

OPSOMMING

Florence Zerffi is op 20 Mei 1883 in Londen, Engeland, gebore. Sy het haar eerste kunsopleiding aan die Tegniese Skool, Stockport, Engeland ontvang. As gevolg van die sakebelange van haar vader, het sy na Berlyn verhuis. Sy het vanaf 1906 tot 1911 deeglike kunsonderrig aan die Königliche Kunstgewerbeschule in Berlyn ontvang en het verskeie pryse en 'n silwer medalje verower.

Met die uitbreek van die Eerste Wêreldoorlog het sy Duitsland verlaat. Deur middel van 'n uitruilskema en die medewerking van haar swaer, dr. Raymond Wilcocks, student in Berlyn, het sy in 1916 via Engeland na Suid-Afrika geëmmigreer.

Sy het na Suid-Afrika gekom toe die Afrikaner-nasionalisme aan die opkom was, maar sy het afsydig ten opsigte van die politiek gestaan. Sy het haar in Kaapstad gevestig en illustrasiewerk vir *Die Huisgenoot* en *Die Burger* gedoen. Sy het ook die sketse vir die kinderboek, *Die eensame Hoop*, van C.J. Langehoven gemaak. In 1923 het sy die tweede kuratrise van die Michaelis-kunsversameling in Kaapstad geword.

Sy het heelwat skilderwerk op die platteland gedoen en veral sketse van Kaapstad en die Maleierbuurt gemaak. Sy het by die K-klub aangesluit en saam met Ruth Prouse en Nita Spilhaus die eertse uitstalling van vroueskilders in Suid-Afrika gehou.

Sy is in 1924 met Strat Caldecott getroud en uit die huwelik is een seun gebore. Sy het haar skilderwerk op die agtergrond geskuif om haar seun groot te maak en haar eggenoot wat betrokke by natuur- en kultuurbewaring was, by te staan. Hy is in 1929 oorlede en as weduwee moes sy selfversorgend gebly het.

Vir 'n inkomste het Zerffi kunsklasse aan leerlinge gegee. Sy was in 1938 'n stigterslid van die Nuwe Groep en het tot en met die ontbinding daarvan in 1954 aktief aan sy bedrywighede

deelgeneem. Sy het met haar skilderwerk volhard en 'n paar eenmansuitstallings gehou.

In 1956 het sy Suid-Afrika verlaat om by haar seun en sy gesin in Londen te gaan woon. Sy het daar saam met haar seun uitgestal. Sy het in 1962 in Wallis gesterf.

Zerffi was besonder veelsydig sover dit genre, medium en onderwerpe betref. Sy is veral bekend vir haar talle stillewens, blomstukke, landskappe, seetonele en portrette. Sy het ook figuurstudies, argitektoniese tonele, stedelike en landelike taferele, nagtonele en interieurs geskilder. Die grootste aantal van haar werke is in olieverf geskilder, maar sy het talle sketse in potlood, houtskool en ink gemaak. Ander media wat sy gebruik het, was waterverf, pastel en gemengdemedia en dié vir lino-sneë en ex librisse.

Sy was lief vir donker tonaliteite wat haar Duitse agtergrond en opleiding in die Jugendstil aandui. Haar werke is terughoudend en sonder opskik. Sy het nie een bepaalde styl aangehang nie, want realisme is afgewissel met 'n eie impressionisme en ekspressionisme.

Haar bydrae tot die Suid-Afrikaanse kuns lê in haar rol as een van Suid-Afrika se eerste vroueskilders. Sy het 'n groot aandeel gehad in die aktiwiteite van die Nuwe Groep. Van haar werke is van estetiese en kultuurhistoriese waarde. Haar invloed het daartoe gelei dat vele van haar leerlinge suksesvolle kunstenaars geword het.

SUMMARY

Florence Zerffi was born on 20 May 1883 in London, England. She received her initial art training at Technical College, Stockport. As a result of the business interests of her father, she emigrated to Germany. From 1906 to 1911 she received a sound training in art at the Königliche Kunstgewerbeschule in Berlin, where she was awarded several prizes and a silver medal.

Zerffi left Germany when the First World War broke out. By means of an exchange scheme and with the help of her brother-in-law, Dr. Raymond Wilcocks, a student in Berlin, she emigrated to South Africa via England in 1916.

She arrived in South Africa at a time when Afrikaner nationalism was rising, but she was politically neutral as far as this was concerned. She settled in Cape Town and did illustrative work for *Die Huisgenoot* and *Die Burger*. She made the sketches for *Die eensame Hoop*, a book for children by C.J. Langehoven. She was appointed as second curator of the Michaelis Art Collection, Cape Town in 1923.

Zerffi produced several paintings in the countryside but more especially sketches of Cape Town itself and of its Malay quarters. She joined the K-club and together with Ruth Prouse and Nita Spilhaus held the first exhibition of female painters in South Africa.

In 1924 she married Strat Caldecott and one son resulted from this union. She neglected her painting activities in order to raise her son and to support her husband who was involved in nature as well as culture conservation. Strat Caldecott died in 1929 and as a widow, Zerffi had to support herself by giving art classes to pupils.

She was a founder member of the New Group in 1938 and continued to play an active role in its activities until its dissolution in 1954. She persisted with her paintings and held several exhibitions of her own work.

She left South Africa in 1956 to reside with her son and his family in London. She held joint exhibitions with her son. Zerffi died in 1956 in Wales.

Zerffi was very versatile in many genres, media and subjects. She is well known for her many still-lives, flower-pieces, landscapes, seascapes and portraits. She also painted figure studies, architectural, urban, rural, and nocturnal scenes and interiors. The majority of her work was painted in oil, but she also produced a large quantity of sketches in pencil, charcoal and ink. Other media used were water colours, pastels and mixed media and those used for linocuts and ex-libris.

Zerffi preferred dark tones which points to her German training in the Jugendstil. Her works are modest and devoid of any trimmings. She did not prefer any one style above another and realism was alternated with impressionism and expressionism.

Her contribution to South African art lies in her role as one of the first female painters in South Africa. She contributed extensively to the activities of the New Group. Some of her works are of aesthetic and cultural-historic value. Her influence has led to many of her pupils becoming successful artists.