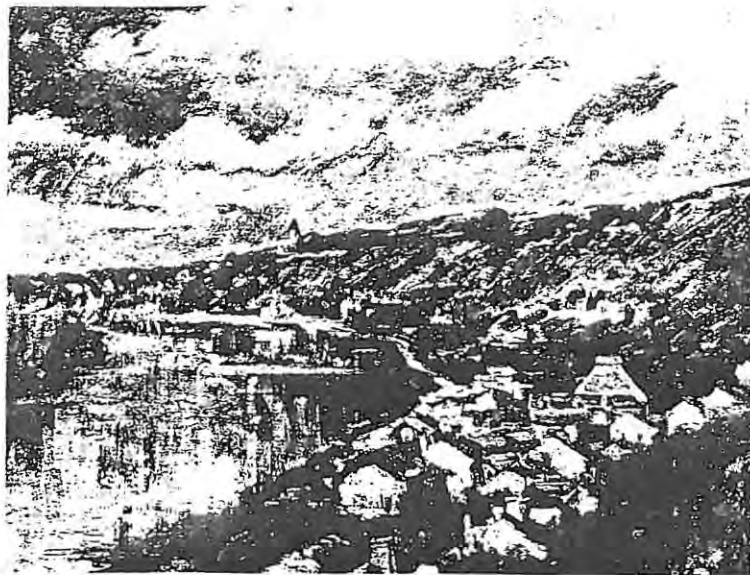
(fig.33) Boats on the Seine (1877) A. Sisley



(fig.34) Wonderboomspoort (n.d) P. Wenning



(fig.35) Mont Sainte-Victoire (1904-06) P. Cézanne



(fig.36) Paysage au bord de l'oise (1875) P. Cézanne

and the flat marks made by the brush (Berman, 1975, p.24,28,32-33; Thomas, 1988, p.165).

For his commonplace genre scenes Wenning did not choose serene views (like the Dutch) or idealised romantic themes (like the British). Instead he chose genre from the local streets. He painted city side streets and suburbia as in his Lane, Malay quarter, Cape Town (n.d.) (fig.37), in an energetic and immediate fashion (Alexander, 1962, p.16). The range of strokes, colour and constructive rendering are similar to those found in Sisley's Snow Scene (1875) (fig.38). Wenning's honest, immediate rendering of this genre was new to South African students. But, as he became a leading figure in South African art circles and his example was influential, his local subject matter must have inspired students (Berman, 1975, p.29-30).

Throughout his career Wenning emphasised the importance of immediacy while trying to capture light and form, was fascinated by South African subjects and encouraged artists to depict these in a realistic, yet true atmospheric manner. His kind, unselfish character made him an attractive advisor from whom fellow artists and students readily sought advice (Berman, 1975, p.14). Even though he was a respected figure in local art circles, he tried to remain detached from their style, not wanting to be influenced by local tendencies, like romanticised landscape, which seemed to ignore local light and scenery (Berman, 1983, p.497). Wenning,



(fig.37) Lane, Malay quarter, Cape Town (n.d) P. Wenning



(fig.38) Snow Scene (1875) A. Sisley

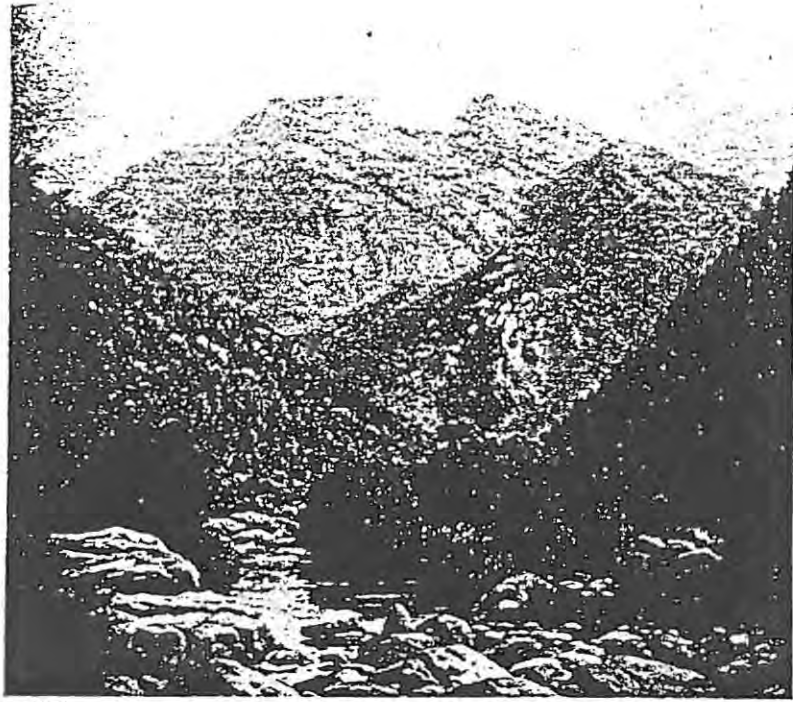
unlike most South African artists, painted the local subjects in an honest manner, seldom allowing outside influence.

The work of the South African born and trained artist Jan Ernst Abraham Volschenk (1853-1936) with its subdued colours, smooth finish, "beautiful and enchanting, ... lyrical approach to the beauties of nature," is typical of the locally popular idealised work of the time (Bosman, 1968, p.115-116). Volschenk's Garcia's Pass (n.d.) (fig.39), probably painted at a similar time to Wenning's arrival, is soft, smooth, hazy, most unlike Wenning's style and therefore indicates how innovative Wenning's style was in comparison (Bosman, 1968, p.115-116). Wenning's freedom of rendering and subject choice was therefore unlike the accepted norm. He also understood that practising artists needed to have their work viewed and criticised and encouraged exhibitions. South African artistic trends were conservative. It is therefore surprising that he, with his new attitudes, became a leader in its development (Berman, 1975, p.27-30).

#### **ARTISTIC ENVIRONMENTS:**

South African tutors, as well as schools and exhibitions were important to the development of South African art. Artistic groups were also a solution for those without much opportunity to travel to Europe or learn in official establishments. These circles encouraged artistic unity and development of style while teachers were also encouraging artistic study. These groups are





(fig.39) Garcia's Pass (n.d) A. Volschenk

therefore vital to a discussion on stylistic influences on South African art.

Artists relied on the guidance of their teachers, schools or groups in order to have their work exhibited. The South African Society of Artists (S.A.S.A.), which was established in c.1897 and officially accepted in c.1902, accomplished some of its developmental goals by encouraging artistic activities like exhibitions, art lessons and the publication of articles on art matters. At the turn of the 19th century, artistic circles in South Africa needed unity because settlements stretched from as far as the Cape to the Transvaal and communication networks were not sophisticated. It was, therefore, this body which gave cohesion to the dispersed collection of local artists and craftsmen. At this stage the demand for art in the form of commissions was insignificant and artists therefore painted exhibition pieces for recognition and personal enrichment. Artists urgently needed avenues where their work could be viewed and evaluated. The Society's first formal exhibition, in c.1902, fulfilled this need (Berman, 1983, p.380).

The exhibitions, held annually, were well supported and frequently there were as many as 500-600 pieces on show. The pieces were not thoroughly criticised or selected because the number of artists exhibiting at the time did not exceed 100. Therefore, to ensure quantity, the selectors could not afford to

be too particular (Berman, 1983, p.4). From c.1902-1930 the exhibition selectors included society presidents and artists like Morland, Robinson, Roworth and members like Oerder and Wenning.

The styles approved by these leaders were those which would be accepted by their schools, which included institutions like the Academies in Europe (Berman, 1983, p.380-381). The pieces which were deemed as show-worthy by the S.A.S.A., were therefore usually those which showed 18th and 19th century European trends. Dutch and British academic conventions liked smooth finish. Tranquil scenes or precise portraiture were particularly popular. The chosen pieces were either subject pieces or those which were idealised renditions of nature and objects. In order to receive approval, artists also had to show technical skill and proficiency (Berman, 1983, p. 3-7,430; Fransen, 1982, p.191-204).

Some dynamic methods of observation and application were periodically approved by the association. Stylistic trends, significantly neglected by South African art groups, were somewhat behind the progressive trends accepted in Europe at the time. These neglected modes incorporated styles such as Impressionism, Post-Impressionism and Neo-Impressionism. The superficial exhibition selection by the S.A.S.A however gave rise to a bias toward practised craftsmen with traditional European technique, style and philosophies (Berman, 1983, p.380-381).

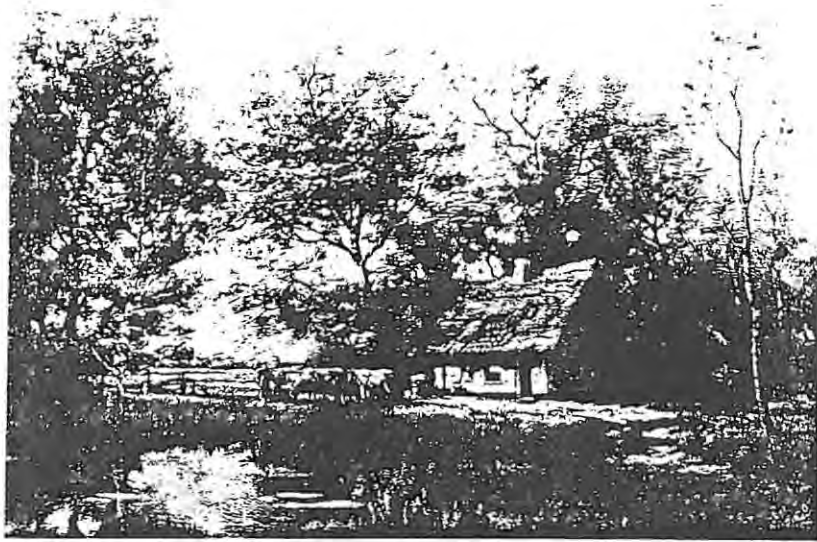
Consequently, because artists wanted approval and recognition by the organisation, they remained faithful to the society's academic, and at times somewhat impressionistic, tendencies. The latter tendencies did not reflect the newest trends in Europe, but were new by South African standards. Novices, especially students of the time, including a young Ruth Everard-Haden (1904- ), Pierneef and Gwelo Goodman, who would view exhibitions as an indication of what work was considered competent, were therefore still not receiving a true indication of modern European artistic trends (Berman, 1983, p.430).

Many paintings of South African subjects, completed during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, possessed a British quality. This was because artists followed prevailing European academic conventions and rarely adapted these to South African conditions. Esme Berman wrote: "They adhered as faithfully as they were able to the style, technique and subject matter favoured by the academic English school... The subtle colours and the multiplicity of tonal variation apparent under blander European light were the aim of every student striving for professional standard" (Berman, 1983, p.430). This style, within South African subjects, can be seen in the work of the predominantly self-taught South African artist Tinus de Jongh (1885-1942). De Jongh's work was popular in local circles and because his style was easily acceptable, he periodically had solo and joint exhibitions (Ogilvie, 1988, p.163-164). His Cows beside a

Farmhouse, a river in the Foreground (n.d.) (fig.40) is very similar to Constable's The Haywain (1821) (fig.5). The subdued colours in both paintings are remarkably alike as is the treatment of the water. The compositions correspond in their similarly ordered ideal structure. De Jongh's subject is like a rural English scene and indicates that South African artists of the early 20th century continued to hold European artists' choice of subject, light and palette in the highest regard.

The lack of new European stimulation for South African art threatened its development during the early decades of the 20th century. The few existing art schools were traditional in their approach. Their European teachers had not yet adapted to their new environment and the possibility of art colonies had not yet been recognised. Opportunities to experience other cultures through international travel, availability of illustrated literature and discussion amongst art groups, were limited to such a extent that they could be termed "non-existent" (Berman, 1983, p.7).

With the European influence of relatively conservative artists, like Roworth, Smithard, Oerder, Wenning and others in the Cape and Transvaal, being popular, South African art establishments could not ignore their occasionally progressive styles and ideas (Berman, 1983, p.380-381). They were considered broad-minded compared to well known late 19th century exhibiting artists like



(fig.40) Cows beside a Farmhouse, a river in the Foreground (n.d)  
T. de Jongh



(fig.41) Hout Bay (1889) W.H. Schröder

Bowler, Baines or William Schroder, whose work such as his Hout Bay (1889) (fig.41) won a prize at the c.1872 Fine Art Society's exhibition. The painting is romantic and academic in style and therefore, by the standards of European early 20th century art, conservative in its colour and mood, but an indication of the predominantly accepted style in South Africa during this period (Alexander, Cohen, 1990, p.35).

Although more progressive artists and teachers like Wenning were well respected, their ideas and suggestions were not easily followed because the notions that they were trying to wean artists away from were well established and continually being enforced by older masters such as Morland. Because of the established style, which did not encourage experimentation or originality, the more progressive ideas which had taken shape in Europe during the 19th and early 20th centuries like Impressionism, Post-Impressionism and Expressionism, would not easily be absorbed into South Africa. In order for these European movements to make an impression in South Africa, local artists had to become acquainted with the ideas and work of contemporary European artists and the movements associated with them.

The progression toward the acknowledgment of newer European styles was also slowed down because South African social circumstances were very different to those which had been experienced in Europe (Berman, 1983, p.4-5). South African

artists would first have to experience some social developments which had influenced these European movements. These circumstances include urbanisation, better and more frequent modes of travel, such as better transport networks for trains, ships and motor cars, easier painting methods and improved knowledge of optical science. Awareness of such factors would spread to South Africa through literature, travelling South African artists and new European visitors, teachers and settlers.

One such teacher was John Adams, a graduate of the Royal College of Art, who came to South Africa in c.1915. In Natal he initiated and established art lessons encouraging an enthusiasm for "modern atmosphere" (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.25) not only for students, but also for art teachers. This "atmosphere" was an attempt at freer techniques and subject matter by many artists of the Natal Society of Artists. He said, "In my opinion, the breaking away from old traditions is a healthy sign" (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.26). At an exhibition held in Natal in c.1920, Adams saw that young South African artists were starting to experiment. He was encouraged by the new "tendency towards bright colour" (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.26). The developments towards less traditional bias was slow, but encouraging. He pacified older teachers and art group members by saying "the experiments of our younger generation are, after all, mild compared to the extravagances of certain groups of painters in London or Paris" (p.26). This implies that these centres were



the main areas of artistic influence overseas, and that established South African tutors still did not wish new trends to permeate local art circles.

The first public plea for South African art to join and catch up with European artistic trends was by Alphred Martin (1874-1939) in c.1918. As a new settler, he noticed that even Impressionism was not evident in much local art. Young South African artists seldom had the opportunity to see late 19th or early 20th century European art locally. Most pieces in South Africa from this period were owned by private collectors (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.27). Up until c.1925, public exhibitions in Cape Town (the centre of the S.A.S.A), were still predominantly of works executed by old masters (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.26; Ruijsch van Dugteren, 1916, p.121). The most talked about and influential work at that time was work exhibited at the Cape Galleries by masters like Frans Hals (Ruijsch van Dugteren, 1916, p.121). Although this was an incredible opportunity for artists to observe the masters, they needed newer input. It was not until the mid c.1930's, when the Board of Fine Arts extended the still predominantly conservative Kolbe Collection, in the Michaelis School, that Impressionistic work by artists like Boudin, Monet, Sisley and Pissarro could be viewed in South Africa (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.26).

Avenues opening for young artists, including easier modes of travel, modern teachers and a tangible connection with Europe through illustrated literature and new exhibitions, would prove to be most influential for young South African artists. It was from this period that artists would come to experience real exposure to European trends due to their eagerness to travel abroad (Berman, 1983, p.5-6).

When given the opportunity to travel, most artists chose England and its close neighbour, France, as their destination (Sauer, 1968, p.103). This was because these artists had only experienced English based schools in South Africa and most spoke English. The "strong familial ties and a sense of identification with the Mother land" through art schools and teachers played a large role in the continuation of European stylistic influence on South African art (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.28).

To discuss adequately European artistic influence in South Africa during the early 20th century, it is vital to examine the experiences and work of selected South African artists from this period. Factors such as European artistic trends, artists' European studies, where they travelled and what they were most likely to have seen will be of the utmost importance when establishing European influence. Finally, a comparative analysis between particular early, then later work by these artists and those of European artists found abroad at the time, will clarify

such connections.

The majority of South Africans who studied in Europe enrolled at institutions like the Slade or the Ecolé des Beaux Arts. These schools, although more progressive than those found in South Africa, were still traditional and many artists turned to exhibitions to learn of new European artistic tendencies (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.28-29). Exhibitions of new movements were usually held by dealers and private collectors because official galleries often only catered for scholarly styles which were readily accepted by the conservative public they were serving. Students therefore had a few alternative avenues available in which to view new work.

In London, between c.1886 and c.1913, there were many controversial private exhibitions. Many shows were also held in France, Belgium and Holland. These were deemed controversial by academics because the work on exhibition, that of the Impressionists, Post- and Neo-Impressionists, Fauves and Cubists was not of the standard or style the academics would have encouraged in their students (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.28). The Impressionists only started to gain tangible public recognition in France in c.1886, more than a decade after they began to show their work (Cavendish, 1993g, p.26). The first comprehensive exhibition of Impressionism was held in Paris in c.1872 by Durand-Ruel (1831-1922), a private art collector and

dealer, who saw a great future in the work by artists ranging from the Barbizon School to Impressionism. The c.1872 showing was not altogether favourably received by critics and the public, but the Impressionists uncompromisingly continued to paint (Ash, 1980, p.25).

During the end of the 19th century some Impressionists did receive success. This was made possible by the Impressionist group being publically recognised due to eight exhibitions in twelve years (Cavendish, 1993g, p.26). The financial success combined with the delay of local acceptance was due to Impressionism's unacademic attitude and their work selling well to American buyers. The work was therefore not extensively available for local public view. It was only during the early 20th century, with the big retrospective exhibitions in the major centres, that their work gained rightful wider recognition. These obstacles explain the delay these artists encountered during the late 19th century. This, in turn, explains why the essence of movements like Impressionism came to South Africa at such a late date (Cavendish, 1993g, p.24-26; Thomas, 1988, p.16-17).

Impressionism, Neo-Impressionism and Post-Impressionism were the trends in art which became well known in Europe due to the practising artists' determination to carry on working and exhibiting despite their controversial status. In Europe artists formed groups which practised these newer styles without the help

of the academies. These organisations included those like the group known as "Le XX" which was based in Belgium and included many French Post-Impressionist artists like Seurat, Lautrec and Gauguin and the Dutch artist Van Gogh. The new movements were therefore not insular and were often practised, exhibited throughout Europe and encouraged by each other (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.27-29; Thomas, 1988, p.16-18).

In England the first controversial public exhibition, held in c.1905 at the Grafton Gallery in London, was of the work of the Impressionists, again held by Paul Durand-Ruel. There were more than 300 works on this show. This number, and the financial success enjoyed by many of the exhibiting artists, suggests that the spontaneous style was therefore becoming more popular among artists and the public. But, the delay in showing this work in England confirms Impressionism's controversial nature in the Traditional establishments (Cavendish, 1993g, p.26).

By c.1910 a contentious exhibition in England was held by Roger Fry, a 19th and 20th century art critic. This included work by Post-Impressionists like Cézanne, Van Gogh and Gauguin and included work by Impressionists such as Manet, Renoir and Degas. (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.29; Cavendish, 1993g, p.26).

In c.1913 the work of the Fauves was on view at the Grafton Gallery. Their second exhibition, also in c.1913, included work by the Cubists and the leading figures of this presentation were Matisse and Picasso (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.29).

These exhibitions continued in a steady stream from this time and visiting artists had much opportunity to view European work.

Artists visiting, studying and working in Europe were therefore likely to have observed both the academic work predominant in the official Galleries, and modern work found in private venues. Because South African artists were in artistic environments like London and Paris it is likely they would have frequented and viewed art shows to broaden their artistic awareness (Sauer, 1968, p.103). A discussion pertaining to the styles South African artists came across in Europe would therefore be apt.

Impressionism was one of the first modern European styles to permeate South African artistic trends. It was a style quickly appreciated because of its bias toward the landscape. This subject matter had always been an accepted genre amongst the predominantly traditional South African schools, teachers and public and it was therefore naturally assimilated by its artists.

## CHAPTER 2.

## THE IMPRESSIONISTIC STYLE:

The Impressionists in South Africa, during the early 20th century, had goals similar to those of the French Impressionists almost four decades earlier. These included the rendering of scenes, predominantly landscape and everyday genre, visually as realistically as possible. In their spontaneity, Impressionists saw themselves as being true realists because they depicted motifs in a manner true to their own subjective visual sensations, as these appeared to them immediately (Leymarie, 1955, p.66).

From 17th century classical Baroque landscape tradition, with its limited atmospheric effects, and use predominantly as settings for allegorical subjects, landscape as a genre in France came into its own right with the establishment of a Prix-de-Rome for Landscape in c.1816. This was founded due to the increasing practice of plein-air painting and the growing popularity of landscape on the part of patrons. During the 17th century, studies had been made of the effects of light and shadow by morning, noon and night on the landscape. These observations of the transient qualities of the landscape were also the aim of the Impressionists of the 19th century (Cornell, 1983, p.260-261; Courthion, 1989, p.10), when Academic landscapes became less

popular due to the work of the Romantic landscapists who further paved the way for landscape as a subject (Cornell, 1983, p.260-261,316,320; Courthion, 1989, p.10).

During the second half of the 19th century a group of French, and, subsequently, European artists, seeing the work of these 17th and 19th century developments, saw the advantages of painting in the open air in order spontaneously to capture subjects, particularly landscapes. They therefore started insisting that works which had previously been labelled as "sketches" be seen as being fit to exhibit. This proposal was to encourage plein-air observations of nature, colour and light, while rendering a transitory moment (Courthion, 1989, p.10-13). While undertaking to achieve naturalism through visual experience, they concluded that "sight was the sum of optical sensations, which are given shape and meaning by the mental act of visual perception" (Berman, 1975, p.32). This perception and rendering had, ideally, to be en plein-air.

Open air painting, stemming from the practice of painters like John Constable, the Barbizon school, and artists like Camille Corot (1796-1875), became a movement preoccupied with capturing the immediate qualities of observed nature (Leymarie, 1955, p.66; Thomas, 1988, p.20). Corot, the first noted plein-air painter, was known to say, "Give in to the initial impression", (Leymarie, 1955, p.66-69). His ideas on quick interpretations of scenes and



his thoughts on spontaneity are very close to those later adopted by the Impressionists who extended the ideas of Corot and the Barbizon group to include ordinary modern-life subject-matter as well as landscapes. In doing this, and painting in a sketch-like style, they deliberately turned their backs on Salon requirements.

In order to capture the every day themes of man and of nature, some artists quickened their style and procedures, ignoring the definitive contours which were favoured by the Romanticists and Realists like Gustave Courbet (Cornell, 1983, p.350; Courthion, 1989, p.22). The Impressionists were adamant that "there are no outlines in nature!" (Berman, 1975, p.32). They interpreted everything (including shadow, volume and space) in terms of the effects of light, which, in accordance with 19th century optical theory, consisted of particles or fragments of colour. The Impressionists knew that the colours of light and the colours of pigments were not the same, but, pigments being their painting medium, they tried to create an equivalent for fragmented light with fragmented paint based on the pigment primaries of red, yellow and blue to indicate light's cyan blue, magenta and green.

Fragmented colour used for spontaneous expression can be seen in Monet's Grain-Stacks series (1890-91) (fig.42,43,77 & 98), which was an attempt at capturing transitory moments at different times of the day and season (Copplestone, 1988, p.44). Each new canvas



(fig.42) Grain-Stacks (1890-91) C. Monet



Musée d'Orsay, Paris



(fig.43)

depicts a phase in the transitory quality of changes of light and colours, each being made up of bright speckled dabs of colour of varying degrees of intensity, with no outlines, on light canvases. Because of the vital aspect of colour in their art, the Impressionists' darkest tones were mixtures of pure colours, and they endeavoured seldom to use pure black. Their palettes therefore differed remarkably from those which were favoured by artists from previous art movements (Coppelstone, 1988, p.13; Courthion, 1989, p.27-28).

Late 19th century artists had a broader choice of colours due to synthetic colours that were new on the market. They often used complementary and harmonious colours simultaneously, in so doing heightening surrounding colours. Complementary colours, such as red and green, blue and orange, purple and yellow, being on opposite sides of the colour wheel available to artists during this period, mutually enhance each other by heightening their intensity. This can be seen in the c.1811 prismatic Colour Wheel of Moses Harris (fig.44) where all shades on directly opposite sides complement and enhance each other (Lacey, 1987, p.138).

Harmonious colours, such as purple and blue, green and yellow, adjacent to each other on the same wheel, could be juxtaposed where less contrast was needed (Clark, 1992, p.138; Lacey, 1987, p.138). Unblended juxtapositions of purer colours applied with loose brush strokes, gradually replaced academic blended tones



(fig.44) Colour Wheel (1811) M. Harris

and glazes (Ash, 1980, p.9-10). Looser, rougher handling of thicker, brighter paint suited plein-air practice with its emphasis on spontaneity (Ash, 1980, p.9). This, in turn, made the Impressionist style attractive to South African artists attempting to represent the country's vivid colour and bright light within vast expanses of landscape (Berman, 1975, p.32).

The Impressionists' rapid style brought about looser, more broken brush strokes compared to those found in previous styles. Their rapidity of execution, a result of the transitoriness sought by these artists, brought about new loaded brush strokes. The Impressionistic artist did not endeavour to disguise brush strokes (Leymarie, 1955, p.17,66). They were no longer obsessed with smooth finished pieces, which the Academies had favoured, and replaced these with rougher, more textured surfaces (Ash, 1980, p.9).

The quest for spontaneity also brought about smaller canvases. The smaller the dimensions, the more likely a scene would be captured as accurately as possible, en plein-air (Ash, 1980, p.37). The essence of the immediate rendering of light and, ultimately, subject matter could only be successfully accomplished by painting directly from the subject, on the spot, and, ideally, finishing the piece on location (Thomas, 1988, p.20).

The new portable easels and ready-mixed paints, available in the 19th century, were also an integral part of plein-air painting and, consequently, Impressionism. The new methods and tools which facilitated mobility allowed them to paint spontaneously out in the open, observing the landscape at first hand. During the c.1870's, the academic, learned way of preparation of the canvas started to be substantially phased out, particularly in new landscape painting circles. In order to respond directly to the "fleeting image seen through half closed eyes", the artist now applied freer, deliberate small dabs of clear colour, for light and shadow, on a usually pale prepared surface (Thomas, 1988, p.20). During the late 19th century, artists could purchase ready primed canvas which cut down on preparation procedures and encouraged immediacy. In the past the preparation of the canvas had been laborious because the artist in his studio had to first size, then prime and seal the surface of the raw canvas to make the surface more sympathetic to oil paint. The style comprised layers of brown as under paint, then murky shadows and ultimately subdued colour in a tonally unifying manner. The Impressionist artist, due to the ready availability of art materials like prepared canvas and new painting techniques, could forgo many of these time-consuming processes (Thomas, 1988, p.20).

Finally, the advent of photography and other optical devices brought about a transformation in people's judgment of composition. The viewfinder of the camera helped the landscapist

select a particular area from the options available. Photography also showed artists how randomly a lens registers a scene, enabling them to crop scenes in order to concentrate on particular viewpoints. The zoetrope and praxinoscope which gave an illusion of movement, and the kaleidoscope and stereoscope, which furthered the illusion of multi-coloured patterns and three-dimensional images respectively, also had marked influences on the artists' quest for an illusion of light and movement effects (Ash, 1980, p.12-15; Thomas, 1988, p.20).

Photographic developing processes also provided the artists of the time with an exaggeration of light and dark, due to the inability of the early photographic chemicals to allow manipulation to enhance tones of grey. It allowed for stark contrasts, and in so doing led to simplifying the description of the volumes of subjects. The unrefined photographic techniques also provided the artists with blurred effects of movement, haloed light effects at night and variations in the depth of field (Ash, 1980, p.13; Thomas, 1988, p.21; Weisberg, 1992, p.7).

Freer procedures resulted in Impressionism becoming more and more popular. As the number of its followers increased, the Impressionistic movement expanded, incorporating artists with varying ideas and methods, adapting aspects of Impressionism to their personal styles. Some were eager to explore features of "plein air, of light, of nature rendered poetically (Monet,

Pissarro, Sisley, Berthe Morisot, Renoir)" (Courthion, 1989, p.10). Others were "Impressionists in spite of themselves," but developed its principles further (p.10). These included artists such as Cézanne and Van Gogh. Ultimately, due to its relative freedom, Impressionism developed into other trends such as Post-Impressionism. The label "Post-Impressionism", coined by Roger Fry in c.1910, was used to describe the work of a group of artists who came after the height of Impressionism, including Gauguin, Cézanne, and Van Gogh. Neo-Impressionism, also an offspring of Impressionism, included artists like Georges Seurat and Paul Signac (p.10).

Some South African artists began to paint in an Impressionistic style during the early 20th century. The artists who explored this style used it in varying degrees, some localising aspects of Impressionism, others gleaning Impressionism's freer technique and yet others using the Impressionists' liberal attitude towards capturing the transient qualities of light and colour. Others again tried to adhere to all aspects of the Impressionist style. Impressionistic attitudes among South African artists were inspired by the slightly liberated, yet still academic, teachers from England and, later, more directly through artists travelling in Europe and often enrolling at art schools there. In order to determine Impressionistic qualities in the work of early 20th century South African artists a discussion and comparative analysis of selected artists' work is required.



**HUGO NAUDÉ : (1869 - 1941)**

Hugo Naudé was a South African artist who employed Impressionism in an individual manner (Ruijsch van Dugteren, 1917c, p.242). Although his work is at times not purely Impressionistic, his style and subject choice are unmistakably derived from Impressionism. Naudé's first concrete artistic influence came in early c.1880, through the authoress Olive Schreiner (1855-1920) who introduced him to the art collector Havelock Ellis (Ruijsch van Dugteren, 1917c, p.242). They encouraged Naudé to go to London, and sponsored him to study at the Slade School (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.12; Du Ry, 1974, p.11; Fransen, 1982, p.258). In c.1888 Naudé went to England where he found European teachers, schools, accepted styles and atmosphere remarkably different to those he had experienced in his home country.

Naudé's master at the Slade School was its head, Alphonse Legros (1837-1911), an influential and unconventional leader who had moved from the Ecole des Beaux Arts to the Slade School in the c.1870's (Ruijsch van Dugteren, 1917c, p.243). In Britain Legros demonstrated new teaching and painting methods. The English tradition of laboriously underpainting layers of browns, then lighter colours, with an insistence on depicting a scene of ideal or romantic realism was replaced by Legros who showed a quicker more immediate method of painting to teachers and pupils (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.10-11; Du Ry, 1974, p.11).

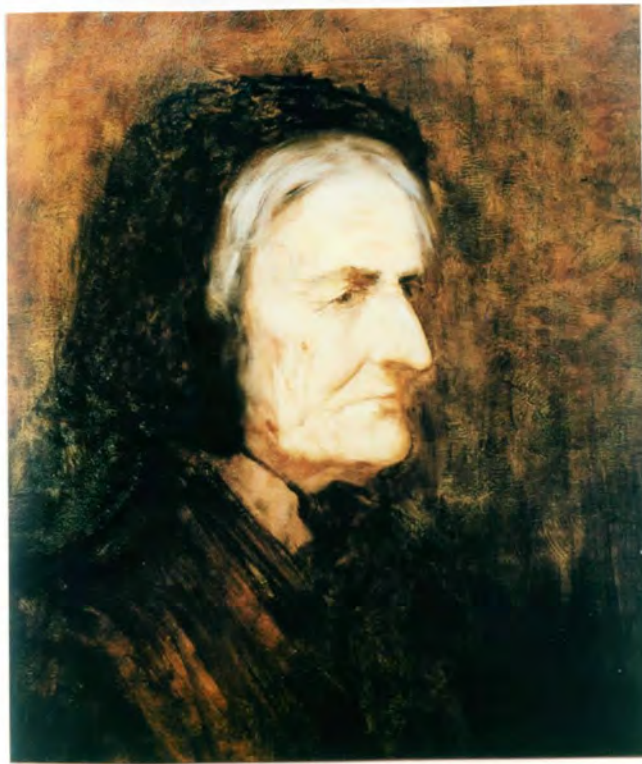
This new lively style was more akin to the Impressionist style which was increasingly being privately exhibited in Europe. Legros' paint handling showed a rapid method of painting which "brought a portrait to completion in less than two hours" (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.10). The style Legros encouraged was also not dependant on a smooth picture surface, he emphasised good constructional drawing and, being aware of the early Impressionists, he encouraged some experimentation. Legros' awareness of European trends therefore allowed Naudé greater artistic freedom compared to that which he would have encountered in South African art establishments of the time (Du Ry, 1974, p.11).

During his English sojourn, Naudé frequented galleries and acquainted himself with the work of James McNiell Whistler (1834-1903), Walter Sickert and that of the Impressionists (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.12; Alexander, Cohen, 1990, p.40). He remained in England under the influence of the Slade School until c.1890. This establishment with its accent on drawing and his gallery visits, would later prove to be the foundation for his realistic, but spontaneous, portraiture for which he became popular in South Africa (Meiring, 1961, p.9).

Naudé then spent five years at the Munich Art Academy where he studied predominantly under the favoured portraitist Franz von Lenbach, who was influenced by the 17th century Dutch master

Rembrandt (1606-1669) (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.12; Alexander, Cohen, 1990, p.41). In Munich Naudé was taught to adhere to blended tones from dark to light, not to be too expressive with paint marks, but to impart a unity to the painting's surface. Volumes, especially those found in portraits, had to be smooth and rounded. This style was unlike that which he had learned in England, but the combination directed him to an inspired, but distinctly individual, style (Berman, 1975, p.9-10; Du Ry, 1974, p.11; Ruijsch van Dugteren, 1917c, p.243).

Legros' Slade School influence and the Munich experience is apparent in Naudé's Portrait of a Huguenot Lady (n.d.) (fig.45). The academic layers of brown/ochre in the background and the marks depicting the highlights on her attire are quick, simple and subtly explanatory which is indicative of Legros (Du Ry, 1974, p.12). The build up of light tones, to an almost pure white, are what he would have been taught by both his masters. The colours are subdued and the tones limited, with a definite light source. The painting is quite similar to Rembrandt's Self-Portrait, 1657 (fig.46) in colour, composition and light or luminosity which seems to emanate from the faces. The white on the edge of Rembrandt's forehead and hair is similar, in effect, to the tones of Naudé's treatment of the lady's grey hair. The contrasts of light against dark and the lightest area being the focal point of the composition is similar to a painting by Naudé's Munich master, Von Lenbach, entitled Portrait of Richard



(fig.45) Portrait of a Huguenot Lady (n.d) H. Naudé



(fig.46) Self-Portrait, 1657 (1657) Rembrandt

Wagner (1865) (fig.47). However, Naudé's painting does not seem laboured and has a sense of immediacy which would have been encouraged by Legros. The painting is therefore academic, yet relaxed, containing qualities of both his schools (Alexander, Cohen, 1990, p.41; Berman, 1975, p.9-10; Du Ry, 1974, p.11-12; Jacob, 1981, p.54-55).

Naudé's stay in Munich also put him in contact with Wilhelm Leibel who, upon seeing an exhibition of French painting in c.1869, was very impressed by the work of Jean-Francois Millet (1814-1875) and Gustav Courbet. Meeting Leibel might have influenced Naudé to move to France, because in c.1895 he moved to Fontainebleau to study with the then still active Barbizon School (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.12; Du Ry, 1974, p.12).

Courbet, who sometimes visited and worked at Fontainebleau, and Millet had been influential members of this group which had settled in Barbizon to paint landscapes and rural scenes earlier in the century. The group's aim was to paint "precise and unglamorized renditions of peasant life and scenery," (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.12). They interpreted realism differently to their predecessors in that they painted what could be seen, without deliberately romanticising the subject. The plein-air painting encouraged by the group, as well as their preferred rural subject is evident when looking at Naudé's Quarry (n.d.) (fig.48). Its subject matter is a rural workers' scene and its



(fig.47) Portrait of Richard Wagner (1865) Von Lenbach



(fig.48) Quarry (n.d) H. Naudé

rendering is also reminiscent of that of the Barbizon school. It is obviously painted en plein-air with the boulders of the cliff face, trees and people painted in quick, but descriptive shapes and marks (Alexander, Cohen, 1990, p.43; Du Ry, 1974, p.12).

The Barbizon School was the precursor of the Impressionist movement and, while staying at Fontainebleau, Naudé was more aware of their work (Du Ry, 1974, p.12; Leymarie, 1955, p.40). His stay in France afforded him the opportunity to see the work of the Impressionists which had become more popular and regularly exhibited in private galleries (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.12). At the end of this visit to France, in approximately c.1902, Naudé returned to South Africa where he became a well known painter. His plein-airist style, learned in Europe, particularly during his Barbizon sojourn, is evident in his Chincherinchees Valley (n.d.) (fig.49). This scene was obviously painted predominantly in the open because it is spontaneous and true to the Cape Peninsula landscape (Meiring, 1968, p.26). Naudé's peasants are common to those found in the paintings from the Barbizon School in that they seem to be natural components of their environment.

This particular Naudé painting is also reminiscent of Impressionism, especially if one looks at the similar treatment of the landscape and the people in Monet's Wild Poppies (1873) (fig.50). In both Monet's and Naudé's paintings the figures are



(fig.49) Chincherinchees Valley (n.d) H. Naudé



(fig.50) Wild Poppies (1873) C. Monet



within the landscape forming part of the subject. Naudé's colour and brush marks are also a hint of the Impressionist influence on his work because the foreground is painted in quick light tones with whites containing yellows and blues. The colours of the stalks of the flowers range from olive green to light blue-brown and the mountains in the background are also harmonious with blues off-set by pinks and purples. These flat hazy mountains are a little contrived because they seem to be the scene's backdrop, a reminder of Naudé's academic English training which often dealt with landscapes in a secondary manner. Another Impressionistic quality to Naudé's painting is the lack of pure black in the dark shadowed areas, instead they are colourful.

Impressionism remained a leading influence in Naudé's work because he remained in contact with Europe and its developments by reading European journals on art (Alexander, Cohen, 1990, p.40). This continued knowledge of developments was reinforced through his brief return to England during the c.1910's. In c.1913 Naudé entered the Kings Road School in London. While there he again acquainted himself with the Impressionist style of painting, this time in a more direct fashion. Here he did not have to rely on reproductions of work in publications, he was able to see work in numerous galleries. It must not be forgotten that Impressionistic paintings were becoming more popular and in so doing were easier to view. "Naudé's journey to Europe ... and England in c.1913 seems, by his own admission, to have focused

his attention more closely on Impressionist practice."

(Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.12; Du Ry, 1974, p.13; Ruijsch van Dugteren, 1917c, p.243).

After this brief visit to England Naudé's paintings took on a more immediate quality. His painting Veld Flowers (n.d.) (fig.51) is illustrative of this freer style. Even though this painting is not dated, Impressionist stylistic characteristics lead one to assume that it belongs to this period. The colours are harmonious with oranges and yellows blending into pale greens, blues and mauve blending into red then orange. They are also complementary with red and green off-setting each other. The scene is transient, as though a specific time of the day, late afternoon, is important. This part of the day is suggested by the stark light and dark contrasts in the background and enhanced by the rich warm colours. Consistent with Impressionism, Naudé has used colour reflections in the shaded areas instead of black. But, he has also made the scene local by capturing the South African atmosphere of augmented light (Fransen, 1982, p.258,274; Lacey, 1987, p.138; Ruijsch van Dugteren, 1917c, p.244).

The Impressionists also influenced Naudé when determining the dimensions of his canvases. His studies seldom exceeded half a meter by half a meter because he wanted to capture the scene in one sitting, not wanting to lose the immediacy of the scene because he strove to "preserve the maximum spontaneity of his



(fig.51) Veld Flowers (n.d) H. Naudé



(fig.52) The Flower Sellers (n.d) H. Naudé

impressions" (Berman, 1983, p.304; Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.12).

Naudé's genre work also demonstrates his debt to Impressionism. The subject, colour and rendering of his The Flower Sellers (n.d.) (fig.52) is indicative of this. The subject is local, an everyday genre scene relevant to the Cape Malay. This local relevance is typical of the work of the French Impressionists. The colours are pure and painted in a thick impasto technique, particularly in the rendering of the flowers. The bunches of blooms are yellow and white, harmonious with the green and orange dappled in the spaces in between. There are complementary areas of colour too, the mauve and purples in the buildings and flowers enhance the yellows in the rest of the flowers. The quick brush strokes are expressive of the fervour with which he painted the scene. The immediacy of the setting is further indicated by the stark light on the road, the pale sky and the overall light on the flowers. It seems to be midday as the sun is shining brightly from above. The figures in the background are successfully hinted at in a silhouetted, simple manner, almost as if they are on a board walk in Trouville - as in a Monet painting of the French social scene (Alexander, Cohen, 1990, p.40).

Naudé's European experience moulded his style considerably. Through his Slade school experience he knew how to observe and accurately depict a subject, particularly effective for his

portraiture (Du Ry, 1974, p. 20). But his affinity with the Impressionist style in France was also a prominent aspect of his work, particularly when considering his landscapes. They are spontaneous, Impressionistic and bright. It seems unlikely that Naudé's paintings would have taken on this spontaneity had he not studied in Europe and rather concentrated on South African studies (Alexander, Cohen, 1990, p.40; Berman, 1983, p.304).

It perturbed Naudé that nobody in South Africa seemed "to care or want anything really seriously connected with art" (Du Ry, 1974, p.15). He believed that people "must possess works to teach them real love for things beautiful, not only in pictures - but art in their houses ... a nation without art is impossibly capable of development in other higher spheres" (Du Ry, 1974, p.15). His strong conviction concerning the benefits of owning art work, being creative and dedication to art encouraged him to inspire development in all art circles (p.16).

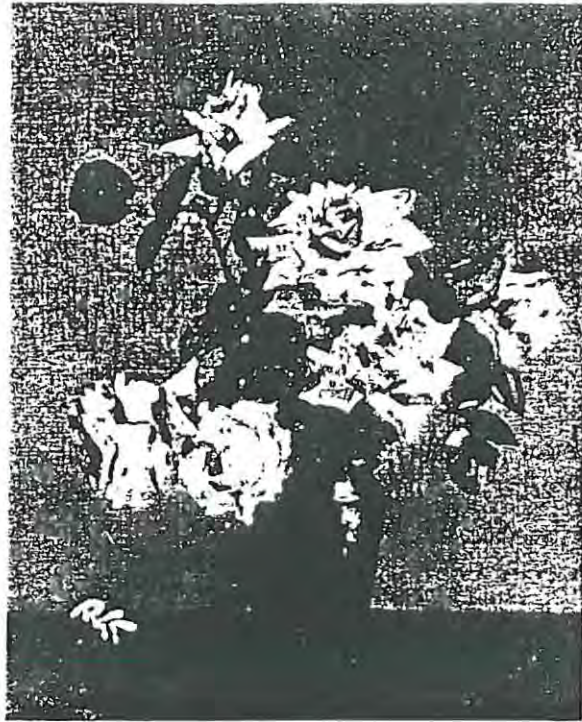
Naudé's work was popular in South Africa and this enabled him to be an influential figure. The extent of his inspiration to art students were reinforced by the fact that from c.1902 he exhibited annually in Cape Town as part of the S.A.S.A. This allowed South African students the indirect stimulus of the Impressionist European style which, at that stage, was not particularly well known (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.25-26; Berman, 1983, p.304). Naudé also tirelessly helped young

artists gain recognition, becoming an influential figure in the early development of Maggie Laubser's work. Though young artists often experimented with styles more modern than Impressionism, like Expressionism and Fauvism, he encouraged any artistic practice (Du Ry, 1974, p.16). He was an Impressionist landscape artist, encouraged by his European experience, who often freely encouraged artists to turn to Europe for inspiration, extending the European influence on early Twentieth century painters (Du Ry, 1974, p.16-17,20-21).

**ROBERT GWELO GOODMAN : (1871 - 1939)**

Goodman was also a South African landscape artist who was influenced by the European trends with which he came into contact during excursions to England and continental Europe. His English heritage was what led him to choose Europe as an artistic beacon, but his artistic pursuit began in Cape Town, South Africa, with night classes under the tutorship of Morland (Newton-Thompson, 1951, p.61).

This tutor's English Academic influence is apparent in Goodman's Roses (1918+) (fig.53). Although painted well into his career, it is, in Berman's opinion, "unimaginative and academic" (Berman, 1983, p.186). The composition and rendering is ordinary and reminiscent of the old Dutch masters. The painting's contrived composition is evident in the precise central position of the flowers (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.12; Franssen, 1982,



(fig.53) **Roses** (1918+) G. Goodman

p.266). Everything is balanced around these and nothing seems out of place. The surface of the study is unified and there is a precise consistent execution of light and shade. The academic quality of underpainting his canvas in Van Dyck brown is a direct influence of the academicism with which he commenced his artistic career (Berman, 1983, p.185). The rendering of this flower painting is typical of the academic treatment of this kind of subject and Morland's influence is apparent in its unmistakable academic quality (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.12).

Morland saw Goodman's potential as an artist and organised the finance necessary for him to register at the Academie Julian, in Paris, in c.1895. At this institution, studying under French Salon masters including William Bouguereau (1825-1905) and Gabriel Ferrier, Goodman's studies were guided by strict academicism, with emphasis on anatomical drawing and perspectival conventions. (While at the academy Goodman was a fellow student of Henri Matisse (1869-1954), who would later become a forerunner of the Fauve art movement) (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.12; Essers, 1987, p.92). Goodman's studies in Paris were cut short in c.1898 due to a lack of funds and he opted to further his art studies in England.

Goodman established himself as an artist in London where, thirty years previously, Impressionists like Monet and Pissarro had stayed and studied the work of William Turner and John Constable.



At the beginning of the 20th century the work of the Impressionists was being more readily exhibited in England and Goodman would therefore have had an opportunity to study their work (Berman, 1983, p.185; Essers, 1987, p.92-93; Leymarie, 1955, p.97). During his English visit, until c.1915, Goodman attained success as a landscapist and was included as an annual exhibitor at the Royal Academy Exhibitions (Berman, 1983, p.184-185; Fransen, 1982, p.266).

Goodman's return to South Africa marked a new development in his work. He worked away from the subdued English landscape to which he had become accustomed and painted South African scenes. His rock formation study The Sentinel, Mont-aux-Sources (n.d.) (fig.54) is a local scene which has traditional as well as Impressionistic qualities. The canvas has been under-painted in brown and there are definitive outlines, but the newer French influence of Impressionism is also apparent in Goodman's awareness of complementary and harmonious colours. Harmonious pink and orange complement pale blue/purple in the background mountains. On the illuminated areas he has again used pure harmonious colour and in the foreground he used green near blue and green/brown.

Furthermore, it seems likely that The Sentinel, Mont-aux-Sources (fig.54) was almost entirely painted and completed on the spot - another Impressionist characteristic. This can be assumed from



(fig.54) **The Sentinel, Mont-aux-Sources** (n.d) G. Goodman



(fig.55) **Mountain Scene** (n.d) E. Roworth

its quick, expressive and descriptive painting style (Meintjes, Pritchard, 1991, p.29). Such plein-airism, sparked off by the Barbizon school, which was still functioning while Goodman was in France, is vital to the immediacy of this scene. Goodman has treated the colourful shadowed areas in a complementary and harmonious manner, with the dark tones off-setting the highlights. He, like most Impressionists, did not use black on his palette, but obtained his darkest tones by mixing pure colours together (Meintjes, Pritchard, 1991, p.29). The precise areas of speckled colour, as well as the spontaneous heightened tones in the sun-drenched areas, is again reminiscent of Impressionism.

The entire painting is reminiscent of the landscape Mountain Scene (n.d.) (fig.55) by Roworth. The colours, marks and preparation of the canvas are similar. Goodman and Roworth used their traditional training to capture their scene accurately, but employed Impressionism to adapt light, shadow and colour to the South African location. The immediacy of both scenes is captured by the pure, unlaboured colour and bold, quick brush marks (Meintjes, Pritchard, 1991, p.29).

Goodman's seascape Blue Sea and Sky (n.d.) (fig.56) provides further confirmation that he was stylistically influenced by Impressionism. It resembles Alfhred Sisley's Boats on the Seine (1877) (fig.57) in all respects other than the fact that Goodman



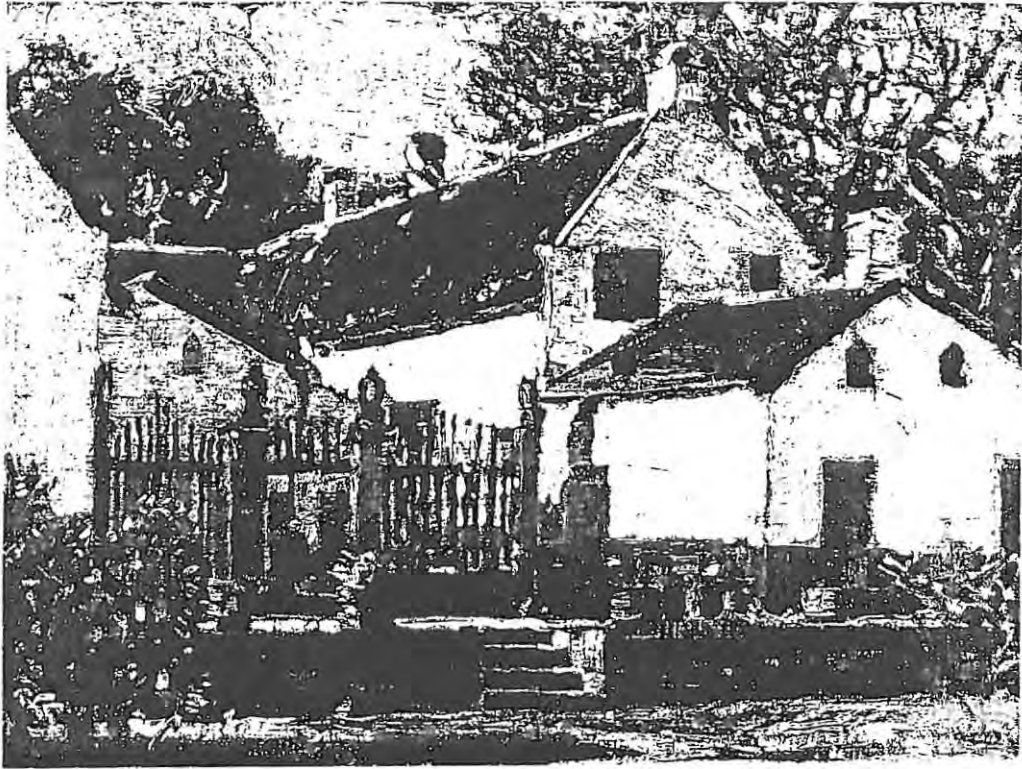
(fig.56) Blue Sea and Sky (n.d) G. Goodman



(fig.57) Boats on the Seine (1877) A. Sisley

has again traditionally prepared his canvas with Van Dyck brown (Meintjes, Pritchard, 1991, p.29). Both are painted in very similar complementary colours with shades of white predominating. The compositional structure in both is the same with one third water and two thirds sky and the boats' masts cutting into the almost straight horizon. The large area of white in both paintings is in a similar area and constitutes the focal point. Both pieces seem to have been rendered on location, indicated by the quick, immediate brush strokes.

Goodman's seascape painting, however, has little local substance if compared to his Stellenberg (1920) (fig.58). Goodman's adherence to the colour, composition and spontaneity recommended by the Impressionists, combined with a local quality, is most apparent in this painting. The portrayal of the major elements of the scene, specifically the architectural detail, in a simplified bold manner is reminiscent of the Impressionist style in France during the second half of the 19th century, particularly noted in Sisley's Square at Argenteuil (1872) (fig.59) (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.15). Both Goodman's and Sisley's paintings are covered with rough, broad, simple, but explanatory paint marks, harmonious as well as complementary colours with whites heightened with pure colour (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.15). However, in Stellenberg (fig.58), Goodman localises Impressionism with warm pinks, yellows and blues to illustrate South African light effects. The dark contrasting with light in a



(fig.58) Stellenberg (1920's) G. Goodman



(fig.59) Square at Argenteuil (1872) A. Sisley

stark, simplified way is another indication of his awareness of South African harsh light conditions. The white-washed walls juxtaposed to dark, warmly colourful shadows combined with quick, broad marks indicating the windows, are more Impressionistic than Sisley's rendering of the same, Goodman's seem more immediate, powerful and stark - like gaping holes (Fransen, 1982, p.266).

Goodman's contribution to the development of South African art is unquestioned. He brought to South Africa a direct contact with Impressionism, together with academicism, and localised their concepts. He used pure colour like the Impressionists, but modified their style to South African light and landscape. He gave light and dark starker contrasts, allowing for the brighter tones he discovered in his home environment. His use of strong intensified colour was also a result of his insistence that he paint on a brown under-painted canvas. He had no glints of white in between colours and had to lighten and brighten his paintings through colour (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.15; Berman, 1983, p.185; Fransen, 1982, p.266).

Goodman travelled throughout the world, touring through Europe, India and Southern Africa. His work was widely exhibited and publically very popular. This afforded him the opportunity indirectly to influence South African students to travel abroad and study artistic styles world wide (Ogilvie, 1988, p.253-254). He was an influential artist who helped students "in terms of a

formalised approach to picture making" (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.15). Goodman's work was influenced by that with which he came into contact. " ... English Academicians of the early 20th century, French Impressionism ... were metamorphosed finally in South Africa in a mannered approach as reflected in Gwelo Goodman's painting" (p.15).

**HARRY STRATFORD CALDECOTT : (1886 - 1929)**

Born in Kimberley in the Cape Province, Caldecott was another artist who brought European stylistic methods, particularly those of Impressionism, directly to South Africa. His preoccupation with art began when he met his mother's friend Lady Phillips who was an avid art collector and leading partner when a Johannesburg Art Gallery purchased French and English paintings in c.1910. Caldecott's contact with her must have inspired him to study art, specifically original art, because soon after their meeting he neglected his legal career and departed for France to study art (Berman, 1983, p.80; Fransen, 1982, p.269; Scholtz, 1970, p.3).

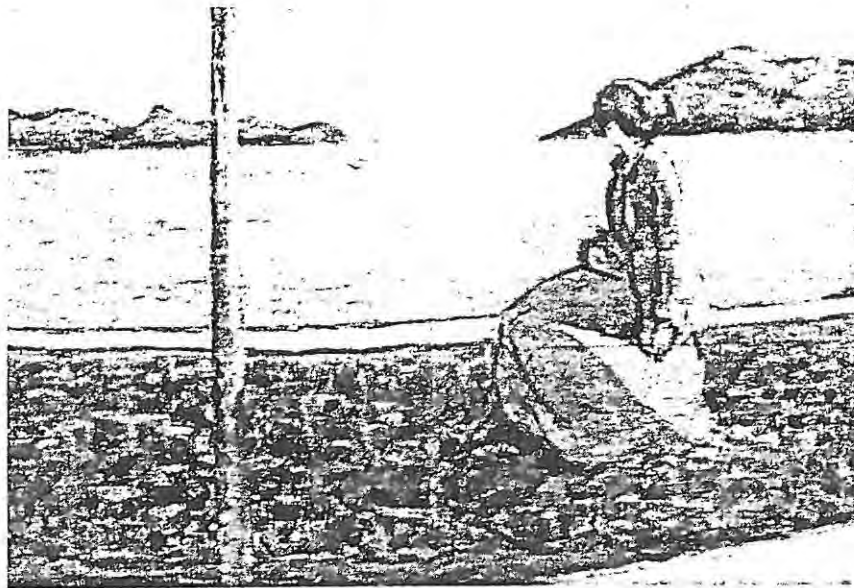
During his first year in Paris, c.1912, he enrolled at the Academie Julian, the same institution that Henri Matisse, Pierre Bonnard (1867-1947), Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968) and Gwelo Goodman had entered during the latter half of the 19th Century (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.20). Like them he later used this establishment as a stepping stone for entering the Ecole des Beaux Arts, also an academic establishment. Caldecott's master



here, Gabriel Ferrier, compounded his lack of contemporary stimulation. Ferrier was fond of the work of the Classicist Nicolas Poussin (1593/94-1665) and Neo-Classicist Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867) and often ignored the relative freedom that Impressionism and Post-Impressionism allowed (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.20; Scholtz, 1970, p.5)

Caldecott became disenchanted with the teachings of the Ecole and instead turned to studying work in galleries and mixing with artistic peers, including Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) through whom he became aware of the Cubists. Caldecott did not succumb to their theories, apparently finding their style unspontaneous and unexpressive and their outlook "less artistic" than "philosophical" (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.20). Instead, Caldecott seems to have been influenced by Impressionism.

In c.1914 Caldecott visited Munich (Scholtz, 1970, p.4-5). Due to his joining the British army and participation in the First World War as an English/French translator, there are few examples of Caldecott's style between c.1914-1923. However, in c.1919-1920, during a respite with his cousin, Elspeth, in the south of France, he painted The Bay, Tamaris with Elspeth on the Sea Wall (1919/1920) (fig.60) which gives an indication of his early style. The subject is an everyday genre scene, obviously painted en plein-air. The painting is like that of Alfred Sisley's The Dinghy at Veneaux, September Afternoon (1882) (fig.61). In both



(fig.60) The Bay, Tamaris with Elspeth on the Sea Wall (1919)  
H.S. Caldecott

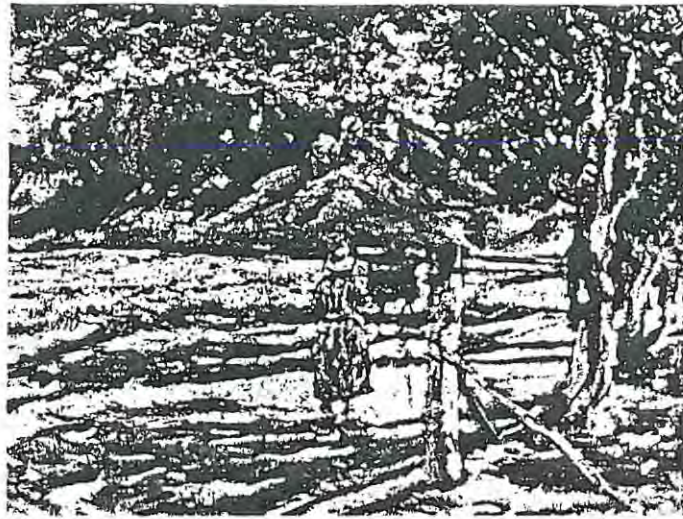


(fig.61) The Dinghy at Veneaux, September Afternoon (1882)  
A. Sisley

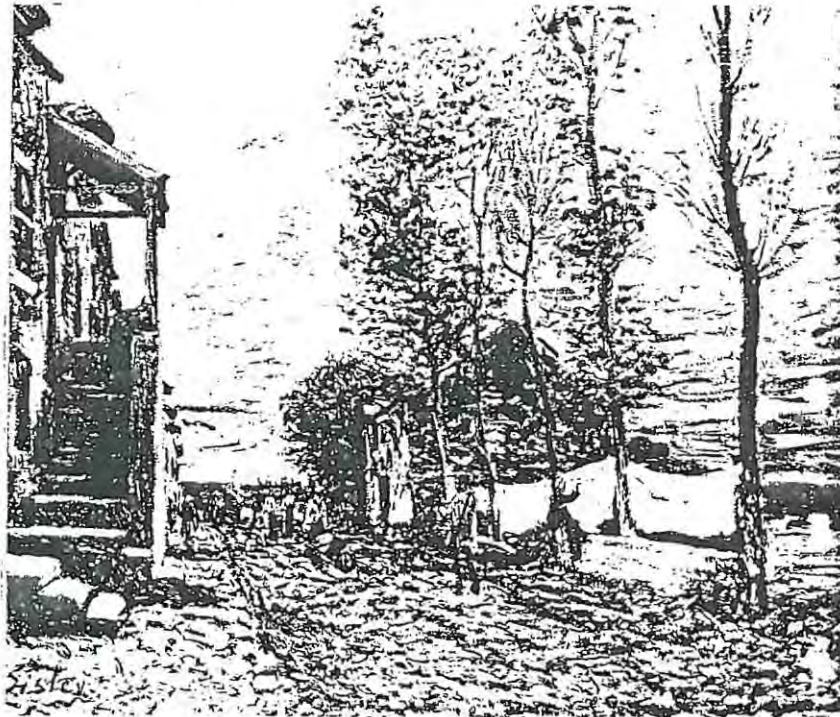
paintings the subject has been handled in a free and spontaneous manner and the dual importance of the figure and the environment are a clue to Caldecott's interest in French Impressionism. The simple rendering of light and dark contrasts are again an indication of Impressionism. Caldecott's rendering is a little stiff, like a posed photograph, perhaps an indication that his cousin was posing while he worked or that he might have used a photograph as an aid (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.20-21; Scholtz, 1970, p.9). The essence of his style is Impressionistic, the scene is of a transitory moment. According to Scholtz even though Caldecott was aware of the Cubists and Fauves, at this stage, "he was, in his own painting, attracted to Impressionism" (Scholtz, 1970, p.8).

Upon Caldecott's return to South Africa in c.1923, he moved to his mother's home in Johannesburg, which he found artistically stifling, promptly deciding to return to Paris. While waiting in Cape Town to embark on his journey to Europe, he met and married the artist Florence Zerffi (1882-1962). This persuaded him to remain in the Western Cape which is, in some ways, reminiscent of Mediterranean countries (Berman, 1983, p.80; Scholtz, 1970, p.10-11).

Caldecott's paintings between c.1923-1929 of the Cape and Boland areas are his most Impressionistic. His painting Early Morning near Worcester (1926) (fig.62) illustrates his use of



(fig.62) Early Morning near Worcester (1926) H.S. Caldecott



(fig.63) Old Houses in Saint Mammès, Autumn (1880) A. Sisley

Impressionistic complementary and harmonious colours. Harmonious tones of yellow and orange are combined with some complementary pale blues. The planes of light and dark, speckled with dots of coloured light are reminiscent of Impressionistic devices. But, unlike the Impressionists, Caldecott introduced black into the shadowed areas, as if he wanted to enhance the harsh African shadows in the landscape before him (Alexander, 1962, p.32). Also evident is the equal importance of all the elements making up the composition. Thus the woman is not the main subject. Each element is of similar importance being painted with the same vigour and intensity. This similar treatment of all elements resembles the way Sisley has rendered all aspects in his painting Old Houses in Saint-Mammès, Autumn (1880) (fig.63) (Alexander, 1962, p.32-33, Bouman, 1933, p.55,57; Fransen, 1982, p.269).

Caldecott's affiliation with, and acknowledgment of, European styles is not only apparent through his work, but also in his writing. He was an eloquent writer and critic and one of the first critics to defend the Expressionist work of the rebuked Irma Stern. Even though he did not identify himself with the Expressionists, he supported and admired Stern's conviction. "He identified the root cause of the public's lack of understanding of the visual arts as a lack of proper training..." (Scholtz, 1970, p.28). Caldecott therefore openly encouraged young South African artists to take risks and confidently turn to Europe for guidance (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.20; Bouman, 1933,

p.53).

Caldecott's city scenes of Cape Town bear a striking resemblance to the Impressionist Parisian genre scenes of the 19th century. His painting Government Avenue, Cape Town (1926) (fig.64) clearly demonstrates this. The composition is noticeably similar to Sisley's Bords de Rivière à Veneux (1881) (fig.65) and Old Houses in Saint-Mammès, Autumn (fig.63). Their compositions have the same linear characteristics. This is indicated by strong lines from the right hand corner diminishing towards the left middle grounds, created by the long tree shadows in Sisley's lake shore canvas, the road in his autumn painting and the poles and trees in Caldecott's city avenue. Sisley's shoreline and road edge is in a corresponding position to where Caldecott has created his avenue's edge (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.23).

Caldecott's figures in Government Avenue, Cape Town (fig.64) are treated in a quick, spontaneous manner like those found in Sisley's autumn painting. The people in the paintings are part of the environment, going about their daily business and no particular subject is of special importance. Caldecott's work shows spontaneous brushwork in the quick, broken marks in the lemon yellow light patches in between the shadows of the trees on the lane's surface (Alexander, Cohen, 1990, p.58). This avenue painting demonstrates Caldecott's use of black. Although used sparingly, as Manet often used it, it goes against the



(fig.64) Government Avenue, Cape Town (1926) H.S. Caldecott



(fig.65) Bords de rivière à Veneux (1881) A. Sisley

Impressionist dogma which rebuked black because it was believed that it was a "denial of colour" (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.23). Like some Impressionists, Caldecott has used black in a constructive manner. Impressionist artists such as Renoir and Manet used black, not as a shadow, but as an active element to describe some of the Parisian fashions of the time, especially when depicting men's clothes. Caldecott has effectively utilised black as part of the actual dark colours - like that of the girls' school uniforms, which are actually black.

Caldecott used bolder colour and starker contrast between light and shade than that used by most Impressionists because the light conditions he was painting in South Africa were very different to the European hazy conditions to which they were accustomed. His Landscape near Grabouw (n.d.) (fig.66), a remarkable manifestation of his attempt at immediate rendering of a South African scene, is representative of his pursuit of a South African Impressionistic style. The scraped areas in the sky show a light pink primed canvas. This coloured surface was occasionally used by his Impressionistic role model, Monet, when trying to give a scene a warm glow (Coppelstone, 1988, p.13). Impressionists usually used white to prime their canvases to indicate the "coolness in the light in many parts of Europe", but Caldecott has used a warmer light tone to indicate the warmer quality of South African light (Berman, 1975, p.36-37). This plein-air painting, with its entire surface worked



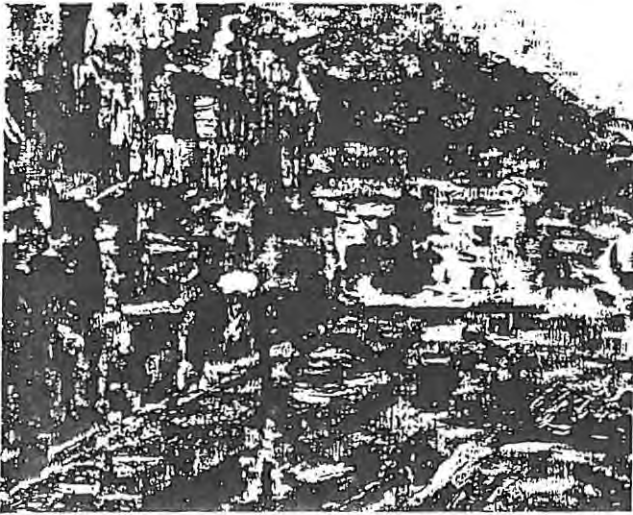


(fig.66) Landscape near Grabouw (n.d) H.S. Caldecott

simultaneously, is again similar to Monet's painting style. The limited palette, consisting of complementary salmon pinks, pale greens and light blue enhancing each other, is part of Caldecott's local adaptation of the subdued tones typical of Europe. The blue and pink in both the sky and the landscape unifies the composition and hints at the European Impressionistic use of similar colours all over their canvases as a way of representing atmosphere, light and unity. Representation by use of colour was a unifying tendency in Impressionism and better explains why Caldecott's work is said to be essentially like that of Impressionism (Berman, 1975, p.35; Berman, 1993, p.44).

Finally, Caldecott's work reflects the influence of the artist he respected most, Claude Monet. Caldecott's series of the Visit of the Prince of Wales, Cape Town 1925 (1925) (fig.67) is akin to Monet's Rue Montorgueil decked out with flags (1878) (fig.68). Like Monet he used a white canvas, elevated his view point and rendered the urban scene in an immediate fashion (Berman, 1983, p.82; Fransen, 1982, p.269).

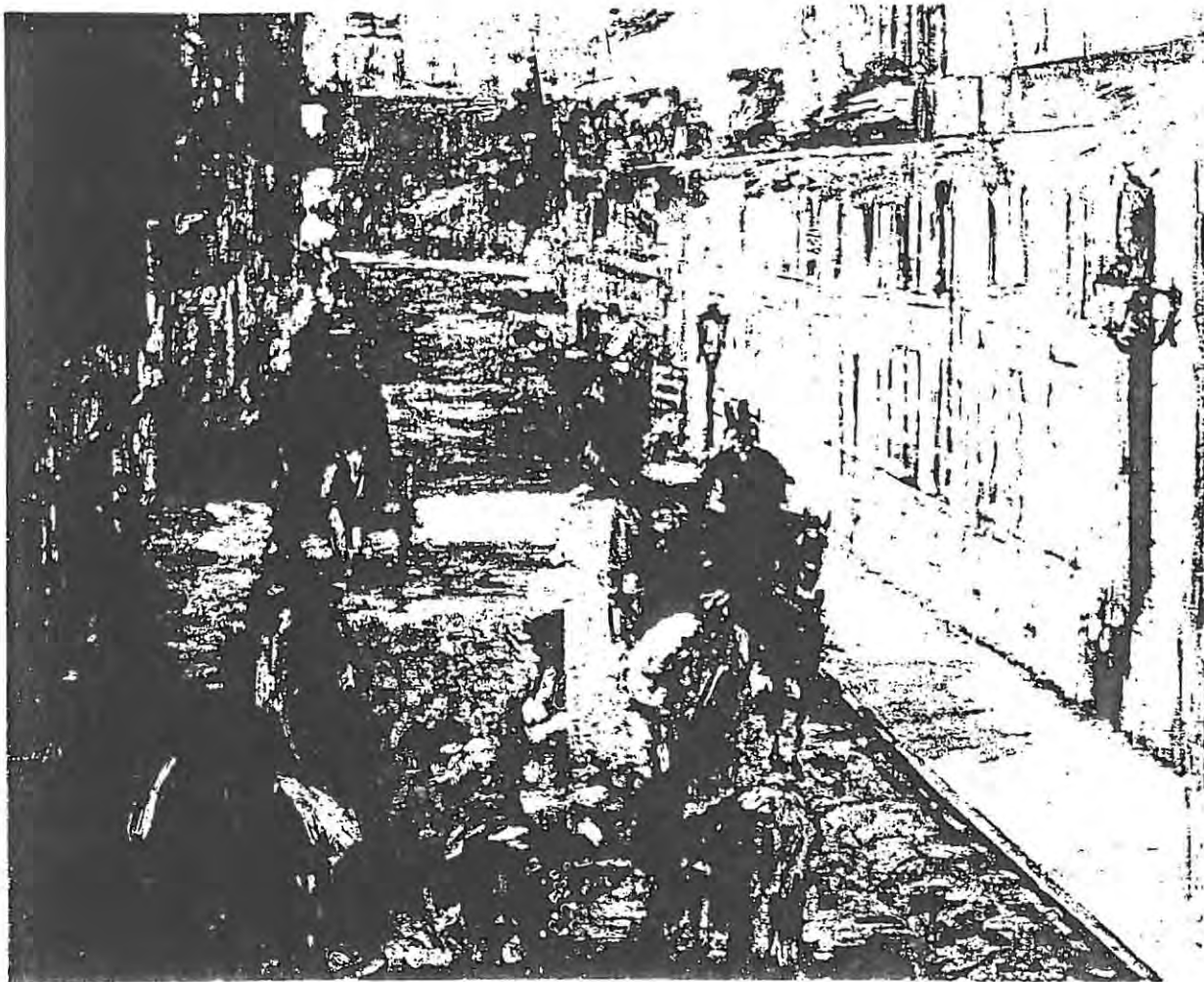
The bustling city and apparent proximity between the beholder and the composition's scene is also similar to Manet's genre city scene Roadworks on the Rue Mosnier (1878) (fig.69) and Pissarro's Boulevard Montmartre in the Spring (1897) (fig.70). Pissarro's, Manet's and Caldecott's urban subject matter has been handled in the same manner. The light broad street leading into the



(fig.67) Visit of the Prince of Wales, Adderley street, Cape Town  
(1925) H.S. Caldecott



(fig.68) Rue Montorgueil decked out with flags (1878) E. Monet



(fig.69) Roadworks on the Rue Mosnier (1878) E. Manet



(fig.70) Boulevard Montmartre in the Spring (1897) C. Pissarro

background towards the left in all three compositions is the dominant aspect. The lower sections of Pissarro's and Caldecott's compositions are intersected by a lamp post, and by workmen in Manet's road scene. The raised viewpoints, suggesting that the artists were painting from apartment windows situated above the scene, allows the viewer access to more of the compositions. This is enhanced by the buildings which make up strong perspectival lines, leading the eye into the compositions (Berman, 1983, p.80-82; Fransen, 1982, p.269-270; Thomson, Howard, 1988, p.109).

Due to his European studies, Caldecott's work is unquestionably Impressionistic. "He analysed and applied the essence of French Impressionism ... better than any artist in South Africa" (Fransen, 1982, p.269). Because he was a respected artist and critic, his opinion was influential, spreading the nature of Impressionism to those who were not fortunate enough to travel abroad and view European artists' work first hand (Berman, 1983, p.82). He believed that South African art could not flourish or develop without the input of new European movements. In his articles, he used Impressionism as an example of artistic brilliance and therefore encouraged continued European stylistic tendencies in the work of South African artists (Fransen, 1982, p.269; Scholtz, 1970, p.27).

As was Impressionism in Europe, Impressionism in South Africa was followed by other trends. Artists experiencing the relative

freedom of Impressionism were often compelled to develop their styles further. Many such artists have painted works with remarkable similarities to the European styles which followed Impressionism known as Post-Impressionism.

## CHAPTER 3.

## POST-IMPRESSIONISTIC STYLES:

As with Impressionism, Post-Impressionism emerged in South Africa after its European peak between c.1885 and c.1905. This delay was due to the dominant influence on South African artists of work they encountered at European exhibitions they frequented, as well as the ideas of fellow students and teachers in Europe. Even in Europe, "modern" movements were seldom readily accepted by the public. The work of progressive artists, therefore, surfaced in exclusive galleries, usually those of private gallery owners like Paul Durand-Ruel, who supported progressive artists and their work during the peak of their respective styles (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.27-29; Cavendish, 1993g, p.26). These works were often bought by private collectors and therefore disappeared from view. Until museums exhibited such collections, South African artists only had opportunities to view Post-Impressionistic work in public venues after the height of its occurrence in Europe.

Like the Impressionists the Post-Impressionists resisted 18th and 19th century Academic art. But they also reacted to and were influenced by Impressionism. They saw its limitations, used the experience gained by the Impressionists, but kept to personal subject choice (Ash, 1980, p.37; Cornell, 1983, p.369).

This progressive style began in c.1883, when some leading Impressionists like Monet, Sisley and Pissarro were no longer in Paris. Impressionism as a movement began to disintegrate, and new artists and groups, including Post- and Neo-Impressionists, surfaced in Paris (Courthion, 1987, p.44). The attitude towards Impressionism by certain artists at the end of the c.1880's was, at times, unfavourable. Some began to question the effectiveness of pure plein-air painting, feeling that Impressionists gave too much attention to the immediate rendering of scenes and too little to finish, composition and significant content. Contrary to the Impressionists, those who became known as Post Impressionists found it unnecessary to paint complete paintings en plein-air, maintaining that the overriding problem with plein-airism "was the built-in limitation" regarding degree of finish and resultant restricted size of the canvas (Ash, 1980, p.37). The Post-Impressionists also questioned whether the spontaneous style of their predecessors left much scope for intellectual or visionary rendering of the subject. Impressionist artists seldom imaginatively altered motifs in front of them and did not invent forms or compositions from the imagination (Ash, 1980, p.37; Courthion, 1989, p.44).

The Post-Impressionists were not anti-Impressionism, "they went beyond it in various directions" and wanted to make it a more durable style (Janson, 1985, p.619). Neo-Impressionist artists, like Georges Seurat, took the obsession with colour and light



even further than the Impressionists had, and concerned himself with the optical blending of juxtaposed colours (Courthion, 1989, p.44). By studying simultaneous colour contrasts, he learned to avoid mixing colours on his palette, dotting complementary colours separately while enhancing the predominant colours of specific areas. The colours merged on the retina of the spectator when he stood a particular distance from the painting (Richard, 1986, p.23-24).

Like the Impressionists, the Post-Impressionists responded to previous styles, this response being, in most cases, "manifested as a highly personal expression," (Ash, 1980, p.37), both in choice of subjects and expressive use of colour. According to the art critic Roger Fry, they often brought "a return to ideas of formal design, a structural order that may be used to give emotional or spiritual significance" (Shiff, 1984, p.144). Some of the Post-Impressionists had worked in an Impressionistic style, often as a means of avoiding academic restrictions. It would have been "virtually impossible for painters such as Gauguin and Van Gogh and a diverse range of the Post-Impressionists in France and elsewhere to have emerged without the liberating background of Impressionism to provide them with the means of expression - free use of colour and brush-stroke, new techniques of composition and above all independence of action removed from the prescribed formulas of the Salon" (Ash, 1980, p.40).

The chief proponents of these diverse Post-Impressionist styles were Paul Cézanne (1839-1909), Paul Gauguin (1848-1903) and Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890). Georges Seurat (1859-1891) and Paul Signac (1863-1935) are often included under the Post- or Neo-Impressionist groups. (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.29; Ash, 1980, p.37-40; Janson, 1985, p.619-624; Thomson, Howard, 1988, p.170). All these artists had, at one time, attempted Impressionism, to which they remained loyal, but changes were inevitable and they expanded on this style. The Post-Impressionists, unlike the Impressionists, were not a unified body and its supporters often worked in isolation (Ash, 1980, p.37).

Paul Cézanne was a leading French Impressionist from the early c.1870's, exhibiting with the Impressionists from c.1874-1877, but never identifying with the group or adopting all of its aims. He was more concerned with structure and composition than the Impressionists were. His later work illustrates his major concern, that of depicting perspective through colour and "to represent three dimensions on a surface that in reality has only two" (Ash, 1980, p.38). While looking at the forms of nature with the idea of simplifying and ordering them, Cézanne said that cylinders, spheres and cones were their underlying forms. These ideas would influence other Post-Impressionists, and in later years, the Fauves and Cubists (Ash, 1980, p.38). He often created three dimensionality, not through perspective or foreshortening,

but by employing subtle nuances of colour, maintaining that the richer and purer the colours used by an artist, the more form and light would be explained. His obsession with structure made the process of painting quite laborious, leading to hundreds of sessions when painting a subject, particularly portraits.

"Instead of the rapid, lively brush strokes of the Impressionists, Cézanne evolved a technique of applying parallel, even strokes that followed the surfaces they depicted. In this way Cézanne could convey a feeling of solid form, especially with the restricted palette in which warm, orange hues would seem to advance in space, and cool, blue-green ones would recede" (Clark, 1992, p.167). This painstaking procedure differs markedly from the Impressionists' style which had facilitated spontaneity (Ash, 1980, p.38)

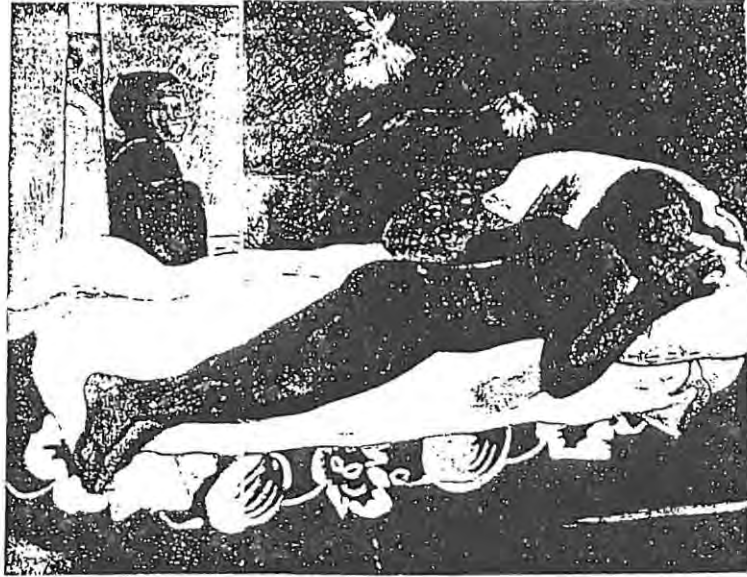
Paul Gauguin was also a Post-Impressionist who developed his technique out of his admiration for the Impressionist style, often claiming that he was an Impressionist (Courthion, 1989, p.52). He is known to have owned original work by Impressionists, and even exhibited with them in c.1880-1882 and c.1886, but he too did not stick to their approach (Ash, 1980, p.38; Clark, 1992, p.160). His Post-Impressionistic phase began in the c.1880's (Clark, 1992, p.160). Like Cézanne he used bright colour, but his colour, often arbitrary, was far more expressive than explanatory. He diverged radically from Impressionism in his opposition to the "naturalism of the Impressionists, remarking

that art 'should not be concerned with the sensations of the eye, but should evoke the inner life of man' " (Ash, 1980, p.38). This anti-naturalistic, more emotive approach was reflected in his curiosity about primitive Far- and Near-Eastern art (Fabbri, 1990, p.8). The Post-Impressionists were all fascinated by exotic cultures, especially primitive ones. Gauguin even went to Tahiti in search of "a primitive, innocent paradise" (Clark, 1992, p.162). The flat colours and decorative quality prominent in his Tahitian paintings, especially in the backgrounds, are derived from his fascination with primitive art and Japanese prints. His paintings are personal and symbolic in his choice of subject and expressive in his use of flat, bright, unusual colours (Clark, 1992, p.161-162).

Another facet of expression which Gauguin and other Post-Impressionists explored was Symbolism. Symbolism, which started in France during the second half of the 19th century, was attractive to Post-Impressionists seeking more than just the imitation of nature and objects. The Symbolists used imaginative and fantastic visions to express emotions and abstract ideas concerning the subjects they were exploring. They would take the essence of the subject matter before them and add to it from the imagination to give it individuality and expression. Through symbols, and the images which viewers associated with these signs, the artists tried to enhance beliefs and emotions (Cornell, 1983, p.366).

The French Symbolists developed a style which expressed their own unique perceptions of the subjective world (Clark, 1992, p.156). Synthetism or Synthesism appealed to Gauguin. He was especially intrigued by the opinions of Emile Bernard (1868-1941) regarding synthesism in painting, and was specifically influenced by the advice that art should represent "what the mind perceives of a particular scene, rather than the eye," (Thomas, 1988, p.174).

Gauguin and Bernard worked together in c.1888 in Pont Avon, Gauguin therefore experiencing the theories of the Symbolists first hand. Gauguin's paintings, such as his stylised self-portraits, illustrate his tendency to reduce forms to abstract shapes, using arbitrary colours. His aim was to express an abstract idea about himself and attempt to synthesize representation with imaginary abstraction. These aims explain why Gauguin believed that unspoiled people, like the Tahitians, could provide inspiration, either through their life style or their art, and why he used eclectic inspiration including Japanese prints, reproductions of Egyptian paintings, Javanese temple reliefs, pictograms from the Marquesas and images from Easter Island. His symbolic use of images was meant to be accessible to receptive viewers. Many of Gauguin's Tahitian paintings reflect his Symbolic tendency. His Spirit of the Dead Watching (1892) (fig.71), an example of his imaginative painting, is a depiction of his Tahitian wife, Teha'amana, who was terrified of ghosts. "...Gauguin depicted the ghost as Teha'amana would have imagined



(fig.71) Spirit of the Dead Watching (1892) P. Gauguin

it..." (Cavendish, 1993c, p.232; Chipp, 1968, p.103).

Vincent van Gogh, like other French artists of the c.1880's, was fascinated by Japanese prints. This is evident in his Portrait of Père Tanguy (1887) (fig.72) with its background covered with Japanese reproductions (Fabbri, 1990, p.8). It also indicates his debt to Impressionism in the all over pure and precise dabs of colour (Thomson, Howard, 1988, p.88-89). Van Gogh and Gauguin frequently corresponded, articulating their ideas verbally, until late c.1888, but Van Gogh's style remained individual (Cavendish, 1993c, p.229). Unlike Cézanne's structured compositions and Gauguin's synthetism, Van Gogh's contribution lay in his animated, expressive technique and liberal use of personalised colour. His paintings from the late c.1880's differ from Impressionist paintings both in style and content. Brush strokes turned into convoluted swirls, colour became expressive rather than tied to representing atmosphere, and line was used both descriptively and expressively. Van Gogh's search for an expression through his work comes through in his letters to his brother Theo. He said that he used colour as an emotive message, rather than painting it exactly as he saw it, in unconventional strokes (Ash, 1980, p.39; Thomson, Howard, 1988, p.87).

Post-Impressionist styles have few unifying threads other than the unconventional attitudes of artists painting in its styles. The Post-Impressionists in South Africa, like their French



(fig.72) Portrait of Père Tanguy (1887) Van Gogh



counterparts, often started their artistic search with Impressionism. Post-Impressionism came to South African artists because of their travels abroad, particularly to Europe, during the early 20th Century. They enrolled at art schools and frequented art presentations there. Because the Post-Impressionist style is so varied, artists were able to glean what they required from it and develop personalised styles based on the freedom which both Impressionism and Post-Impressionism provided. The free, but expressive colour, freedom of rendering and personal choice of subject, favoured by the Post-Impressionists, were attractive to South African artists, like Bertha Everard, who were searching for a new manner of painting.

**BERTHA EVERARD : (1873 - 1965)**

Bertha King was a South African born artist, schooled in England. Her tertiary training to become a professional piano player began in Vienna in c.1891. In c.1893, when she realised that she did not have the temperament to endure the strain of such a demanding career, she took up painting at the Slade School in London (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.16). The conservative training she experienced there was not to her liking. She found her tutors narrow-minded, refusing to allow their students to abandon old customs like the laborious, planned realism they preferred. She was unhappy in that environment and left in c.1894.

Bertha King went to Bushey and joined another academic art institution, The Herkomer School of Art, a very important private school in England (Harmsen, 1980, p.9). Even though Hubert Herkomer was an academic-minded teacher, he had a profound influence on Bertha King's early work. He was a teacher who seldom deviated from strict academic portraits, English landscapes or historical paintings, but, he did have "adventurous and amusing ideas" (Harmsen, 1980, p.9). He advised his students to be bold, but upheld the highest standards. He encouraged pupils to paint directly from nature, setting up camp if need be. Herkomer's school suited the independent Bertha King because it was more like an artist's colony than an institution. Even though Herkomer wanted his students to accomplish a schooled style, he also encouraged them to find their own style. This would influence Bertha King later, especially during her Impressionistic and Post-Impressionistic phases when she endeavoured to capture her paintings' subjects and scenes en plein-air (p.10).

Bertha King's painting Water Lily Pond (1895) (fig.73), executed while she was enrolled at the Herkomer school, illustrates the style typical of this phase in her work. It is a realistic, precise rendition of the view. It lacks expression or a personal impression of the scene and is therefore a little decorative. There is little true realism as the outside scene is too ideally serene to be a plein-air painting. The entire painting is handled



(fig.73) Water Lily Pond (1895) B. King



(fig.74) Portrait of a Lady (n.d) B. King

in a similar detailed manner with no adaptation to texture or recession (Harmsen, 1980, p.10).

Between c.1896 and c.1899 Bertha King enrolled at two schools. She initially studied at the Westminster School of Art in London. Following that she entered the St. Ives School of Landscape Painting in Cornwall under Julius Olsson (1864-1942) (Ogilvie, 1988, p.214). This final phase in her formal art studies shows a marked change in her style for it is at this time that the Impressionistic style started to permeate her work. The Impressionists had been exhibiting throughout Europe's major centres for over 20 years, formally since c.1874. (Thomas, Howard, 1988, p.16). While in Europe she had much opportunity to view such work at first hand and read articles concerning Impressionism in journals.

Bertha King's painting Portrait of a Lady (n.d) (fig.74) demonstrates the change in her work. It has a relaxed quality in the handling of paint. The work has a new immediacy, lacking in most of her earlier paintings. The lady's dress is clearly painted with much attention given to the effects of the bright light catching the frilly bodice. The confidently painted bits of coloured white on the dress, hat, nose and chin are clearly reminiscent of portraits within Monet's garden scenes. The strong contrasts and bold, thick brush strokes are similar to those in his Women in the Garden (1866-1867) (fig.75) (Copplestone, 1988,



(fig.75) Women in the Garden (1866-67) E. Monet

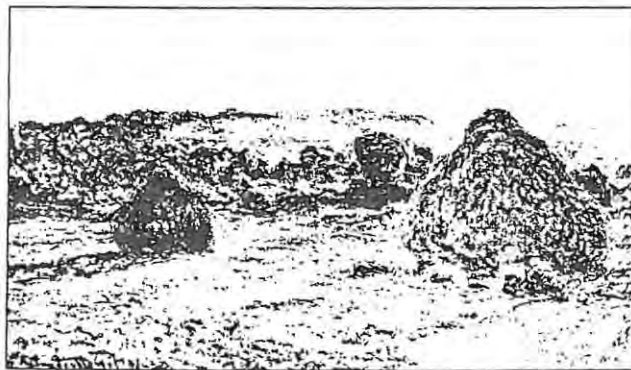
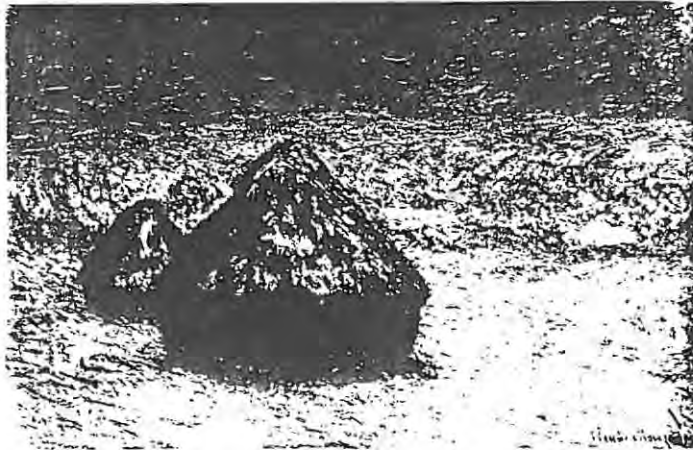
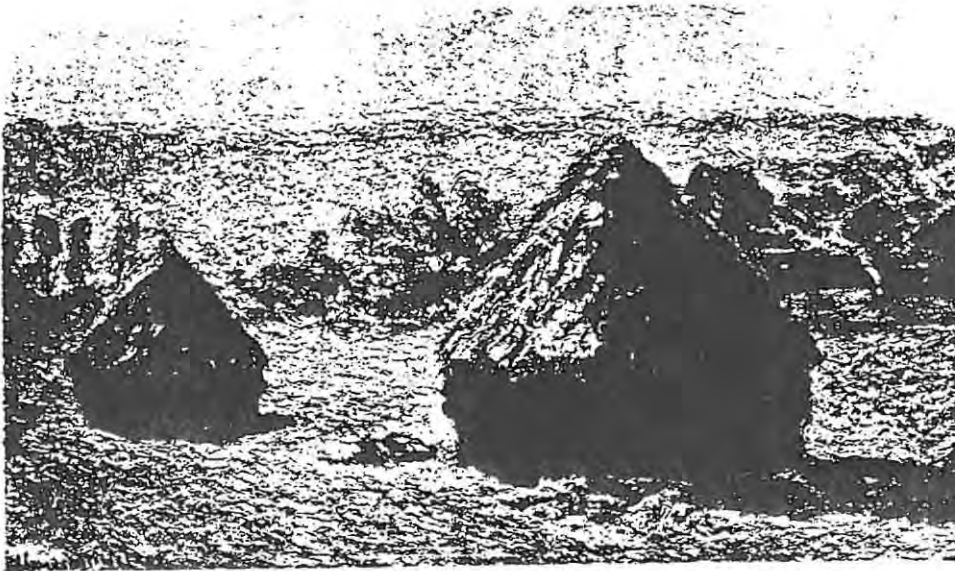


(fig.76) Kentish Poppyfield (n.d) B. King

p.18, Harmsen, 1980, p.11-12).

Bertha King's tendency towards the Impressionist style broadened just before her return to South Africa in c.1902. Her Kentish Poppyfield (n.d.) (fig.76), although undated - its title and style indicate that it was painted at this stage - is Impressionistic in subject and technique. The dominant field of flowers, the three haystacks and group of trees breaking into the horizontal of the composition are reminiscent of Impressionistic work, particularly those of Monet's 1890's Grain-Stacks series (figs.42,43,77 & 98) . Their paint technique is quick and loose and the undefined edges allow the bright, pure colour and shapes to merge. The importance of the time of day is apparent in the consistent shadows. Bertha King's academic start during her early years in London comes through in the dark primed canvas (Harmsen, 1980, p.16).

Bertha King's return to South Africa, in c.1902, was the year of her marriage and the year c.1904 marked the birth of her daughter Ruth Everard Haden, the other member of the Everard group to be discussed. This period of Bertha Everard's work, until c.1922, consisted of painting the surrounding landscape of the farms where she lived in the Eastern Transvaal, at Bonnefoi and later at Lekkerdraai (Harmsen, 1980, p.19,38).



(fig.77) Grain-Stacks (1890/1891) E. Monet

In c.1910 Bertha Everard returned to England for a brief interval. Being an enthusiastic landscape artist, she would most certainly have been drawn to exhibitions of work by the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists. Everard's painting View Towards Swaziland (1920/21) (fig.78), bears testimony to this - through the technique, colour and mood, which is reminiscent of the Post-Impressionist Vincent van Gogh (Thomson, Howard, 1988, p.181-182). Her painting style is like that found in Peach trees in Blossom (1888) (fig.80), a painting Van Gogh said was his best landscape ever. The scene is immediate, the colours well chosen for their complementary qualities, with free expressive brush strokes and impasto areas (Clark, 1992, p.162).

Everard's painting View Towards Swaziland (fig.78) also has technical qualities parallel to those found in Van Gogh's Post-Impressionistic Crows Flying over a Cornfield (1890) (fig.79). Although Everard's colours do not contrast as starkly as those in Van Gogh's painting, they are not purely complementary or conventional. They are heightened and some areas contrast, like the crimson red road snaking across and over the blue/green areas of the landscape. Her canvas seems to be pale, which is less traditional, and she seems to have abandoned her brush in some areas. The palette-knife marks directing the eye into the landscape are similar to the expressive marks of Van Gogh. She, like Van Gogh, has simplified the painting by reducing aspects of





(fig.78) View Towards Swaziland (1920-21) B. Everard



(fig.79) Crows Flying over a Cornfield (1890) Van Gogh



(fig.80) Peach trees in Blossom (1888) Van Gogh

essentially expressive colour and directional rhythm (Fabri, 1990, p.28).

Everard's next direct contact with European stylistic modes was when she moved to London, then to Paris between c.1922-1927. This trip, essentially to allow her daughter, Ruth, to study, enabled her to see and become acquainted with the work of the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists and, this time, also that of the Expressionists, including artists such as Van Gogh, Cézanne and Marquant (Berman, 1985, p.46; Harmsen, 1980, p.81; Stein-Lessing, 1968a, p.32). Flat expanses of colour combined with choppy, often expressive contrasting colours, were to mark this final phase to her stylistic development.

Everard's Delville Wood, 10 Years Later (1926) (fig.81), contains aspects of all that touched her. The flat expanses of colour in rhythmical waves are reminiscent of Van Gogh's expressive colour application. The bright, flat application of dark lime green contrasts with the broad rendering of rich salmon pink. This freedom to paint colours in an individual expressive manner, is typical of the Post-Impressionists. The emotive vivid colour and intensity of vigour with which the Delville landscape has been put down are an indication of how the devastating scene outraged and upset Everard. The scene has a remarkable resemblance to a moody landscape painting by the Expressionist painter Vera Nilsson, entitled Study, Öland (1917) (fig.82). The compositions



(fig.81) Delville Wood, 10 Years Later (1926) B. Everard



(fig.82) Study, Öland (1917) V. Nilsson

by the two women artists are similar, with a strange, distorted foreshortening and disturbing turbulent atmosphere. The gaping holes of the earth in both paintings have been treated in the same expressive manner, by quick, powerful brush marks. The broken, gnarled and skeletal trees breaking into the horizon lines are symbolic of the devastating, apocalyptic subject matter. The rendering and colour, which are expressive of the mood of the paintings, portrays the personal feeling of the artists toward their subjects (Behr, 1988, p.60). Bertha's painting is therefore an expressive and personal interpretation of the war ravaged landscape (Alexander, Cohen, 1990, p.45).

Everard's The New Furrow (n.d) (fig.83) illustrates her Post-Impressionist Symbolic vision. The broad, flat, unexplained areas, with boldly contrasting and harmonious colour such as the lemon yellow and mauve in the moonlit furrow against the red-brown hills, bears testimony to this. The broad areas of one tone, mixed with contrasting organic curves is similar in style to work by Gauguin and the Post-Impressionists she admired (Fransen, 1982, p.285). Everard often painted at night and this piece was painted at such a time. Painting the landscape at night, when she could retire from people and the real world, is rather similar to the ideas which encouraged Gauguin and Irma Stern, a fellow South African artist, to travel to primitive, remote areas (Alexander, Cohen, 1990, p.46).



(fig.83) The New Furrow (n.d) B. Everard

Everard's interest in Gauguin's work, specifically his knowledge of Symbolism is clearly apparent in this furrow painting. Like Gauguin, she has taken the real landscape and simplified the forms to combine the real with the imaginary. The silvery-mauve path and undulating forms are not only from the landscape itself, but also from the imagination. She had painted the scene almost in the dark, alone with her thoughts. The light and unnaturally coloured water seems to indicate a winding glimmer of hope in the dark red foreboding landscape.

Everard felt that she could only express herself on large formats. Impressionism's stress on spontaneity did not allow free expression on a large scale. Therefore Post-Impressionism allowed her the freedom of subject choice, size, colour and technique she yearned for (Stein-Lessing, 1968a, p.31). Everard continually strove to spread the Post-Impressionistic influence in South Africa. Her respect for the work of the Post-Impressionists also comes through in her written work. She wrote: "We are growing up in our ideas . . . . . The altered or rather enlarged idea of what is admirable in form (and) colour has led many artists . . . . . to paint objects, things, not subjectively like the idealists, nor again so as to give a general impression, merely, as the older 'impressionists' did, but in such a way as to convey only what they want to see in them, eliminating everything in them which is not necessary and even putting in what is not actually visible if the artist requires it." (Berman, 1983, p.150). Bertha Everard

encouraged artists to travel abroad and explore different European styles. She inspired artists to grasp stylistic freedom and her family were those most inspired by these suggestions. Her daughter Ruth Everard-Haden was one of the first to follow her guidance.

**RUTH EVERARD - HADEN : (1904- )**

Bertha Everard's eldest daughter, Ruth Everard-Haden's art studies commenced under Robinson at The Cape Town School of Art in c.1921. She was dissatisfied with his tuition for she found it limiting and subdued. Her mother had been painting in a free style at this stage and Everard-Haden must have been encouraged to express herself freely too. The academic institutions available to her in South Africa must therefore have been inhibiting (Harmsen, 1980, p.79)

Everard-Haden's formal European art training began in London at The Slade School in c.1922 under the leadership of Henry Tonks. Again, the studios regimen inhibited her artistically, so, while studying, she took advantage of the numerous available galleries she had the opportunity to visit. She was particularly drawn to and influenced by the Post-Impressionists, who were still being classed as modern (Harmsen, 1980, p.83). These exhibitions exposed her to work freer than that found at the academies and institutes, she is known to have acknowledged that at this stage "it was not the advice of her teachers but the contentious



exhibitions which she visited which had a formative influence on her work" (Alexander, Cohen, 1990, p.86).

Everard-Haden's next period of study was in c.1923-1927, when she enrolled at numerous academies and studios in Paris. These included studying at the Academie Colarossi and, later, under the French master Andre Lhote (1885-1962), a progressive artist, who admired the work of Cézanne and the Post-Impressionists. He was particularly drawn to their theories on the reintroduction of line, constructed composition and expressive colour (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.80-81).

Although Everard-Haden maintained that she was predominantly encouraged by the exhibitions she frequented in Paris, she was also influenced by her teachers (Alexander, Cohen, 1990, p.86). The influence of her master, Lhote, is evident in her painting Nude (c.1924+) (fig.84). Even though Lhote was not officially her tutor until c.1926, her nude study is exceptionally similar to his La Joueuse de Flûte (1911) (fig.85). The putty-like quality of their figures and the angular light and dark areas are alike. The treatment of the background, made up of long dark patches with looser strokes radiating in lighter tones from the darkness, are similar. Lhote often used Cézanne as an inspiration for his students and because of his passion for Cézanne's work, Everard-Haden's painting seems to have the same respect for his angular brush work, seen in the drapery and in the angular contrast of



(fig.84) Nude (1924+) R. Everard-Haden



(fig.85) La Joueuse de Flûte (1911) Lhote

light and dark on the hands of the model (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.50; Harmsen, 1980, p.87).

Ruth Everard-Haden's Nude (fig.84) also has a striking resemblance to work by Gauguin, another artist she greatly admired. The flat areas of simplified form show that she understood the underlying build and form of the nude in uncomplicated terms and she has not romanticised the subject. Another connection Everard-Haden's work shows with that of the Post-Impressionists, specifically Gauguin and Cézanne, is the mask-like attitude of the face. This tendency to capture aspects of primitive cultures was common to these artists. The importance Everard-Haden gives to the personality of the sitter through pose and rendering is another connection with Gauguin, who also strove to subtly reveal the inner portrait of a model (Alexander, Cohen, 1990, p.86).

Everard-Haden's continuous visits to galleries in Europe and the influence artists like Gauguin had on her work comes through in her L'Art d'Aujourd'hui (Portrait of Bertha Everard) (1926) (fig.86). She often commented that the work she saw in galleries during her student days in Paris was important to her development as an artist and the significance of this comes through in this painting of her mother (Harmsen, 1980, p.86). The composition fits closely that of a painting by the Impressionist Mary Cassatt (1844-1926) entitled Reading the Figaro (1883) (fig.87). Both



(fig.86) L' Art d'Aujourd'hui (Portrait of Bertha Everard) (1926)  
R. Everard-Haden



(fig.87) Reading the Figaro (1883) M. Cassatt

sitters fill the composition. The literature being read has a similar suggestion of lettering on the cover, just a hint of particular words. The strong vertical line in the background of both paintings is also the same. Everard-Haden's work reflects a similar volume and handling as illustrated in the plump chair in Cassatt's painting. The shape of the top edge of the chair in the Impressionist's painting is the same shape that Bertha Everard's shawl makes (Clark, 1992, p.148).

In this portrait Everard-Haden also used the flat decorative style favoured by the Fauves (Berman, 1983, p.153). The confident flat floral shapes on the shawl and right hand corner of her composition are reminiscent of work by Matisse. The organic motif repeated in both Everard-Haden's and Cassatt's portraits in the flat colourful flowers are like those in Matisse's The Black Table (1919) (fig.88) (Essers, 1987, p.61; Stein-Lessing, 1968b, p.38). The tulips in Everard-Haden's painting are another indication of the influence of Gauguin, specifically his Symbolism. The symbolism between the fragility of a flower and that of women is intentional. The graceful bowing of her mother's head and the gentle arch of the tulips' stems is not only a pattern, but also a reinforcement of a connection between the two. This symbolic element in her work is similar to that used by Gauguin to give substance to the personality of his models (Alexander, Cohen, 1990, p.86).



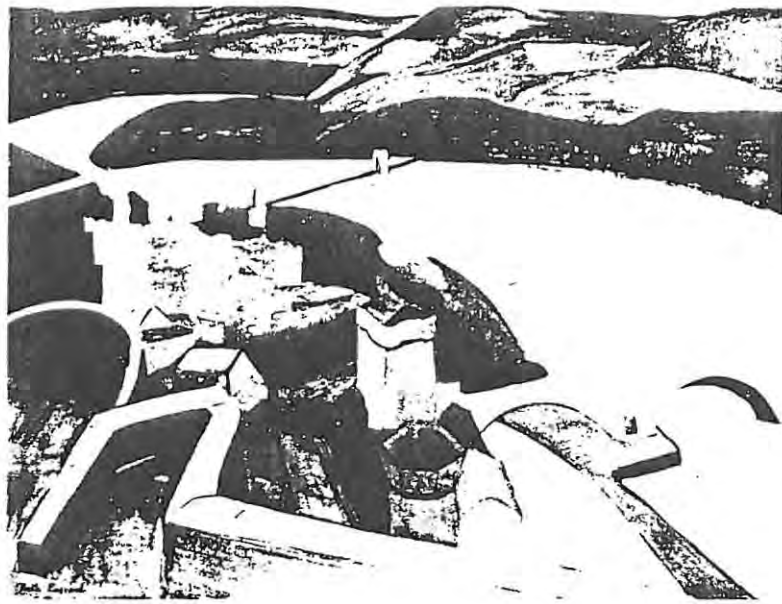
(fig.88) 'The Black Table' (1919) H. Matisse



(fig.89) 'Portrait of a Woman, with a Still-life' by Cézanne  
(1890) P. Gauguin

Another connection the Everard-Haden painting has with Post-Impressionism is its similarity to Cézanne's work through that of Gauguin. The compositional devices, the plump floral chair and shawl in Everard-Haden's painting, are similar to the seated figure and flowered chair found in Gauguin's Portrait of a Woman, with a Still-life by Cézanne (1890) (fig.89). The technique of this painting, which was strongly inspired by that of Cézanne, is similar to that of Everard-Haden. The rugged paint edges of the still-life area, which Gauguin copied from Cézanne's composition, and the background of the Everard-Haden painting, coincide. Sharp, contrasting tones of light and dark on the figures also correspond and the breaking up of the face into areas of dark planes and light patches again recall Cézanne.

Cézanne's influence on Ruth Everard-Haden, which was reinforced by her teacher Lhote, is most apparent in her Le Pont d'Avignon (1927) (fig.90), which she painted while in her studio. It is therefore a constructed scene, with no hint of spontaneity. The cubistic influence of Cézanne comes through in the strong outlined, three-dimensional, simplified, geometric forms in the fortress-type building and the distant mountains (Stein-Lessing, 1968b, p.38). It is semi-abstract because of the combination of the organic meandering river in strong contrast to the solid, hard medieval buildings, perhaps symbolic of man-made objects versus nature (Fransen, 1982, p.285). Also, if her painting Landscape in the South of France (the Cézanne) (1927) (fig.91) is



(fig.90) Le Pont d'Avignon (1927) R. Everard-Haden



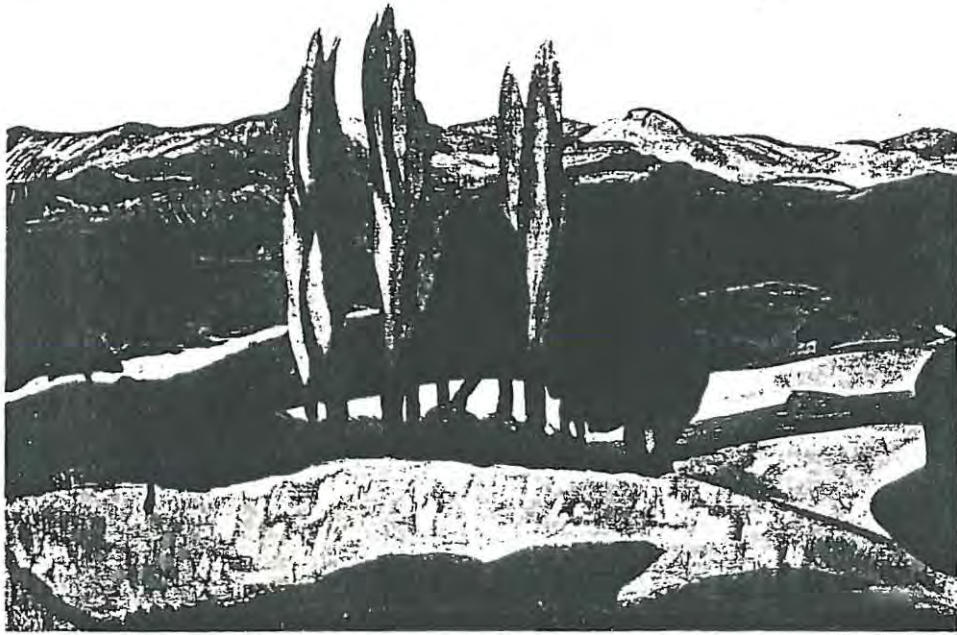
(fig.91) Landscape in the South of France (1927)  
R. Everard-Haden



considered, its title and simple, bold, arranged composition underlines her admiration of Cézanne (Harmsen, 1980, p.134-135).

Finally, Everard-Haden's straightforward landscapes bear the closest resemblance to the work of some Post-Impressionists, not with those like Seurat who tried to construct illusions with meticulous dabs of colour, but with those who were concerned with personal reflections of subjects in contrasting, as well as some complementary, colour and organic shapes. Her Autumn (exhibited c.1938) (fig.92) displays a close similarity to many of Gauguin's Tahitian landscapes with their bold, often contrasting colours, fields of outlined, undulating forms and colourful shadows (Berman, 1983, p.151). Her "reliance on flat shapes of colour rather than modelling or strong tonal contrasts" as well as an emphasis on two-dimensionality and personal additions to composition allow Everard-Haden the label of a Post-Impressionist (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.53-54).

Both Bertha Everard and Ruth Everard-Haden were students of European ateliers and studios. Their work was popular both in South Africa and in Europe, evidenced by the regular exhibition of their work at home and abroad (Berman, 1983, p.149,152). Their style changed with the influence of particular European experiences, be it through their tutor's advice, their schools or the galleries they frequented. The Everards' Post-Impressionist label pertains to their style of painting. But, the Post-



(fig.92) Autumn (exhibited 1938) R. Everard-Haden

Impressionist classification relates to a varying style and other artists, such as Pierneef, with vastly different ideas, belong to this discussion.

**JACOB HENDRIK PIERNEEF : (1886 - 1957)**

Pierneef was born of German/Dutch descent in Pretoria where he commenced his schooling. While there he took a keen interest in art, especially drawing and architecture (Ruijsch van Dugteren, 1917a, p.271-272), his dream was to become an architect, but he could not afford the necessary tutoring. This fascination would, however, later help him to construct harmonious formal landscape paintings (De Villiers, 1986, p.7).

During the Anglo-Boer war (1899-1902) the Pierneef family moved to their home country, Holland, as part of a compromise between deportation or internment (Hendriks, 1968, p.1). This stay marked the early stage of Pierneef's development as an artist. In Holland in c.1901 he attended night drawing classes for one year, then enrolled at The Rotterdam Academy where artists such as Oerder, Van Wouw (1862-1945) and Wenning had been trained (Fransen, 1982, p.295; Meintjes, Pritchard, 1991, p.73). At this academy, precise observation and meticulous drawing were emphasised, as well as a continual striving for perfection in the rendering of a scene (Ruijsch van Dugteren, 1917a, p.272). Pierneef was therefore encouraged to draw accurately and then meticulously paint the scene before him. This preparation would

influence his constructive style in later years in South Africa (De Villiers, 1986, p.7; Dannhauser, 1987, p.28).

While in Holland Pierneef frequented galleries and small private showings, learning other European artistic trends (Ruijsch van Dugteren, 1917a, p.272). Through the work of the Dutch Impressionists, which he saw in c.1901 and again in c.1925, he became familiar with the work of the Impressionists and Neo-Impressionists (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.28; Dannhauser, 1987, p.29). He was also intrigued by the work of the French Impressionists and their successors whose work he frequently saw in Europe. Apparently he "investigated the art movements, visited museums and kept returning ..." (Nel, 1990, p.135). Pierneef had an extensive library pertaining to French Impressionism and Post-Impressionism (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.28). He was therefore aware of the work and ideas of modern artistic movements and this knowledge, combined with his draughtsmanship, went into forming a skilful artist with fresh, new ideas.

Upon his return to South Africa, Pierneef met and joined a circle of established artists, of whom many became his tutors. These artists included the Impressionistic painter Hugo Naudé as well as Anton van Wouw, a well supported sculptor. Also included were Dutch teachers, Pieter Wenning and Frans Oerder with whom he drew and painted studies of the surrounding scenery (Berman, 1983,

p.327; De Villiers, 1986, p.7; Fransen, 1982, p.295; Ruijsch van Dugteren, 1917a, p.272).

The strong Dutch influence on his work was further enhanced when Pierneef formally studied under Oerder between c.1905 and c.1908. Pierneef's painting Greurberg, Orange Free State (1922) (fig.93) bears a close resemblance to Oerder's Landscape near Tzaneen (n.d.) (fig.94). Like Oerder, Pierneef has not adapted the colours of the landscape to the strong South African light. Both views are painted in subdued pastel shades. Pierneef's canvas is almost certainly primed with white, an Impressionistic trait seen in the scuffed areas showing white under the blue sky. Both artists have used the same harmonious colours, pale orange with salmon pink, and complementary colours of light yellow leading into the distant purple and mauve mountains, which enhance each other (Meintjes, Pritchard, 1991, p.75-77).

Both Oerder and Pierneef, in their Landscape near Tzaneen (fig.94) and Greurberg, Orange Free State (fig.93) respectively, accomplished an enhanced panoramic view by painting fields of flat colour in the middle ground, hazy mountains in the background and detailed definition in the foreground (Meintjes, Pritchard, 1991, p.75-77). Through professor Matthys Bokhorst it is known that from c.1903, Pierneef "became a follower of the Impressionists" (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.56). Pierneef's painting illustrates this interest and admiration in



(fig.93) Greurberg, Orange Free State (1922) J.H. Pierneef



(fig.94) Landscape near Tzaneen (n.d) F. Oerder

that he, like them, has omitted black on the canvas (Hendriks, 1968, p.2). His work expresses this interest, but at the same time he retained an individuality through controlled structure and harmony (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.28,56).

Pierneef's choice of a predominantly pale palette was also due to the insistence of Smithard, his tutor after c.1908, who had suggested to Pierneef that he would have greater commercial success if he were to keep such a palette (Coetzee, s.a., p.17-18; De Villiers, 1986, p.7; Till, 1991). This pale palette was not always true to the colours Pierneef encountered in South African landscapes. Some panoramic views such as those Pierneef painted for the Johannesburg station, were those which allowed for these subdued tones. But others, like those depicting scenes of the Cape with clear light, and Natal with harsher more tropical light conditions, would require bright colours. Smithard also introduced Pierneef to graphic techniques like etching and woodcut (Ruijsch van Dugteren, 1917a, p.273).

Pierneef is known to have had much literature on the Post-Impressionists and his landscapes often reflect their influence (p.28). His regard for the work, style and theory of the Post-Impressionists comes through in his Clouds over Ficksburg (1922) (fig.95). It is an expressive plein-air painting, but the colours are, at times contrasting, in much the same way as those in Gauguin's Landscape at Le Pouldu (1890) (fig.96) contrast. In



(fig.95) Clouds over Ficksburg (1922) J.H. Pierneef



(fig.96) Landscape at Le Pouldu (1890) P. Gauguin



these paintings flat undulating planes of harmonious bright red and orange contrast with the bright green painted next to them. The treatment of the sky in both is very similar in that they are constructed with specific, deliberate brush marks. The Post-Impressionistic quality of bright colours eased Pierneef away from the subdued tones encouraged by Oerder and Smithard and therefore led him toward a more expressive style. (Meintjes, Pritchard, 1991, p.77-78; Thomson, Howard, 1988, p.117).

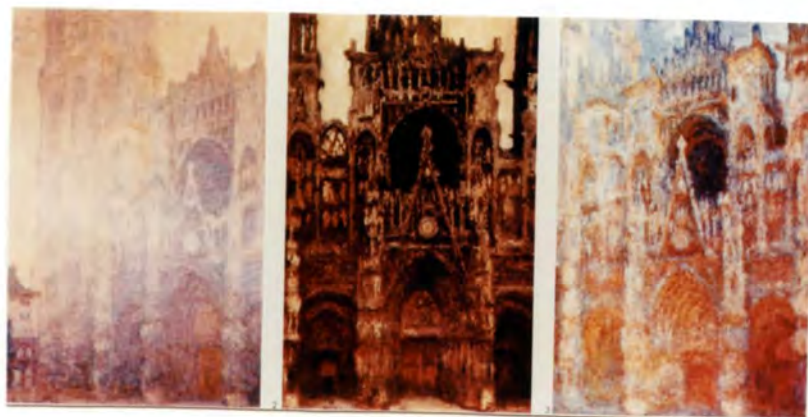
Pierneef's second visit to Europe in c.1924, led to another great influence on his work, that of the Neo-Impressionists, particularly Signac and Seurat. Pierneef became acquainted with their Pointillist style when he saw their work in galleries and in literature he continuously perused (Nel, 1990, p.135; Dannhauser, 1987, p.29-30). This new style, which differed from Impressionism and Post-Impressionism in the depiction of nature, was attractive to Pierneef because of his tendency to construct and arrange his landscapes (De Villiers, 1986, p.10-11; Till, 1991).

The subject matter of these Neo-Impressionist artists was often consistent with that favoured by the Impressionists, but their style and theories of painting differed dramatically. They painted with precise dots and small dashes of pure colour and tones. Their colours were meticulously painted, but separate colours had to be blended optically into single tones by the

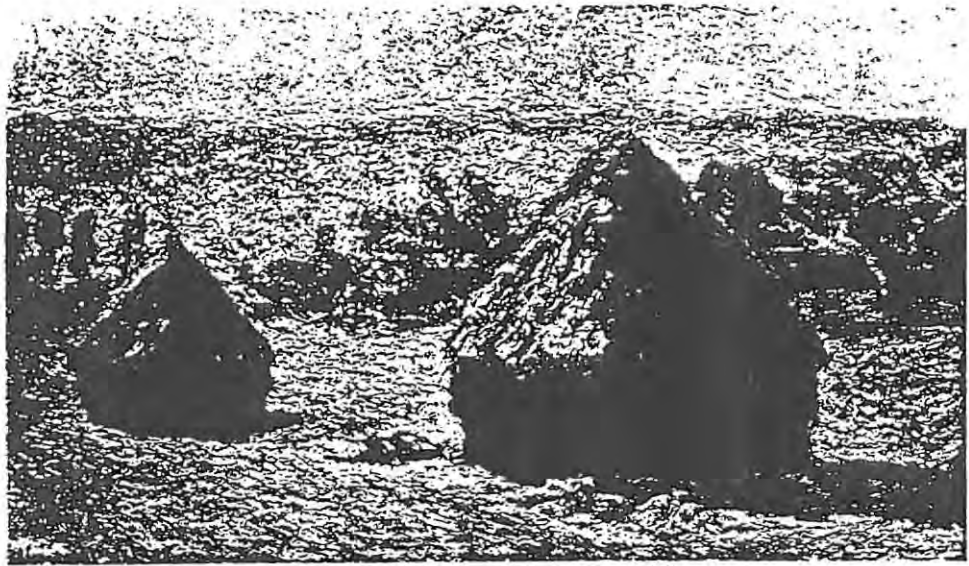
observer. This divisionism brought about purer colours, yellow dots interspersed with blue dots would give an impression of green when standing back from the canvas.

The optical mixing of undiluted colours resulted in purer colour because the colours were not spoiled on the palette. (Courthion, 1989, p.44-45; De Villiers, 1986, p.11; Werth, s.a., p.4). At times the actual colours of the subject would be added, but always in the Pointillist technique of deliberate dabs and dots. This meticulous style was attractive to Pierneef who was used to painstaking methods. During his European sojourn he also saw the work of the French Impressionists. The combination of these influences introduced another facet to Pierneef's style. This ultimately developed one which was part Impressionist, part Divisionist (Hendriks, 1968, p.2; Till, 1991).

Pierneef's work was not always readily accepted locally because the more modern trends which permeated his work were foreign to most South Africans. This led critics to label his constructive or divisionist work unconventional. One newspaper even claimed that "'strange influences' were affecting him" (You, 1993, p.102-103). Pierneef's series of the Rooiplaat area has similarities in style and theory to both the Impressionist Monet and the Neo-Impressionist Signac. The "series" in itself bears a resemblance to Monet's series entitled Rouen Cathedral (1894+) (fig.97), or his Grain-Stacks (figs 42,43,77 & 98). The series idea, which



(fig.97) Rouen Cathedral series (1894) C.Monet



(fig.98) Grain-Stacks (1890/1891) C. Monet

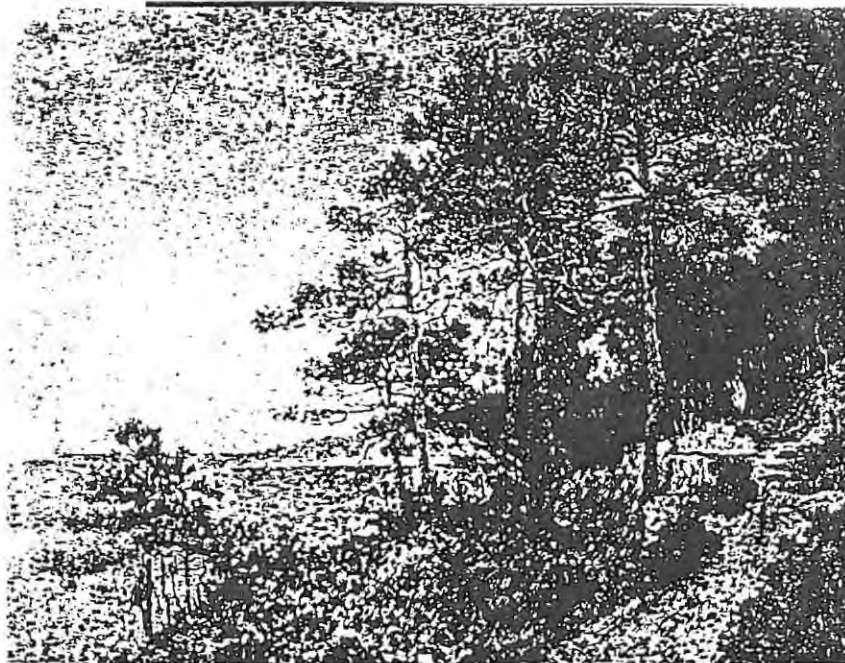
helps the artist to capture different effects of light, atmosphere and climatic conditions, and the resultant impression of immediacy, is what likens Pierneef to the Impressionists (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.28; Dannhauser, 1987, p.29).

The Neo-Impressionist technique comes through in Pierneef's actual painting procedure. His Rooiplaat (1927) (fig.99) is made up of dots of pale pure colour with careful observation of the light source. This chalky quality of the colours and the technique of allowing the observer to blend these colours optically is akin to the style of Signac, especially that found in his Saint-Tropez (1905) (fig.100). The composition of both paintings, although inverted, with the straggly silhouetted trees to one side, as well as their precise paint technique, is very similar (De Villiers, 1986, p.11; Read, 1966, p.123; You, 1993, p.102-103).

Neo-Impressionism and Impressionism were styles Pierneef frequently encountered in Europe during his c.1920's sojourn (Hendriks, 1968, p.2; Dannhauser, 1987, p.29). He was intrigued by the construction of the one and immediacy of the other, but nothing surpassed the other European stylistic influence on his work, that of Willem van Konijnenberg (1868-1943) (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.28; Nel, 1990, p.135). Pierneef became acquainted with the man, the artist and his philosophies during his visit to Holland between c.1925-1926. Pierneef was drawn to



(fig.99) Rooiplaat (1927) J.H. Pierneef



(fig.100) Saint-Tropez (1905) P. Signac

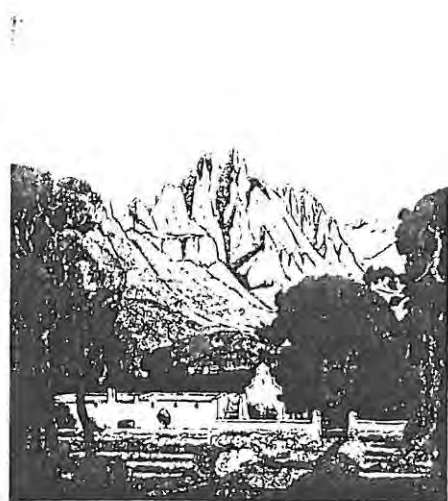
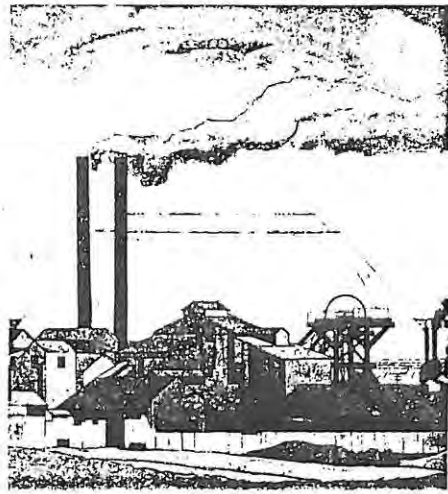
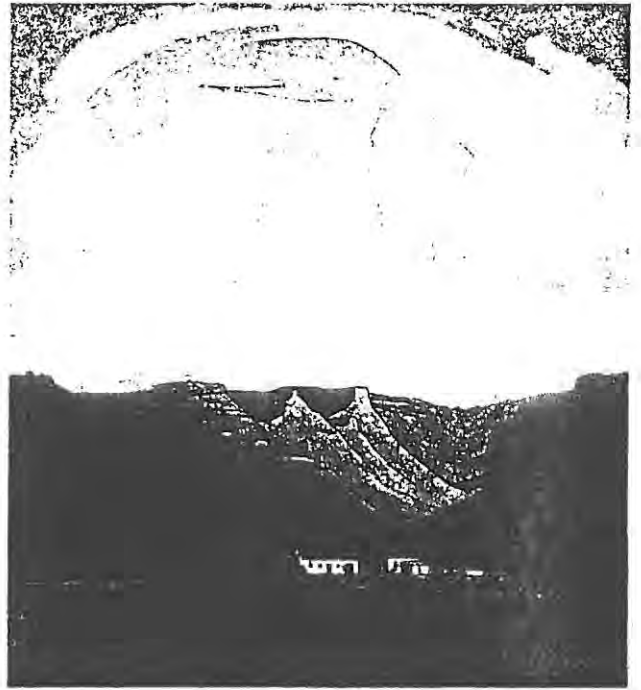
Van Konijnenberg because, like him, he was a man of sound Christian conviction, an excellent draughtsman and interested in architecture (Nel, 1990, p.135). Van Konijnenberg's theoretical writings intrigued Pierneef who was attracted to his belief that "mathematical proportion, linear rhythms and simplified forms had a visual connection with the struggle between good and evil" (Alexander, Cohen, 1990, p.63; Till, 1991). Like Van Konijnenberg, Pierneef attempted to evoke a sense of tranquillity through the simple rendering of the "rhythm of line and colour" with stark precise outline (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.28). Van Konijnenberg's theories, such as those in which he maintained that art had "a strong mathematical foundation", motivated Pierneef (Nel, 1990, p.135). Van Konijnenberg also believed that erect lines meant strength, downward lines - sadness and diagonal lines - dynamism. This would explain Pierneef's noticeable use of such lines (Cohen, 1994). Van Konijnenberg's view that the artist had to find "a relationship between life and art and a parallel between the earthly and spiritual worlds," as well as geometrically to unify the spiritual and the material, were also influential. Because of their like interest in architecture and religion, Pierneef strove, through his work, to find "harmony through geometric order" (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.28; Nel, 1990, p.135). Their similarity also encompassed their artistic development, "the work of both was realistic in the early stages, but was soon characterised by striving for stylisation" (Nel, 1990, p.135).

The underlying geometric order in Pierneef's work also links him to De Stijl artists. This predominantly Dutch style evolved from the analytical side of Cubism. This "more classically structured and geometric abstract art developed ... into a style concerned ... with external problems of composition and harmony" (Cornell, 1983, p.412). Piet Mondrian (1872-1944), a Theosophist inspired by Neo-Platonic philosophy and ideas of harmony underlying the apparent chaos of nature, was the nucleus of this style. There are similarities between his work and that of Pierneef. This connection is especially apparent in their like search for harmony and balance. In c.1911 Mondrian had seen the work of the Cubists in Paris and was intrigued by their preference for idealism and disregard for naturalistic composition. Upon his return to Holland, Mondrian found that a contemporary of his, Theo van Doesburg (1883-1931), had a similar interest in the new abstract art and these two artists called their style Neo-Plasticism. They began by "abstracting design from natural objects" eventually disregarding nature entirely (Cornell, 1983, p.412). They created an ideal environment for their subjects by rationally ordering the everyday world. Aspects of this constructive style are apparent in Pierneef's work. The "classical emphasis on harmony and balance" of De Stijl (p.413) was a perfect example for an artist whose "primary quest was for harmony and order" in nature (Berman, 1975, p.39).



Pierneef's staunch Protestant beliefs also influenced him, leading him to use subtle symbolism to help portray his subject matter in a religiously meaningful manner. Like the German Romantic painter Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840), also a loyal Protestant, Pierneef uses a combination of the observed landscape with the imagined and meticulous use of symbolism (Cohen, 1994). Protestant artists often did not portray their subjects in a direct or literal manner, but used natural forms to reinforce expressions of pantheistic predetermination. Both Friedrich and Pierneef adhered to this form. Protestant leaders also believed that their artists had to reflect a religious message through their work. This emphasis on a symbolic depiction must have inspired the devout Pierneef to portray his landscapes with a religious undertone as well as adhere to a harmonious composition (Cohen, 1994).

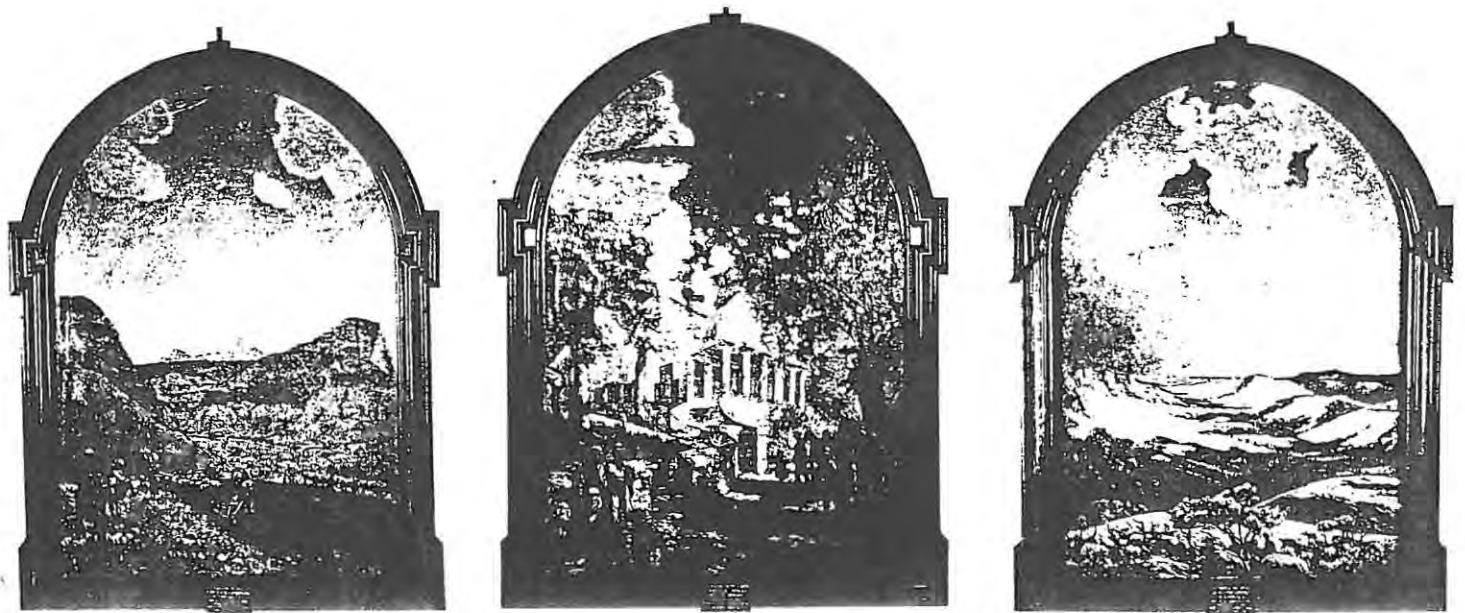
Pierneef's Station Panels series (fig.101) is a conglomeration of all the influences on his artistic endeavours. This group of 32 large landscapes, commissioned in c.1925 and completed in c.1932, shows the interaction of European styles, as well as his personal beliefs, on his work. This commission was the turning point in public acceptance of his work (You, 1993, p.102-103). The subject choice of the Impressionists, the construction of the Neo-Impressionists, Neo-Plasticists and Van Konijnenberg, as well as the advice of his other teachers are all apparent. Smithard's suggestion of a pale palette is recognised at once. The subject



(fig.101) Station Panels examples (1929+) J.H. Pierneef

matter is like that of Smithard's Pretoria Station Coffee Room Paintings (1916) (fig.102). The subjects of both Pierneef's and Smithard's paintings are particularly famous and serene views of South Africa (Coetzee, s.a., p.14-15,21). Like Smithard's Station canvases, Pierneef's views are panoramic with vast dominant expanses of sky.

Pierneef's panel Karoo (1930) (fig.103) is the epitome of this period of his work. The mountains are flat planes delineated by strong black outlines and there are two light sources on the scene, one being a natural source from the right and the other the depiction of the heavenly light. The predominantly pale, light colours, panoramic view and huge expanse of sky is like a description of Smithard's Summer in the Zoutpansberg (fig.104) or his Winter in the Conquered Territory (fig.105). As in the latter painting, Pierneef's entire composition is framed by two mountains, symmetrically arranged on either side of the central theme. The colours are harmonious, as is the scene. Pierneef's landscape has no human activity, nor natural phenomenon like a breeze. Everything is exceptionally still. This harmony, balance, linear quality and ideal environment is much like Van Konijnenberg's work and that which is found in Mondrian's Horizontal Tree (1911) (fig.106). In both Mondrian's and Pierneef's paintings the few colours are balanced and unmodulated, enhancing the unity they sought in their work (Cornell, 1983, p.411).



(fig.102) Pretoria Station Coffee Room Paintings (1916)  
G.S. Smithard



(fig.103) Karoo (1930) J.H. Pierneef



(fig.104) Summer in the Zoutpansberg. (1916+) G.S. Smithard



(fig.105) Winter in the Conquered Territory (1916+) G.S. Smithard



(fig.106) Horizontal Tree (1911) P. Mondrian

Also apparent in Karoo (fig.103) is Pierneef's personal as well as religious aim, as far as the importance of achieving harmony and balance is concerned. These aspects of equilibrium are enhanced by the all-over subtle colours, beautiful still landscape, balanced composition and rhythmical outline (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.63). The spacial relationships between aspects in the painting are simplified and the nearest and furthest points, the bushes and the mountain plateaux respectively, are observed and treated with the same ideal clarity and detail. The symmetry, religious harmony and geometric construction, especially apparent in the sky, shows also the influence of his passion for architecture. This harmony and passion also helped him design The Station Panels in such a way that they melded with and enhanced the architecture in which they hung (Berman, 1983, p.331)

Some of Pierneef's panel pieces like Malutis, Basutoland (fig.107) are made up of facets in the landscape and semi-circles, predominantly found in the sky. This preoccupation with geometric structure often gave him the label of a Cubist. The relationship of landscape and geometric, mathematical shapes, found in Pierneef's work, was however not employed in the same aesthetic context that cubism had intended. The most considerable difference between their intentions was that Cubists were concerned with the synthesis of three dimensional objects on a two dimensional surface, and Pierneef's aim was geometric order

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(fig.107) Malutis, Basutoland (1929+) J.H. Pierneef



(fig.108) The Kloof, Rustenburg (1935) J.H. Pierneef



to attain an ideal harmony. He is therefore more of an Idealist, influenced by De Stijl and Van Konijnenberg (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.28; Fransen, 1982, p.295). Pierneef's The Kloof, Rustenburg (1935) (fig.108), although treated in an individually discernable style, is essentially similar to Mondrian's Horizontal Tree (fig.106) - a similarity apparent in the intention - that of an ideal harmony in paintings of nature through line, colour and construction.

Pierneef's later work, like that of Van Konijnenberg, remained heavily reliant on this ideal geometric order. The scale of his work remained large. This and his consistent quest for balance, made his works perfect for decorative purposes, especially for large scale architectural buildings. Pierneef therefore remained a popular choice for commissions and an influential figure (Bouman, 1933, p.33; Dannhauser, 1987, p.30). His work continued to depict sun bleached, pale landscapes of structured, geometric form in flat planes of colour (Berman, 1983, p.332; Fransen, 1982, p.295). His faceted landscapes are predominantly flattened by the use of similar colours of corresponding intensity in the depiction of forms in the fore- and deepest background (Alexander, 1962, p.20).

Pierneef's contribution to South African art is unquestioned. He became a well publicised art figure who held many exhibitions, evolving into a artist with a great following (Dannhauser, 1987,

p.27). He synthesised aspects of styles he encountered in Europe into a style that remained distinct and individual. Even though he said, "that South Africa should draw on its own rich resources and its own environment to build an individual national culture, and not imitate others", he perpetuated Europe's influence on South African art (Dannhauser, 1987, p.27; Bouman, 1933, p.29). His limited, often pale palette, constructed landscapes and smooth painting technique were all results of his quest for harmony. He was an artist who painstakingly endeavoured to find a South African style through European trends, which at the same time could be individually discernable (Ruijsch van Dugteren, 1917a, p.273).

## CHAPTER 4.

## THE FAUVES:

Artistic movements which developed in Europe in the early 20th century, were innovative. Groups which had been founded in France, where movements like the Fauve movement had emerged in c.1901, were particularly influential. The Fauves, pioneered by Henry Matisse (1869-1954), were against academicism and their freer style was pioneered by the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists. When the Fauve group first exhibited in c.1905 as part of the Salon D'Automme, they were nicknamed Les Fauves (the wild beasts) because of their boldness (Haftmann, 1965, p.36). They, prior to the Expressionists, had said that art should be the expression of reality (Haftmann, 1965, p.36). Matisse, and those who identified themselves with the Fauvist movement, did not have a tangible binding thread. They were individuals whose ambition was to express their own individuality. The only goal they shared was to create an art of "equilibrium, purity and tranquillity, without ambiguities, one that would provide spiritual reassurance and soothe the soul" (Richard, 1984, p.26; Haftmann, 1965, p.36).

The nucleus of this movement was in Paris and its leading artists also included Andre Derain (1880-1954) and Maurice Vlaminck (1876-1958). Even though many of these artists worked throughout

two World Wars, most of their work did not directly express anxiety or their feelings towards social circumstances. Matisse said that his artistic aim was, "an act of balance, of purity and serenity devoid of troubling subject matter ... something like a good armchair ..." (Clark, 1992, p.173).

The ideas employed by the Fauves had originated in the Post- and Neo-Impressionism of artists such as Seurat, Signac, Van Gogh and Gauguin. They were attracted to the smooth unbroken surfaces and Arcadianism of Gauguin's paintings and theories. Neo-Impressionists' rich, pure colours, as well as colour and light theories were important to the Fauves, especially to those like Matisse who were finding a coloured, but flat equivalent for light and reflected light. The expressive, spontaneous work of Van Gogh was as influential (Haftmann, 1965, p.37).

The Fauves used Gauguin's symbolic colours in a new way - by using colour in colour harmonies. They were also inspired by his use of line; they took the outline even further by using line in a decorative manner. They employed Neo-Impressionist meticulous use of colour in a constructive manner, to give compositions light and structure; and used its freedom of choice to give them the confidence to experiment with colour. Even though they were struck by Van Gogh's technique, they preferred their painting surfaces to consist of areas of smooth, decorated flat colour (Haftmann, 1965, p.37). They did however adopt Van Gogh's symbolic forms and colours.

Spacial relationships between objects in compositions were applied in an individual way by the Fauves. The spacial bond between elements no longer resembled the perspectives of the familiar world. This led to a picture surface with continuous space and no particular light source, other than that which emanated from colour itself (Essers, 1987, 14,23; Haftmann, 1965, p.36). The inspiration behind their subject matter was vastly unlike that of the Expressionists. The Fauves restricted their subjects to landscapes, objects painted as a still-life genre and people in their commonplace surroundings. They did not intend to imitate nature or deceive the eye through their art. Their subjects just had to "provide an interpretation through subjective emotion and perception" (Richard, 1984, p.27). This was often achieved by allowing the imagination to take the place of visual observation. These ideas were employed in much the same vein as those of the Symbolist movement had intended.

The work of the Fauves was not immediately accepted, but when they did gain recognition - their ideas spread quickly due to the new approach to art set by the Impressionists and their followers. The avant-garde art world was considerably more open to new artistic trends at the beginning of the 20th century. The Fauves' work was therefore exhibited and acquired at a rapid rate, and students, like those from South Africa, therefore had plenty of opportunity to view their work first hand (Clark, 1992, p.173; Richard, 1984, p.27).

**THE EXPRESSIONISTIC STYLE:**

Like Impressionism, Post- and Neo-Impressionism, the Expressionist movement was a reaction to events which surrounded and preceded it. It evolved due to new viewpoints, social developments, its members being fascinated and guided by Impressionism and those who were influenced by its ideas.

The most profound influence Expressionism had on South African artistic style was through individuals connected to German groups such as "Die Brücke" (The Bridge) and Blaue Reiter, prominent from c.1905 to c.1912 (Richard, 1984, p.17). Expressionism's most direct influence on South African art was through its teaching and stimulation of South African artists whose work was sometimes exhibited with the German groups. The styles of these German artists are complex and varied. Therefore definitive characteristics, tendencies and factors influencing the development of German Expressionism must be mentioned. (Clark, 1992, p.185; Department of Education - C.P.A., 1979a, p.29-30; Richard, 1984, p.9).

At the end of the 19th century photography and all the new, easier modes of painting allowed the visual arts freedom from traditional conventions. But artists in Germany were often not permitted to express themselves with this new found freedom. After victory in the Franco-Prussian war in c.1870-1871, the

German Empire expanded and the ruling class shared the resulting glory of the nation. Artists were patronised predominantly by this essentially militaristic ruling class which exploited art for propaganda purposes and dictated its style and subject matter, the arts being used to enhance national heroes in an "academic realistic style" (Clark, 1992, p.185).

A group of artists who reacted to these staid styles became known as the Expressionists. This label came about because of their deep personal interpretations through expressive subject, colour and rendering. Their new ideas were chiefly due to their exposure to French painting techniques via exhibitions in Germany. By the turn of the 19th century German artists were aware of and inspired by the work of late Impressionists, Post-Impressionists and Fauvists such as Monet, Pissarro, Gauguin, Van Gogh, Signac, Seurat and Matisse (Clark, 1992, p.185; Dube, 1987, p.23-25). Potential Expressionists were particularly inspired by these artists' apparent freedom of choice as far as colour, style and subject matter was concerned. The Germans were living in times of unrest and new conventions. Increasingly, they wanted to express their feelings and views on social as well as personal issues boldly and in an individual style. They endeavoured to paint in a frenzied, honest manner and to portray their sensations, passions and visions, rendering their subjects with enhanced emotional impact by distorting line and colour and simplifying shapes (Clark, 1992, 185; Haftmann, 1965, p.53; Read, 1966b, p.197).

The entire movement encompasses a large number of varying artists and diverse styles. The first Expressionists to constitute a group, exhibited under the title "Die Brücke". Later Expressionism continued with those of the "Der Blaue Reiter". But, because "Die Brücke" had the largest influence on South African artists, a few of its members and the essential influence on their work will therefore be briefly reviewed.

"Die Brücke", which was based in Dresden from c.1905, was started by an architecture student, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (1880-1938). He was joined by fellow students Fritz Bleyl (1880-1966), Karl Schmidt-Rottluff (1884-1976) and Erich Heckel (1883-1938). Later, in c.1906, the circle was joined by Emile Nolde (1867-1956) and Max Pechstein (1881-1955). This group was determined to express the "profound presence of nature" (Richard, 1984, p.17), and to distance itself from traditional renditions of subject matter. They wanted to express religion, ideology and symbolic significance in their work (p.18), endeavouring to paint in an untutored and uncompromisingly personal manner (Clark, 1992, p.185). They also respected the Impressionists, being especially attracted to the brilliant richness of their colour, their unaccustomed subject and free handling (Vogt, 1979, p.14).

The work of the Neo-Impressionists, particularly that of Seurat, made a powerful impression on the development of this expressive style. The most significant of Seurat's concepts to inspire them



was his dissatisfaction with the spontaneity of the Impressionists. Seurat's imaginative, often symbolic subject choice and his method of combining simultaneously contrasting colours were also an inspiration to the Expressionists (Richard, 1984, p.23-24). Seurat's personal, often unreal colour choices influenced the Expressionists most. His pointillist technique did not appeal to them, but rather his independence from momentary impressions. His belief that an artist could determine the mood and character of a painting through personal renditions of "line, rhythm and colour contrasts" was a stimulus (Richard, 1984, p.24).

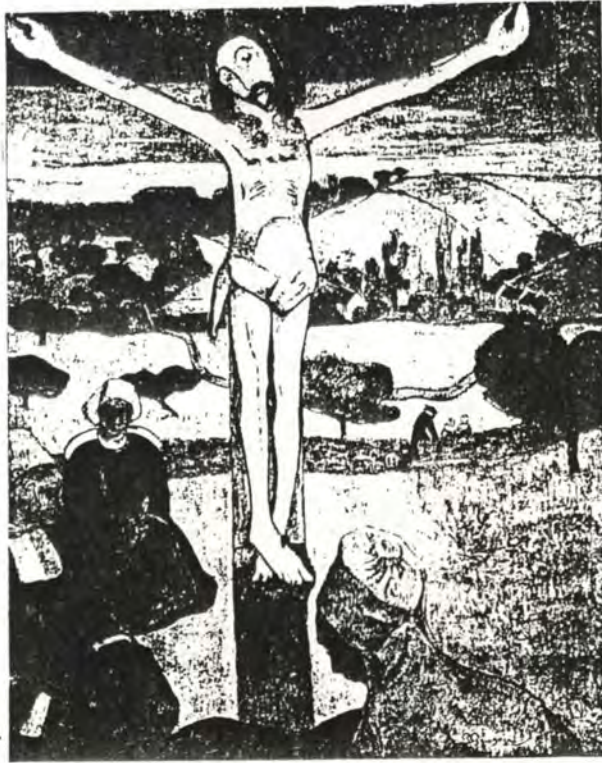
Seurat's Post/Neo-Impressionist counterpart, Signac, was also an inspiration to "Die Brücke". He, like Van Gogh, was particularly inspiring, as he supported personal expression through art, believing that an artist "could determine the character of a painting ... by subordinating colour and line to the emotion which possess him" and that this would enable "the painting (to become) a poet, a creator ..." (Richard, 1984, p.24).

The Neo-Impressionists' independence from traditional techniques, and awareness of the emotive qualities of colour, inspired the philosophical Expressionists, who did not see colour in terms of intensity of tone or purity, but in terms of emotional value (Vogt, 1979, p.14). The Expressionists painted subjects they wished to express, rendering them in a manner with which they

could personally identify (p.24-25). The example of the Neo-Impressionist style taught them the associated qualities of complementary, harmonious and contrasting colours (Read, 1966b, p.59; Richard, 1984, p.32).

The work of the Post-Impressionists also made a profound impression on these new artists. Gauguin opened up new paths for the Expressionists to follow because he sought true expression by working in a supposedly unadulterated society, with primitives. He travelled to the South Seas in search of true expression and lived in Tahiti for many years (Cavendish, 1993c, p.230-231). He was an amateur anthropologist, preoccupied with primitive cultures, their folklore and their art, particularly ceremonial masks. He also studied prehistoric Central and South American art, as well as Egyptian artifacts which he was able to study at the Paris World's Fair in c.1889, and museums he frequented. The figures in many of his paintings have primitive, mask-like features. Their features are usually outlined almond-shaped eyes, long narrow noses and small outlined lips as is found in the Christ figure in his The Yellow Christ (1889) (fig.109) (Cavendish, 1993c, p.232-233,239) which was also inspired by the Breton crucifixes.

Gauguin was also impressed with, and therefore influenced by, Japanese woodcuts. He observed their flat, yet decorative quality and strong outlines. He was predominately impressed by their



(fig.109) The Yellow Christ (1889) P. Gauguin



(fig.110) Summer (1913) K. Schmidt-Rottluff

simple rendering of subjects through purposeful contour drawing (Richard, 1984, p.24-25). The Expressionists used the Japanese wood-cut technique in an individual way. They revived the ancient graphic technique, but predominantly used it to portray figures inspired by primitive cultures.

Gauguin's preoccupation with the primitive cultures of the world, particularly those of the South Seas inspired the German Expressionists who frequented museums and anthropological institutions in search of prehistoric and primitive artifacts. Artists collected pieces derived from exotic cultures and the Ethnographisches Museum was a favourite haunt and topic of discussion (Dube, 1987, p.24). Seeing primitive works paved the way to the reduction of the human figure to bare essentials of simplified line and form (Clark, 1992, p.175).

Max Pechstein (1881-1955), a leading member of "Die Brücke", and tutor to students including South Africans, undertook a similar South Sea venture between c.1914 and c.1917, an example followed by Emile Nolde (1867-1956) (Dubow, 1991, p.9; Dube, 1987, p.15,24-25; Richard, 1984, p.24,91,93-94). From Gauguin's primitivizing example, these artists learned to use flat colours confined by bold outlines in a two dimensional, decorative manner. These expressive features became typical of the Expressionistic style (Cavendish, 1993c, p.234; Dube, 1987, p.15; Vogt, 1979, p.19). Schmidt-Rottluff's Summer (1913) (fig.110) is

an indication of this type of expressive rendering. The red figures standing in an imaginary, colourful landscape are outlined with bold black lines (Richard, 1984, p.32).

Vincent van Gogh and his admirer Edvard Munch (1863-1944) also had a profound influence on the formation of South African Expressionistic style. There is no doubt that Van Gogh's advocacy of the spiritual power of colour was an important factor in the Expressionists' own use of emotive, often contrasting colour. Van Gogh's deep personal identification with subjects, specifically his religious pieces, were also a significant influence (Dube, 1987, p.15; Vogt, 1979, p.22-23). He was known passionately to identify with the objects he painted and found it difficult to distance himself from the world around him (Dube, 1987, p.15). This symbolic expression appealed to artists who "maintained the importance of the intellect, and (were) not simply concerned with form" (Richard, 1984, p.17).

Van Gogh's free application of expressive colour, like Gauguin's mustard yellow Christ figure (fig.109) which evokes a feeling of death, influenced the Expressionists. He said, "Instead of trying to reproduce exactly what I have before my eyes, I use colour more arbitrarily so as to express myself more forcibly." (Clark, 1992, p.165). His state of mind was aptly expressed in his Crows Flying over a Cornfield (1890) (fig.79). The dark sky and black crows are regarded as symbolic of his spiritual torment, and the

absence of people an indication of his loneliness. It must not be forgotten that this particular painting was completed in the same year as his self-mutilation by shooting (Barr, 1984, p.20-21; Clark, 1992, p.166; Vogt, 1979, p.22-23). When Frans Marc of the Blaue Reiter group saw the work of Van Gogh in Paris in c.1907 he wrote: "Art is nothing but the expression of our dream"

(Cardinal, 1984, p.69). There is no doubt that the Expressionists expressed themselves through emotive, often contrasting colour (Richard, 1984, p.32). Emile Nolde's Tropical Sun (1914) (fig.111), a moody, peculiar sea-scape, is an example of expressive, yet personal colour and subject choice. The sky is a deep red and the sea an emerald green. Like Van Gogh, who stated that "Color (sic) is expressive in itself, ..." (Grohmann, 1962, p.4), Nolde has incorporated black to add an ominous, brooding mood (Dube, 1987, p.70)

Van Gogh's tempestuous painting technique was an indication of his deep feeling and belief in the cosmic and divine forces in nature. These frenzied, swirling, choppy and haphazard methods, were his way of expressing his "ecstatic love for man and for things" (Richard, 1984, p.26; Barr, 1984, p.20-21). The expressive quality in his work often has him labelled as an Expressionist and he certainly inspired Expressionists to express themselves freely through colour and rendering. He therefore cannot be separated from their development (Barr, 1984, p.20).



(fig.111) Tropical Sun (1914) E. Nolde

The preceding artists paved the way for the Expressionists, who adopted their bright colour, spontaneous handling and personal interpretations and used them in their own individual way. "They simplified representational forms, reducing them to their barest bones, heightened colour contrasts, tried to preserve the relationship between instinct and pictorial practice, and found confirmation and considerable stimulus in primitive art" (Haftmann, 1965, p.56).

"Die Brücke" had hoped to found a community which could live in a spirit of camaraderie and goodwill. This dream was derived from the ideas of the Post-Impressionists, particularly Van Gogh and Gauguin, who hoped to accomplish the same ideal through communalism which was popular at the turn of the 19th century. Over the summer season the Expressionists would often separate and travel to distant areas of Europe, only to meet and discuss the various cultures they encountered. They wanted to depict their themes in a subjective manner, and at the same time have them universally accepted. Until the outbreak of the First World War (1914), they expressed everything in optimistic terms. Thereafter, while they were in Berlin, some of them painted their feelings toward their changing environment. They endeavoured to portray the evil, hectic, artificial elements in the cities. The group disintegrated during c.1913 due to the very different personalities of the artists who made up the group, each artist retaining independence and continuing to express his inner views



on subjects in a honest and consistent manner (Richard, 1984, p.33).

Many South African artists, like their European counterparts during the previous century, became disillusioned with their local academic artistic societies, specifically their theory and traditionalism. Their individualism was shunned and they were seldom allowed to express themselves fully through their work. Artists such as Irma Stern and Maggie Laubser therefore turned to European ideas of Expressionism and Fauvism for guidance and stimuli.

**IRMA STERN : (1894 - 1966)**

Irma Stern was born in the Western Transvaal, in the Schweizer-Reneke district. She was the first in her German-Jewish family to be South African born, as they had moved from Germany in c.1886. Her particular European connection was integral to her travels, predominantly to Germany, when she wished to study (Daneel, 1981, p.99; Dubow, 1991, p.7-8; Arnold, 1993).

In c.1896, during the Anglo-Boer War, Stern's father was taken prisoner and her family moved to Berlin, Germany, where she commenced her schooling. The family returned to South Africa to Wolmaransstad in c.1903. At the time that Stern wanted to study art, the schools available in South Africa were conservative. She took art lessons at the Cape Town School of Art at a time when

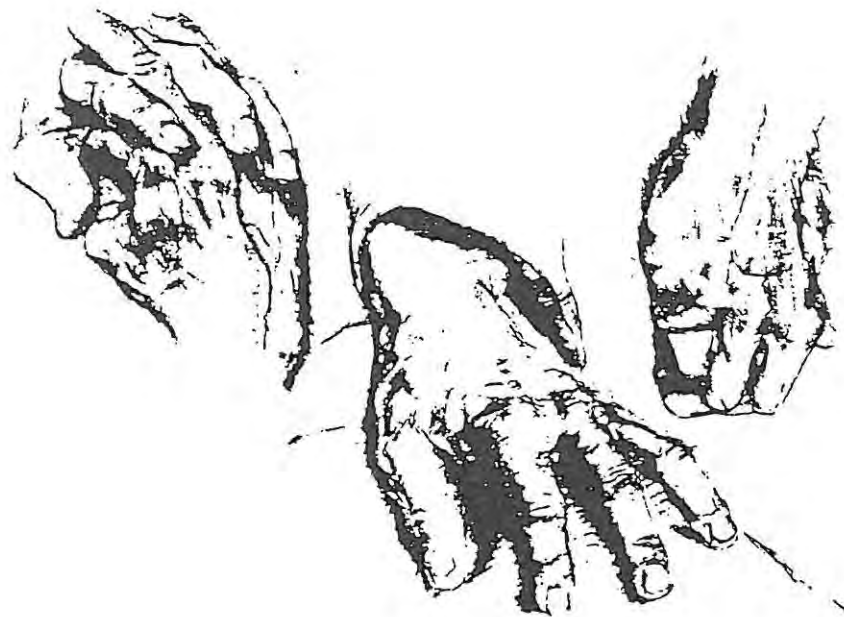
the artistic climate was steeped in traditionalism and change was frowned upon (Sauer, 1968, p.103). But she revolted against the academic painting schools which were dominated by masters like Roworth and Morland (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.8-10) and therefore visited Europe intermittently between c.1903-1913 to keep abreast of newer developments.

Eventually, in c.1911, Stern persuaded her parents to allow her to study art in Europe. Her drawing, Study of leaves and insects, Wolmaransstad (1913) (fig.112), executed while still in South Africa, is an indication of the stiff, formal training she had received before leaving for Europe. Each aspect of the composition is meticulously rendered with little regard for personal interpretation.

In Germany during the latter half of c.1913, after seeing an advertisement for "Special classes for women", she enrolled at The Weimar Art Academy (Department of Education - C.P.A., 1979a, p.27). She probably joined this particular institution because, at the time, it was one of the few European academies which accepted women students. When Irma entered the Academy (before c.1919), it was relatively conservative, as this was prior to the period when Walter Gropius merged aspects of the Academy and the Arts and Crafts Movement to form the Weimar-Bauhaus. She did however find some artistic freedom under Gary Melchers (1860-1932), who encouraged her, but he left the establishment during



(fig.112) Study of leaves and insects (1913) I. Stern



(fig.113) Study of hands (1914) I. Stern

her first year. She soon found the learning environment under his replacement too stifling to continue studying there. The teachers were faithful to the old academic outlook and she was disappointed by the lack of new stimulation. Her Study of hands (1914) (fig.113) is a study typical of an academic student. It is a well observed drawing of hands in different positions, but there is a hint of her expressive tendency. The drawing is spontaneous with dark, black outlined areas and quick rendering of light and dark shadowed areas (Dubow, 1991, p.107; Dubow, 1971, p.5; Hurwitz, Chosack, 1971, p.1).

Irma Stern frequented and studied exhibitions in Berlin for stimulation and insight. Here she came across the work of Martin Brandenburg (1870-1919) (Department of Education - C.P.A., 1979a, p.28-29). She found his work free in his choice of subject matter and his colours bright and expressive (Sachs, 1942, p.32-33). This persuaded Stern to study under his tuition. She consequently relocated to the more stimulating surroundings and influences of The Levin-Funcke studio in Berlin (Daneel, 1981, p.99). In this new studio, between c.1914 and c.1916, she worked under and was motivated by Brandenburg. He dabbled in the Neo-Impressionistic style and was therefore more open to experimentation than the academic tutors she was used to. She found him stimulating and liked being under his instruction. But he was also fond of academicism and he disliked the Expressionists. This would eventually form a rift between him and Stern (Arnold, 1993;

Department of Education - C.P.A., 1979a, p.28).

In c.1916 Stern painted her Eternal child (1916) (fig.114). This personal piece proved to be pivotal to her development as an artist in the sense that it permanently changed her attitude to art. The painting was a breakthrough for her, and in c.1926 she called this particular painting, "my first real painting" (Arnold, 1993). On its completion Stern took it through to Brandenburg's studio where it was "greeted with disgust" (Arnold, 1993). He judged it as "a cold hearted, cynical representation of human misery" (Arnold, 1993). He was offended by the painting and linked her to the German Expressionists in a derogatory tone (Dubow, 1987, p.13).

However, Stern had intended The Eternal child (fig.114) to be an illustration of a "little creature disinherited by fortune, but clinging to the only little bit of beauty in its reach (wild flowers)" (Arnold, 1993). To Stern this subject was touching and therefore totally misunderstood by Brandenburg who also did not appreciate the style in which the painting was rendered. He found neither the treatment, which utilised distortion and exaggeration to enhance the sad feeling of the pathetic child, nor the subject matter, satisfactory. The subject, expressively depicted, was too directly realistic of the German child's poverty and sense of desertion (Arnold, 1993). Brandenburg was enraged by "its explicit emotionalism ..." and he linked Stern to the



(fig.114) Eternal child (1916) I. Stern

Expressionists whom she knew he felt, "constituted a threat to the closed world of the academy and the socially discreet" (Department of Education - C.P.A., 1979a, p.29). At this early stage Stern was therefore already labelled an Expressionist.

Eternal child (fig.114) led Stern way away from academic processes towards her own personal vision. She often remarked that she painted this work "while in a trance" (Arnold, 1993). Once Stern had experienced this freedom of expression, she was compelled to leave the academicism of the Levin-Funcke school. She consequently began to search for an environment which would encourage this new found freedom. This resulted in her meeting the Expressionist artist Max Pechstein (1881-1955). Pechstein had joined the Expressionist group in c.1906. She was in awe of him because she knew he was one of the founder members of "Die Brücke" in Germany. This Expressionist artist's involvement in her work and studies, was to become one of the most important influences on her style (Dubow, 1987, p.56-57).

Pechstein became more than Stern's teacher. She saw him as her mentor. He, like Gauguin had travelled to the South Seas. He had also been in search of an unaffected culture. (It is therefore probable that it was his and the Post-Impressionistic example which encouraged Stern to venture through Africa after c.1925) (Dubow, 1991, p.9). Stern's Expressionistic style therefore owes much to her admiration of Pechstein's work, teaching and ideas.

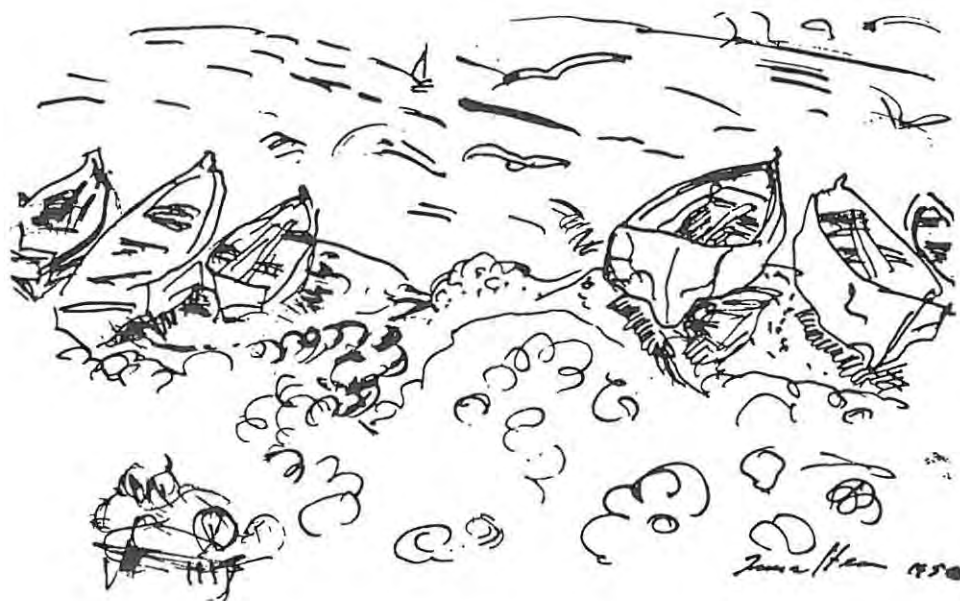
There are remarkable similarities in their work, indicating like ambitions. Pechstein's 1914 pen and ink sketch of Women sitting by a tree (fig.115) and Stern's Boats (fig.116) (1950) are interpreted through similar marks such as indicative squiggles combined with sure descriptive line. The scratched, quickly described shadows too are similar. The figures in Stern's And sad was the Ball as never before (1920) (fig.117) are perceived in much the same way as Pechstein's sketched women. The figures in both drawings are slightly elongated with only the essential descriptive lines. The figures are strongly outlined and the organic flowing shapes describe the form of women. Quick twirling rendering of the hair occurs in both (Department of Education - C.P.A., 1979a, p.29; Dubow, 1987, p.56-57).

The similarity between Stern's and Pechstein's work is further emphasised in their portraits. Although the two portraits to be discussed are from different dates, they do indicate the style which was encouraged in their artistic circle. Stern's pen and ink Portrait (1917) (fig.118) and Pechstein's Lithograph of Wolfgang Gurlitt (1919) (fig.119) are notably alike. The facial features are so similar that it seems they could almost be personal interpretations of the same person. The depiction of the nose, long and thin with a pointed area around the nostrils, is the same. In both pieces the eyes are almond-shaped and heavily lidded. The expression in their eyes both hint at something searching. Their jaws are strong and distinct with pronounced





(fig.115) "Women sitting by a tree" (1914) M. Pechstein



(fig.116) Boats (1950) I. Stern



(fig.117) And sad was the Ball as never before (1920) I. Stern



(fig.118) Portrait (1917) I. Stern



(fig.119) Litho of Wolfgang Gurlitt (1919) M. Pechstein

chins. The lips seem to be pursed, in a contemplative expression. Their hairlines are the same as is their hair, in slicked back style. Their ears have the same quality, the top half protruding in an arch-shape. In conclusion, the actual rendering is the same, with sure descriptive lines combined with areas of zig-zagged indications of shadow (Dubow, 1987, p.26; Dubow, 1991, p.9).

Stern's combination of writing and sketching, prevalent in her journal "Paradise", is like that of Pechstein. His c.1919 letter to her (fig.120) is made up of text with quickly rendered figures dominating the bottom of the page. This is remarkably similar to Stern's Journal, page 48 : And took all this manifold beauty with me to Europe - to the sun-starved people (after c.1920) (fig.121). Here she has combined text and imagery in a similarly harmonious fashion (Dubow, 1991, p.10,72).

Stern learned under this progressive tutor and exhibited in Germany from c.1916 to c.1922. From c.1918 she was invited to exhibit as part of groups like "Novembergruppe" and "Neue Sezession". She was susceptible to the Expressionist style because she was an emotional person and could associate naturally with its tendency to personify the subject matter through the use of expressive line and colour (Dubow, 1991, p.9,109; Von Molkte, 1962a, p.27).



(fig.120) Page of an illustrated letter (1919) M. Pechstein



(fig.121) And took all this manifold beauty with me to Europe - to the sun-starved people (1920+) I. Stern

Stern's paintings resemble the work of other Expressionists as well. Her Girl with a recorder (1951) (fig.122) is an indication of this. The treatment of the figure is like that of the girl in Maschka with a mask (1919) (fig.123) by Otto Mueller (1874-1930). Mueller was an Expressionist who had joined Pechstein and Kirchner after c.1910, because he identified with their search for the harmony between man and nature (Richard, 1984, p.89-90). Stern's girl, like Mueller's, is thin and lanky, with long, thin, pale, exaggerated arms, giving them a spindly quality. Their pale faces are mask-like with long features and slit, almond-shaped eyes, narrow noses and outlined mouths. The elements of the compositions are outlined by dark linear marks. These simple features were influenced by the Expressionists' fascination with primitive cultures, their artifacts and Japanese prints. The mood in both paintings is subtle. The ambience is peculiar, as though something is about to occur. Stern's girl (fig.122) seems to be waiting to be told what to play while Mueller's Mashka (fig.123) seems to be questioning something (Dubow, 1987, p.50; Vogt, 1979, p.61).

The German Expressionist style which Stern seemed quickly to master would not have been allowed to develop in South Africa. This is evident by the cool receptions her c.1920 and c.1922 South African Exhibitions in Cape Town received. Her work was called "immoral" and there was a huge public outcry, even a visit by the police (Arnold, 1993). An art critic was to say, "The



(fig.122) Girl with a recorder (1951) I. Stern



(fig.123) Maschka with a mask (1919) O. Mueller

first visit (to her exhibition) caused undoubted amusement, but on subsequent inspections ... it is replaced by frank disgust by the nastiness of the work" (Arnold, 1993). After her c.1922 exhibition, Stern travelled and exhibited in Europe. She visited Rome, Florence, Venice, Paris and London. She found the way of life there fascinating and frequented artistic haunts. Her work remained popular in Europe and she was included in exhibitions throughout Germany, France and Switzerland, her work unavoidably European. In c.1927 she was awarded the Prix d'Honneur at the Bordeaux International Exhibition. This further emphasises the European stylistic influence on her painting (Dubow, 1987, p.60).

The work of the Post-Impressionist Gauguin also proved to be most influential on the work of this South African artist. Gauguin's c.1891 trip to Tahiti enabled him to search for inner peace and an environment in which to work and collect images (Fezzi, 1981b, p.4). Paintings he executed while in Tahiti would ultimately influence Irma Stern through the work and teaching of Max Pechstein. Gauguin's rejection of civilisation in order to "render the unspoiled intensity of nature's children" is like that of many artists of the German "Die Brücke" group who tried to capture the primitive and indigenous in unspoiled environments (Stevenson, 1990, p.20).

Gauguin's influence on Stern is apparent in her travels throughout Africa in search of untainted indigenous cultures



(Department of Education - C.P.A., 1979a, p.29; Dubow, 1967, p.198). Her first such undertaking was her trip to Swaziland in c.1925. Her paintings from this phase reflect the work of Gauguin. Her Three Swazi Girls with clay headdresses (1925) (fig.124) has the same cluttered, flattened space with undulating hills that most of his Tahitian paintings contain. But in this trip there was also a philosophical bond with Gauguin, as it was also a search for peace of mind because her marriage was going through a time of crisis. Like Gauguin she tried to search for the essence of the cultures she encountered and in so doing ignore her own loneliness, unhappiness and dissatisfaction with Western modes of life (Bouman, 1933, p.71; Dubow, 1991, p.89-90).

Gauguin's Te Rerioa (The Dream) (1897) (fig.125) and Stern's Pondo Woman (1929) (fig.126) and Mangbetu Bride (1947) (fig.127) have great similarities. The pose of Stern's Pondo figure and the main figure in Gauguin's painting are very similar. They sit in a cross-legged position with their heads held up in their left hands. They seem to be brooding. There is a sense of ennui illustrated through the down-cast eyes, heavy head and slumped shoulders. The figures are cut around the midriff by a strong horizontal line, by the drapery in the one and the tree in the other. Stern's composition in Mangbetu Bride (fig.127) is remarkably similar to Gauguin's composition. The floor surrounds the figures, like a cradle. There seems to be another plane in the left mid-ground. The space leads into the back wall in an



(fig.124) Three Swazi Girls with clay headdresses (1925) I. Stern



(fig.126) Pondo Woman (1929) I. Stern



(fig.125) Te Rerioa (The Dream) (1897) P. Gauguin



(fig.127) Mangbetu Bride (1947) I. Stern

ambiguous fashion. The space seems strangely flattened, achieved by the decorative motifs which cover all the walls (Dubow, 1987, p.38-39; Stevenson, 1990, p.22,159).

Stern's Azande Musicians (1942) (fig.128), painted while in the Congo, can also be compared to Te Rerioa (The Dream) (fig.125). The subject matter is not alike, but the essence, the raw untempered truth to the indigenous cultures is parallel. Both artists keep to the inherent dress and colour of their subjects - the topless woman in his and the men in hers, Stern using dry earthy colours which depict the African essence and Gauguin the more tropical tones of greens, yellows and mauve. The spacial relationships in both are similar in that space has been flattened by linearly patterned walls, he using a Tahitian motif to cover the walls and she using linear ethnic symbolic shapes. There seems to be a purposeful play on ambiguous space, creating a sense of mystery. The ethnic character of the two paintings, although different, shows a similarity of quest - that of finding an indigenous material far removed from westernisation with its industrialised materialism (Bouman, 1933, p.71).

Irma Stern's still-lives are often of a symbolic nature. Her Arum Lilies (1951) (fig.129) shows her excitement over African mysteries, the objects having been chosen for their symbolic value. The stool, which looks like a sculpture, is an African fertility stool. The figure is protecting herself from harm. The



(fig.128) Azande Musicians (1942) I. Stern



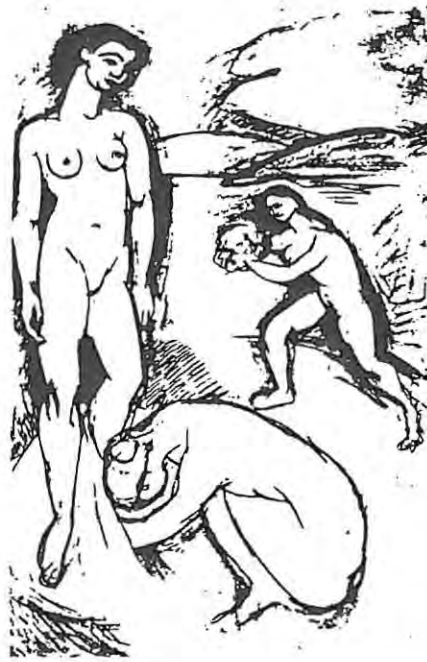
(fig.129) Arum Lilies (1951) I. Stern



(fig.130) La Belle Angele (1889) P. Gauguin

white arums seem to indicate purity and their contours those of a woman's form. Gauguin's La Belle Angele (1889) (fig.130) has similar messages. Like Stern he has an idol-like image to give a sense of mystery and flowers to denote innocence. Both paintings certainly depict personal opinions concerning the fragility and passivity of women (Alexander, Cohen, 1990, p.70; Stevenson, 1990, p.97). The decorative compositions are again enhanced by the flattened space. This ambiguous space and decorative quality is also reminiscent of work by Matisse.

In the same way that Gauguin took his painted vision of paradise to Europe, so too Irma Stern, following his example, showing Southern Africa something of the mysteries of Africa (Dubow, 1967, p.198). She was, however, also influenced by the Fauves, specifically Matisse, whose main influence was through his expressive outlined rendering, and can be seen in Stern's journal "Paradise". Matisse's sketch Study for Luxe I (1907) (fig.131) and Pechstein's Summer in the Dunes (1911) (fig.132) correspond in many ways to Stern's Journal page 5 : And the people wept over their weakness - the precious gift of golden light was too strong for them - it brought them to their knees - thus they hated the Blue One and nailed it to the cross (1920+) (fig.133). The circular compositions with a dark outlined standing nude figure on the left are extremely similar.



(fig.131) Study for Luxe I (1907) H. Matissee



(fig.132) Summer in the Dunes (1911) M. Pechstein





(fig.133) And the people wept over their weakness - the precious gift of golden light was too strong for them - it brought them to their knees - thus they hated the Blue One and nailed it to the cross (1920+) I. Stern

Both Stern and Matisse's compositions revolve around a type of gift being offered in the centre. The figure on the right cutting into the middle ground and the kneeling figures in the foreground correspond. The fluid, rounded shape of the kneeling figure in Stern's sketch (fig.133) is the same as that found in Matisse's (fig.131). The kneeling figures are organic volumes with bent heads, as if in reverence or in awe of the offering. The backgrounds of the two figure studies are the same. The marks made from the right mid-ground leading towards the left cut into the space in a similar manner. The marks of the background enhance the arched, circular form (Dubow, 1991, p.18; Essers, 1987, p.24). Matisse's ambiguity regarding perspective and spacial relationships is also echoed in Stern's work. He often achieved a compromise between decorative abstraction and three-dimensional space by decorating almost the entire surface. These decorative, patterned surfaces are like those found in Stern's Azande Musicians (fig.128) (Essers, 1987, p.38).

Stern's Figures on the Beach (1962) (fig.134) provides an indication of the similarity of her views to those of the Fauves when it came to the painted portrayal of the figure. Stern's figure is handled in a similar fashion to those found in Nude Woman (1907) (fig.135) by George Braque and Pink Nude (1935) (fig.136) by Matisse. The flesh of all three nudes has a soft, pliable quality. Their bodies are outlined by flowing dark linear marks. This further compresses the already flat space. Matisse's



(fig.134) Figures on the Beach (1962) I. Stern



(fig.135) Nude Woman (1907) Braque



(fig.136) Pink Nude (1935) H. Matisse

and Stern's compositions are very similar. The nudes dominate the format, with some interruption in the top centre. Braque and Stern have rendered their creations in the same mode. The zig-zagged marks indicating their figures' backs seem to be casual brush marks, but are actually planned, Braque's derived from Cézanne (Essers, 1987, p.71; Read, 1966b, p.31).

Because Stern had chosen Germany as her artistic beacon, she could not help but be influenced by the Expressionists and those artists who influenced them. Her work thus evolved from modern European influences from which she took certain stylistic and philosophical lessons. She learned from European examples and adapted them to her own purposes. Had she stayed in South Africa, with its predominantly traditional establishments, where the Slade was considered advanced, her emotive work would have been stifled or taken another direction. The undoubted influence on her work of the Expressionists and the Fauves, evident in her portrayal of landscapes and people in which she expressed their dynamic forces, was localised to portray South African scenes. Her personal feelings toward subjects, through emotive colour, patterns and expressive rendering, was innovative in South African art circles of the early 20th century. This innovation always evoked tumultuous reaction amongst the public with some critics labelling her work "Irma Stern's Chamber of horrors" while others labelled her as "a fearless and individual painter" (Bouman, 1933, p.69; Sauer, 1968, p.103). Stern's modernisation

of South African perceptions would later influence artists to paint as they wished and in so doing spread Europe's relative artistic freedom (Sauer, 1968, p.103).

**MAGGIE LAUBSER : (1886 - 1973)**

Maggie Laubser was born in the Malmsbury area. Her artistic awakening came about through her fascination with the bright fancy attire her art teacher in Stellenbosh wore. This fascination developed into a commitment to art and she enrolled as an art student at her school, Bloemhof Seminary, in c.1897. She soon became disillusioned with the staid, conventional learning pattern adopted by the school. She found the monotony of cast drawing uninspiring and in c.1901 she terminated her artistic schooling (Delmont, 1975, p.74; Van Royen, 1974, p.8).

Laubser only resumed painting in c.1903 when Beatrice Hayzel, also a South African painter, introduced her to Edward Roworth in Cape Town. Roworth, a conservative teacher, had recently arrived from the Slade school which was under the leadership of Henry Tonks. He encouraged her to paint from post cards. This second-hand observation gave her work a romantic mood (Delmont, 1987, p.5; Van Royen, 1974, p.8). During this stage in the development of her style she used a well-finished, broad brush stroke and employed harmonious colours. Her style was traditional enough for her work to be accepted for the c.1909 S.A.S.A. Annual Exhibition (Van Royen, 1974, p.8).

Taught by Roworth and having taken lessons at the Cape Town School of Art, her work at this time was considered relatively conservative and naturalistic and "typified the romanticized picturesque style of the early twentieth century South African landscapes" (Delmont, 1987, p.5). At this stage Laubser herself believed that her art should portray the world in a literal way, exactly as she saw it (Arnold, 1992). Before her European trip Laubser's paintings "typified the descriptive genre of early 20th century South African art ..." (Delmont, 1992, p.13).

Laubser's work prior to her first European sojourn in c.1913, although always sincere and celebratory, was readily accepted by the conservative public (Delmont, 1987, p.5). Between c.1909 and c.1913 she continued to paint and became part of a circle of friends including the artists Frans Oerder, Hugo Naudé and Nita Spilhaus (1878-1967). They encouraged her to paint en plein-air. This style was later reinforced by her contact with Dutch painters in Laren and English landscape painting (Delmont, 1987, p.5; Delmont, 1992, p.13). The bond with these South African artists, particularly with Naudé, who had already had direct contact with European trends, would eventually encourage her to grasp at the chance to travel and learn abroad (Van Royen, 1974, p.8-9).

Laubser left for Europe in October c.1913 and her first destination was the Netherlands. While there she is likely to

have seen or read about the work of the Neo-Impressionists. This is because Neo-Impressionists such as Georges Seurat and Paul Signac were influential figures and their style had been adopted by local artists. The influence is made even more likely by the fact that while she was in Holland, The Hague School of Neo-Impressionism had already reached its peak (twenty years before her arrival). It is known that since c.1918 Laubser had possessed a book entitled "Allies in Art" which contained reproductions of the work of the Post-Impressionists and Neo-Impressionists (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.27).

Laubser's Orange, Lemon, Pot and Tray (1921) (fig.137) is clearly derived from the dogma of the Neo-Impressionists. She has constructed the image in a manner typical of their style - with precise, clearly differentiated dot-like paint marks and the colours have been specifically selected for their complementary and contrasting qualities. The orange and blue are complementary, the orange, green and yellow are harmonious and the blue and yellow seem to clash. Areas of pure colour have been painted next to each other and have to be mixed optically by the spectator. The varying colour relationships are perhaps also derived from Van Gogh's theories on colour combinations. According to Van Gogh, "There is no blue without yellow and orange, and when you paint blue, paint yellow and orange as well" (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.27).





(fig.137) Orange, Lemon, Pot and Tray (1921) M. Laubser



(fig.138) Landscape with Sheep (n.d) M. Laubser

Laubser has also taken aspects of Cézanne's work and combined them with these theories. This is evident in the multiple viewpoints and unconventional spatial relationship between objects. The tray seems to be falling down the back into the table. The other distortion is that the tray's body is seen from the frontal view and the handles seem to be viewed from the sides (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.28,35).

Laubser's learning period in Holland was cut short by the outbreak of World War I and, being a British subject, she travelled to England. In October c.1914 she enrolled as a student at the Central London School and then the Slade School of Art. While in England she studied under the same master as had her South African tutor Roworth - Henry Tonks, an excellent draughtsman, who encouraged precision. The academic English tradition she learned there was strengthened by her own plein-air painting technique and practice. But for the duration of her stay, her palette remained tonally harmonious and subdued (Delmont, 1987, p.5).

Artistically Laubser's Slade experience proved to be a tiresome period. She never painted while in the studio, which she found inhibiting, and often told her masters that she was not yet ready to commence painting. Apparently she did not want to paint in the staid conditions of the school because she felt that by doing so she would lose her individuality. She did, however, draw

continually during studio time, painting in her own time. She predominantly painted landscapes on the spot (Van Royen, 1974, p.10). They were scenes chosen for their "romantic picturesqueness", favourites being quiet melancholic landscapes with canals and rivers (p.10).

While Laubser was in London a memorial exhibition of Van Gogh's work was held. His work was therefore popular there. Works by the master were known and reproductions of originals were circulated. The exposure to the style of this Post-Impressionist must have excited and inspired Laubser because she owned two sets of reproductions of his work. In the Cape Times of October c.1930 she acknowledged that "she was perhaps most drawn towards the inimitable Van Gogh." (Delmont, 1975, p.75). She was probably also drawn to Van Gogh because she, a Christian Scientist, also had strong religious convictions. Like him she used trees as a sign of man's spiritual longing. Her Landscape with Sheep (n.d.) (fig.138) is an illustration of this similar use of symbolism. The shepherds are the protectors and the sheep are the sheltered. Her colour choice, like that of Van Gogh, is indicative of mood. Through colour and style, all seems to be calm and at peace. The colours, which are rendered in smooth undulating forms, are harmonious, with yellow, orange and green repetitively next to each other (Alexander, Cohen, 1990, p.61). Laubser studied in England for the duration of the war and in c.1918 she relocated to other areas of Europe (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.27).

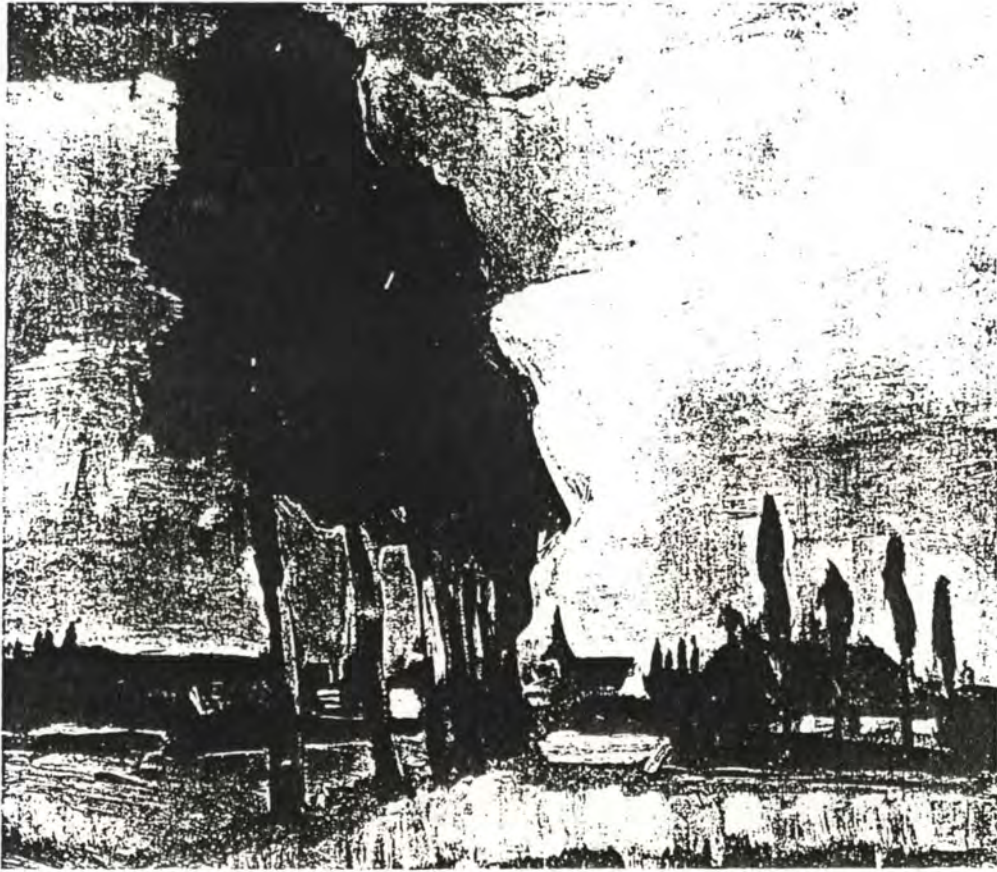
Between c.1919-1920 Laubser moved between Belgium and Germany.

"... during her stay in Belgium ... there is a definite shift from the descriptive picturesque style, towards a simplification of form, reduction of detail and intensification of hue"

(Delmont, 1992, p.13). While in Munich she saw an exhibition by German painters including members of "Die Brücke" and "Der Blaue Reiter" (Alexander, Cohen, 1990, p.61; Van Royen, 1974, p.11).

Work by these artists was still being exhibited in the form of retrospective shows and her exposure to this work enabled her to see the blatant honesty of expression that an artist could use, rather than the "parlour niceties of academism" (Van Royen, 1974, p.11-12). Laubser was naturally inclined to Expressionism, which, according to Malherbe, "devotes itself to expressing the being, the soul of things, or a concept of vision" because this imaginative style was so "eminently suited to her nature" (Malherbe, 1968, p.37). It allowed her to "reveal her own concept of the world" which was always optimistic and expressive (Malherbe, 1968, p.37).

Laubser's Belgian Landscape (n.d.) (fig.139) shows her move away from her earlier unexpressive landscapes. Here it must also be mentioned that Laubser often did not date work in order to conceal her age. Work, like this landscape, has been selected according to suggestions made through style and title. The silhouetted jagged trees contrast starkly against the light sky. Everything has been painted quickly and in an expressive manner.



(fig.139) Belgian Landscape (n.d) M. Laubser



(fig.140) Landscape, Orange Free State (n.d) M. Laubser

The foreground field is rendered with broad painterly strokes. In this image her "emotional experience overrules objective visual perceptions" (Van Royen, 1974, p.11). "... bold forms, simplified outlines, reduction of descriptive detail and heavy dark contours" have replaced her usually bland landscapes (Delmont, 1992, p.13). She has not painted the scene as it is, but as she wants to portray it, allowing "a more symbolic and expressive interpretation" (Delmont, 1992, p.13).

Laubser returned to South Africa for a brief visit in c.1920 and between c.1922-1924 she was once again in Germany. This time she was based in Berlin where, at night classes, she studied figure drawing and improved her use of colour under Professor Jachels. This was a period when she had greater, more direct contact with the Expressionists (Fransen, 1982, p.286). "From November c.1922 to January c.1923 a group exhibition of Die Brucke was shown ... in Berlin. ... Laubser, who had just arrived in Berlin, would have visited this exhibition" (Delmont, 1992, p.16). She saw work by Expressionists including Nolde, Pechstein, Marc and Schmidt-Rottluff at the Kronprinzen Palais. She later became friends with Schmidt-Rottluff, who apparently gave her one of his wood-cuts, and with Marc (Delmont, 1975, p.74; Ogilvie, 1988, p.367). She was again immediately attracted to the approach of these artists and she wrote, "I enjoyed the life in Berlin (and) saw interesting works of art by leading Expressionists and that was the art I had longed for" (Delmont, 1987, p.7). "... her contact

with the German Expressionists was to have a significant impact on her work during her stay in Germany and after her return to South Africa in c.1924" (Delmont, 1992, p.13).

In her curriculum vitae Laubser wrote: "Schmidt Rottluff saw my work and was interested and helped me - I liked the work of Schmidt-Rottluff" (Delmont, 1992, p.26). Laubser's identification with, and subsequent practice of the Expressionist style is apparent in her Landscape, Orange Free State (n.d.). (fig.140) This landscape and Schmidt-Rottluff's Norwegian Landscape (1911) (fig.141) are distinctly similar. Schmidt-Rottluff, who remembered Laubser "very well" during an interview in c.1974, "... thought that his painting technique of the early c.1920's was influential for Maggie Laubser" (Delmont, 1992, p.26). The strong greens and reds form contrasts and the colours are arbitrary and expressive. "Laubser's colour usage which is also clearly influenced by Die Brucke for a heightened expressiveness and directness of impact is evident in the modelling through colour changes" (Delmont, 1992, p.20). The areas of sky are of invented colour, like an enhanced emotional sun-set. Each aspect of Schmidt-Rottluff's and Laubser's compositions is defined with outline and the space is flattened. There is no ordinary indication of recession or hint of perspective. Both have paths as recessional aids, they seem to draw the eye into the composition, they also seem to be of some symbolic nature, drawing the observer into the landscape. The houses have been



(fig.141) Norwegian Landscape (1911) K. Schmidt-Rottluff



(fig.142) Harvest scene in Belgium (n.d) M. Laubser



conceived in the same manner, as square boxes amongst the organic shaped trees. The black jagged edges employed by both artists is another similarity and typical of Expressionism (Delmont, 1987, p.7; Meintjes, Pritchard, 1991, p.60-61; Richard, 1986, p.102-103).

Maggie Laubser's Harvest scene in Belgium (n.d.) (fig.142) is directly influenced by the post-war viewpoint of the Expressionists. It depicts "man as a defenceless creature threatened by his environment" (Van Royen, 1974, p.15). The figures are in a reverent pose, seemingly submissive. The haystacks repeat this pose and seem to symbolise the bond between man and nature, a symbolism directly derived from the Post-Impressionists and the Expressionists who sought similar meanings. The dominant dark sky looks ominous and the colours, including the manner in which they have been rendered, is expressive. The black silhouetted trees seem threatening and foreboding and the yellow, red, blue and lime green contrast. The colours are contained within black frames, one next to another. The forms are explained through colour because they have no modelling or tones. "Like the German Expressionists and Irma Stern, her emotional involvement in her subjects was expressed in heightened, intensified colours and powerful direct brush-work" (Fransen, 1982, p.289). This powerful painting is therefore unquestionably Expressionist, but the flattened space and form through colour also seems close to the concepts of the Fauves

(Fransen, 1982, p.279,286; Van Royen, 1974, p.15).

While in Europe Laubser was also inspired by the work of the Fauves, particularly Matisse, and her work shows many similar tendencies. Matisse's The Green Line (1905) (fig.143) is distinctly similar to Laubser's Portrait (1924) (fig.144). The similarities are in the constructive colour predominant in their faces, the importance of imaginary expressive colour like the green marks, the composition and similar use of black outline to define areas. Laubser's painting technique, consisting of confident broad strokes of unconventional colour, is like that of Matisse. Both employed contrasting colours, apparent in the bright green with vivid red and the purple with green. There is little jagged line. The effect is therefore harmonious like that of the Fauves. This also reflects the influence of her Christian Science beliefs which called for spiritual harmony (Delmont, 1992, p.25). The dark almond-shaped eyes and pronounced eyebrows in this painting and in her Japanese Girl (1923) (fig.145) are like those found in the portraits of the Expressionists and Fauves. The eastern woman's robe has the tell-tale Fauve flat floral decoration. The mood of the women, serious yet questioning, is indicated through strange colour and expressive rendering (Berman, 1983, p.255; Meintjes, 1944, p.39).

Finally Laubser's still-lives reflect even more clearly the Fauve stylistic influence. Her Cat with Flowers (n.d.) (fig.146)



(fig.143) The Green Line (1905) H. Matisse



(fig.144) Portrait (1924) M. Laubser



(fig.145) Japanese Girl (1923) M. Laubser



(fig.146) Cat with Flowers (n.d) M. Laubser



(fig.147) Spanish Still-life (1911) H. Matisse

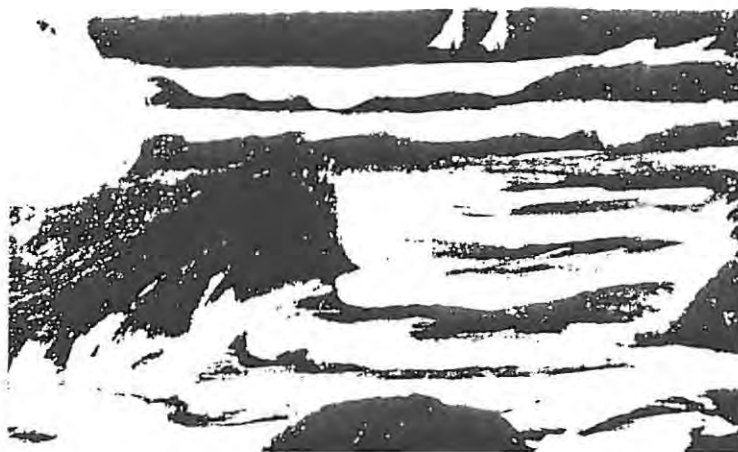
is comparable to Matisse's Spanish Still-life (1911) (fig.147) in many respects. The central situating of the white pots is similar, as is their shape and the angle from which they have been observed. The ambiguous juxtaposed elements in Laubser's painting in the flattened space behind the flowers is like that of Matisse's spacial relationships. The form of the cat and its position is reminiscent of Matisse's green jug and big pink berries. The remarkably similar rounded shapes of the elements making up Laubser's composition, are again indicative of the Fauves' stylistic influence. Like them she has also endeavoured to find harmony through composition, colour and rendering (Berman, 1983, p.225; Essers, 1987, p.38).

At the end of c.1924 Laubser returned to South Africa and, like Irma Stern (whom she met on the voyage home), she was rebuked by the still moderately conservative public. She and Irma Stern had a common bond. They were friends through their shared aims and influence - that of Expressionism. Laubser's heightened emotional colour and quick expressive brush strokes were too modern for the South African public (Delmont, 1992, p.13). Her work was scorned by Roworth and Robinson who were only interested in the romantic, realist approach. She was rejected and labelled a "modernist" (Van Royen, 1874, p.16). It was only in the mid c.1930's that she gained public recognition of a positive nature. Laubser's desire to be untouched by foreign influences, a common tenet between her and the Expressionists, was impossible to attain.

If Laubser's romantically conservative 1912 Tablemountain (fig.148) is compared to her emotive and dynamic Sea-Scene with Two Boats (1925-1930) (fig.149), it is apparent that her work went through considerable developments and that she was greatly influenced by all that she saw and learned. Her work reflects the influence of her South African teachers, the Expressionists, the Fauves and her strong Christian Science beliefs. These influences gave Laubser's work individuality and life. Contact with international artists and their styles, "particularly the Expressionists ... shifted (her work) towards an expressive style in which objects take on symbolic or emotive significance" (Delmont, 1992, p.25).



(fig.148) 1912 Tablemountain M. Laubser



(fig.149) Sea-Scene with Two Boats (1925-30) M. Laubser



## CONCLUSION:

In the 19th and early 20th century South African art establishment shortcomings, including infrequent exhibitions, lack of progressive artistic institutions, lack of public understanding and a persisting need for new teachers, meant that South African artists had no alternative but to turn to the influence of progressive European trends for artistic inspiration and stimulus. "During the first 30 years of this century there were few art schools and those which did exist were completely hide-bound by academic traditions. There were no art colonies and too little of that intense camaraderie of discussion in which ideas are tossed about and movements given birth" (Berman, 1983, p.7). Once artists had utilised what was available to them locally they realised South Africa's restrictions and turned instead to Europe for better understanding of new artistic modes and trends (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.8-10; Berman, 1983, p.5).

Thus, South African artists of the early 20th century, who were able to travel, spent time in Europe where, firstly, they still had ancestral ties, and secondly centres such as London and Paris were dominant artistic beacons worldwide to artists searching for new ideas (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.8, 28). There is no doubt that early 20th century South African artists were influenced by the trends they encountered while studying and

travelling in Europe. The variation in style from their early work in South Africa to work executed in Europe and upon their return to South Africa is so marked that it is obvious that it was through such journeys that their work was affected.

When artists returned to South Africa they found that its aesthetic norms still did not allow for much artistic freedom or for the expression of unique or modern ideas. Once artists had sampled the relative freedom available to them in European artistic groups, it seems they could not revert back to their earlier traditionalism. Even though their work was often ridiculed and snubbed, these artists continued developing European ideas and, in turn, spreading these to fellow South African artists through avenues such as local exhibitions (Berman, 1983, p.9).

A comparison of the early and later works by particular South African artists illustrates the extent of European influence on early Twentieth century South African artistic style. Such inspiration is seen in the style of artists like Naudé, Goodman and Caldecott, who were attracted to Impressionism. Naudé quickened his technique, experimenting with colour and texture. His style had been reliant on, and faithful to, the recommendations of the traditional schools and he found Impressionism gave him greater freedom within the locally accepted genre of landscape painting. Also of relevance is that

Goodman's early meticulously realistic renditions were, once he studied in Europe, replaced by a style similar to that of the Impressionist Sisley. The subject matter and style of Caldecott, which, like Naudé and Goodman, had also been traditional, was replaced by an immediate style like that employed by the French Impressionists who painted their surrounding social scene.

Critical analysis of the Everards' work, shows that they too grew impatient with artistic circumstances in South Africa and were captivated by the styles of Europe, particularly those of the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists. Bertha Everard was particularly drawn to Impressionism and the comparative artistic freedom its style provided. Her work, once she had had contact with European art, became liberated and, eventually, she painted in a manner reminiscent of Van Gogh's style. Her daughter's style also incorporated elements reflecting her European contacts. Ruth Everard-Haden's style became less reliant on realistic representation taking on an uninhibited appearance, ultimately painting subjects suggesting a Symbolist influence. Also of importance is that Pierneef's work developed from literal interpretations into a somewhat Post-Impressionistic style, also encompassing his European experiences. His South African landscapes became controlled, harmonious and, at times, schematic portrayals.

Artists like Stern and Laubser, who, it has been established, also had their roots in traditional trends, were greatly influenced by Expressionism and Fauvism. But, like the South African Impressionists and Post-Impressionists, their styles changed dramatically only once they had had contact with modern European trends. Stern's style immediately absorbed the essence of Expressionism and her continued contact with that style ensured that her own style remained faithful to those teachings. Likewise Laubser's later paintings incorporated Symbolist and Fauve qualities. Nevertheless, she chose her subject matter carefully, painting what would more easily be accepted in South African society. Her expression was subtle and her work was therefore often accessible to both the unorthodox and the conservative South African public (Fransen, 1982, p.286).

Artists, such as these, upon returning from Europe and showing their new found trends in South Africa, were not always easily accepted. They were faced with an unsympathetic public tending to ignore new European artistic styles. After c.1920 annual exhibitions were held by a group, the South African academy. This group "attempted to foster public interest in South African art" (Schoonraad, 1988, p.41). The drawback to their selection process, which often led to conflict and dissatisfaction, was that the work had to be by South Africans. Even as late as c.1950 work deemed as exhibition-worthy by the South African academy selection panel had to have "a South African intent" (Schoonraad,

1988, p.41). In this way they naively continued limited access to other art trends, including those of Europe. This type of selection limited artists, because it is noted that "as late as c.1933 the critics ... proved that they did not have the vaguest notion of the internationally recognised art movements of the preceding decades" (Fransen, 1982, p.286).

The training institutions, where artists had started their artistic pursuits, had predominantly been governed by traditionally orientated masters like Roworth (Fransen, 1982, p.296; Schoonraad, 1988, p.41). The environment to which they returned was also not as "charged" or spirited as that which they had experienced in Europe and artists struggled to keep up the enthusiasm and momentum enjoyed by themselves and other artists while abroad (Berman, 1983, p.5-9). The artistic environment in Europe had been all consuming and returning to the subdued environment available to South African artists must have dulled their eagerness to continue painting and spreading their new found styles.

Artists who brought what they learned in Europe back to South Africa were often snubbed and their opinions ignored by the leadership of art establishments. These artists however could not easily revert back to the traditionalism from which they had weaned themselves. Most of them therefore often found a South African equivalent of what they had learned in Europe and they

adapted aspects of trends like Impressionism, Post-Impressionism and Expressionism to easily acceptable subjects such as landscape and genre painting (Fransen, 1982, p.296; Berman, 1983, p.7-9).

Some artists, like Naudé, were accepted without too many concessions, his style being a combination of Traditionalism and Impressionism, his subject matter remaining predominantly landscape. Others, however, had numerous obstacles to overcome before gaining tangible recognition. Pierneef had to establish himself before achieving unrestrictive commissions, and in her lifetime Stern never really gained the public acclaim she desired. South African artists, like Stern, who painted according to the more modern European traditions, continued to paint in styles they were convinced should be extended to other South African artists. Thus, although the styles they proceeded to encourage were essentially from Europe, once in South Africa, without the encouragement of European groups and through the need to have some recognition amongst local groups, artists often painted with local emphasis, particularly noted in their choice of subject matter.

This remained the position until c.1938 when The New Group was formed. This group, which would not have been able to start or function without the groundwork and experience it learned from early 20th century South African artists, was an innovative and enthusiastic association. For the first time, through this group,

artists of all categories enjoyed the support, encouragement and enthusiasm necessary for progress. It was a society spearheaded by Walter Battiss (1906-1982), Terence McCaw (1913-1978) and Gregoire Boonzaier (1909- ), which assisted artists who wanted opportunities to exhibit and sell their 'modern' work and who were against the conservatism of the South African Society of Artists, which was still headed by Roworth (Fransen, 1988, p.296).

The New Group's first exhibition was held in Cape Town from 4-10 May 1939. According to reports Gwelo Goodman, Hugo Naudé, Maggie Laubser and Irma Stern were among those present at the opening. Caldecott's wife, Zerffi, was part of the exhibiting group. It is therefore likely that he too attended the show. South African and European works, which had never been viewed in local circles, were on show. "It was from this time that modern art trends - of which hesitant signs had already been noticeable in the work of some isolated artists - could develop unhindered" (Fransen, 1982, p.296).

This first New Group exhibition was a great achievement and its success was supported by Gwelo Goodman, at the time "one of the best-known of South African artists" (Schoonraad, 1988, p.44). It was reported "in the Cape Times of 20 April 1938 ... Mr Goodman has promised to help with advice and criticism - strong criticism, if necessary ... Perhaps remembering his early days of

struggle in Paris, Mr Goodman has given the Group a cheque for 10 pounds" (Schoonraad, 1988, p.44).

The Group's appeal to artists of all categories was further enhanced by the inclusion of work by Laubser and Pierneef at its second exhibition on 23 November 1938 in Pretoria. This exhibition was, according to Battiss, "the first time it was possible to appreciate the fresh and healthy talent of the young South Africans ... the exhibition was the finest yet held of contemporary South African art" (Schoonraad, 1988, p.45). The Group assured all artists the opportunity to have work exhibited throughout the country. It also introduced artists to the public and educated and advised exhibition visitors on art matters, particularly assuring them that art was a secure investment.

Just prior to c.1939 European work was more prevalent at exhibitions held in South Africa and after c.1940 "it was clear that the artistic climate in South Africa was changing. Greater opportunities existed for more South Africans to travel to Europe ..." (Alexander, Bedford, Cohen, 1988, p.56,60).

Once early 20th century South African artists had taken advantage of such opportunities and established themselves in South Africa, with the help of groups like The New Group, they continued to paint with a European flavour. They continued to have their work exhibited at home and abroad and in so doing encouraged South



African art to be viewed worldwide. But more importantly they further spread the stylistic influence of Europe to South African artists.

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