

THE CAPE MALAY QUARTER IN SOUTH AFRICAN PAINTING

by

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the M.A. Fine Arts degree in the Faculty
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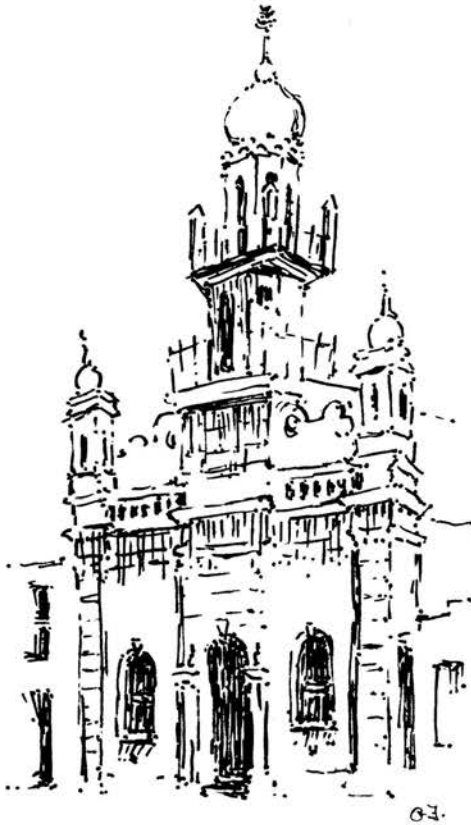
PRETORIA.

JUNE 1970.

I.

DEDICATED TO MY
HUSBAND AND SON.

II.



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III.

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PREFACE

From time to time articles have been published concerning the Malay Quarter, its origin, historic significance, its fascination for artists, its decadence and threatened demolition. But it is only when one has actually visited the Malay Quarter, entered its houses, tombs and mosques and seen the colourful lanes, that enthusiasm is aroused. Then curiosity to know more about its people and its fascination for artists and writers is stimulated.

Personal contact with some of the older Malayan inhabitants produced first hand accounts which disclosed the interesting tradition of the Malays, their historical background and the architectonic development in their Quarter.

Only after walking tirelessly up and down these steep streets and lanes on Signal Hill, does one begin to understand why the Malay Quarter has been and still is a source of inspiration to artists. This picturesque site represents a fusion of Western and Eastern Cultures, although only dating from the Eighteenth Century. South African artists specifically, are keenly aware of its significance and unique beauty.

If steps are not taken towards restoration, its already decadent state will soon result in demolition. The public is concerned about the preservation of this picturesque area and much thought has been directed towards turning the Malay Quarter or a section of it, into a national monument. The Historical Monuments Commission as well as other organizations have for some years been trying to come to an agreement with the Cape Town City Council, as to the restoration¹⁾ of the Malay Quarter.

1) The Argus Municipal Reporter: Malay Quarter may be national monument, The Cape Argus, July 1, 1964, p.13.

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Paintings of the Malay Quarter are as important as its preservation, since they show an ever-changing appearance through the passage of time.

A discussion of paintings of the Malay Quarter form a suitable background for the recording of the development of South African painting in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.

As far as possible, reproductions accompany the descriptions of works in the text.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.

&	:	And.
Dr.	:	Doctor.
Dte.	:	Date.
e.g.	:	for example.
8 th	:	Eighth.
Ibid.	:	Ibidem. (in the same place).
i.e.	:	that is.
intro.	:	introduction.
Med.	:	Medium.
Mr.	:	Mister.
Mrs. Miss.	:	Mistress.
Nm.	:	Name.
19 th	:	Nineteenth.
n.d.	:	not dated.
No.	:	Number.
p.	:	page.
pp.	:	Pages.
P.O.	:	Post Office.
Prof.	:	Professor.
Publ.	:	Published.
R.A.	:	Royal Academy.
Rep.	:	Reproduction.
Rev.	:	Reverend.
17 th	:	Seventeenth.
Sign. r.h. bot. cr.,	:	Signed right hand bottom corner.
Sign. l.h. bot. cr.,	:	Signed left hand bottom corner.
Sign. l.h. top cr.,	:	Signed left hand top corner.
St.	:	Saint.
Vol.	:	Volume.

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INTRODUCTION

In a search for paintings of the Malay Quarter, one finds that many of our well-known artists have at one time or another depicted this colourful site in Cape Town. Even to-day in its dilapidated state with its ramshackle houses and gay people this area still creates an inspiring atmosphere for artistic expression.

Being built on rapidly falling ground, the houses adjoining one another, form long low lines of terraced roofs and stoeps. Not only the grouping, but also the bright colours of the architecture as seen in the pale green, yellow and silver of the Buitengracht Street Mosque, make this area attractive. And at the corner of Castle and Chiappini Streets one sees homes painted pink, blue and green, while the Chiappini Street Mosque nearby has recently been repainted so that its facade is a dark green contrasted with white.

Diversity of form prevents monotony. Domed mosques placed next to the rectangular facades of the houses, form a remarkable contrast. Even where double and single storeys co-exist, there is no restlessness, since a gay vitality is created, uniting the architecture in one flowing rhythm.

The Malay Quarter is attractive although the homes at first appear to be built according to a monotonous pattern and are generally flat-roofed, having one door and two windows, yet each house bears an individual character. Next to brightly coloured houses one finds an attractive contrast of crumbling and decaying architecture.

This picturesque part of Cape Town contributes largely towards the cultural development of our country and preserves our long association with a proud and dignified Eastern race. "The Malays who have given their name to this part of the city have been identified with life at

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the Cape since the first European settled here. The Malay Quarter is their traditional home."¹⁾

It is also of historical value. "The Malay Quarter and the surrounding area constitutes the largest concentration of pre-1840 architecture to be found anywhere in South Africa. Even now though gap-toothed it presents a picture of early Nineteenth Century Cape township that cannot be equalled."²⁾

The Malay Quarter³⁾ is one of the oldest areas of Cape Town. It is possibly the only part which has not been affected by commercialization so that it has "retained a semblance of its old world character." There are some detached buildings like the old Town Hall and the Castle, but only in the Malay Quarter does one find blocks of houses which having been built long ago, still retain their former appearance.

The first Malays (followers of Mahomed) arrived at the Cape in 1667. The Dutch East India Company deported them as slaves or political prisoners, from Madagascar, India, Batavia and Zanzibar. "During the time of the Dutch East India Company's rule at the Cape, many slaves had been brought out from the East, as well as a number of political exiles of aristocratic birth, such as Sjech Yussuf (or Sheik Joseph), brother of the King of Goa, in Macassar."⁴⁾

Sjech Yussuf arrived at the Cape in 1694 and was the spiritual leader of the Malays until he died in 1699. His tomb can be seen at Faure in the Cape.

-
- 1) Ruth Prowse: Leng Dixon, p.1.
 - 2) Hans Fransen and Dr. Mary Alexander Cook: The Old Houses of the Cape, p.16.
 - 3) I.D. du Plessis and C.A. Lückhoff: The Malay Quarter and its People, p.11.
 - 4) Raie Rodwell: Cape Town's Historic Malay Quarter, Personality, November 11, 1965, p.55.

3.

In 1834⁵⁾ when the slaves were freed and the Europeans left Signal Hill, the Malays established themselves there. They were forced to move out of the poorer parts of the town because of the increased pressure of living caused by the Europeans leaving Signal Hill. By the middle of the Nineteenth Century the Malay Quarter had become predominantly non-white.

The area is situated on the slopes of Signal Hill and is bounded by Wale, Rose and Waterkant Streets. The fourth side is less definite and extends up Signal Hill.

The privilege of establishing themselves on Signal Hill, was granted because the Malays were a distinct group. Having a recognised religion, a strong bond of loyalty one to the other, and skill in workmanship, they were considered superior to the majority of liberated Africans.

The Malay Quarter came into being after a French fleet arrived in 1780 to strengthen the garrison at the Cape in case of war against England. Additional quarters were needed for the artisans employed by the garrison and terraced houses were built on Signal Hill, with the help of the Malays. "They were skilled artisans, and it was not long before their masters realised their worth and had them working on the buildings in the growing settlement."⁶⁾

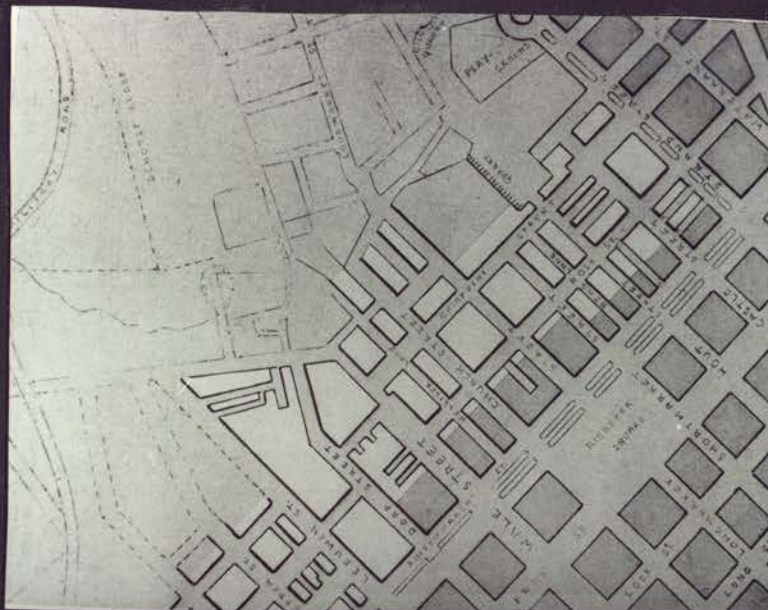
The Mahomedans took their faith into many lands, but did not bring any special style of architecture with them.⁷⁾ "They were content to adopt that which had already been proved suitable to the locality, but upon all types which

5) Ibid., p.55.

6) Ibid., p.55.

7) Other Malay groups are to be found in Woodstock, Claremont, Simonstown, Kalkbay, Wynberg and farther inland at Worcester, The Strand, Stellenbosch, Port Elizabeth and Johannesburg.

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II



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they appropriated was set the distinguishing seal of their peculiar form of decoration and ornament."⁸⁾

Since the Malay Quarter⁹⁾ was constructed in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, characteristics of the Dutch and Georgian architecture may be found here. The houses are small, being placed back to back so that they face the street. Their front section is short but they are deep and usually have a courtyard which is attractive and typical of these houses. Where the ground slopes too severely builders supplied a high stoep with steps on both sides leading up. This feature derives from the old Dutch town houses. Not only the high stoep, but also the old Dutch houses have almost ceased to exist in Cape Town. Examples can however still be seen in the Malay Quarter.

Among the Malay tombs, that of Sjech Yussuf¹⁰⁾ built about two hundred years ago at Faure, has a dome, rectangular facade and semicircular arches.

The tomb of Sjech Mahomet Hassen Glishiba, a contemporary of Yussuf, has just been completed (1966) on Signal Hill. It bears the same features, but the rectangular facade is higher and the dome less conspicuous.

An unusual mosque¹¹⁾ built in 1847, is to be found at the corner of Church and Chiappini Streets in Cape Town. A pointed arch is seen in the portal and windows and is again represented in the conical dome and triangular gable above the portal. It is portrayed¹²⁾ by Désirée

8) Sir Banister Fletcher: A History of Architecture, pp. 939-940.

9) Du Plessis, *ibid.*, p.12.

10) Rep. III, p.4a : Sjech Yussuf's tomb at Faure, in the Cape.

11) Rep. IV, p.4b : Church and Chiappini Streets Mosque.

12) Watercolour in Western Provincial, p.37.

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Picton-Seymour¹³⁾ in a series of watercolour paintings.

In the dwelling-houses of the Malay Quarter, Eastern and Eighteenth Century Cape Dutch architecture blend. But unlike the mosques and tombs where the Eastern influence is predominant, there are more Cape Dutch than Eastern features to be observed in the houses. The parapet which is sometimes delightfully ornate is an Eastern feature. The Cape Dutch style is mainly seen in the door, windows and stoep. Dividing the two small-paned windows, the door is placed below a decorative fan-light. Sometimes a stable-door is introduced. The stoeps are terminated by low walls which often have seats.

From 1790 onwards the houses in general had straight mouldings to their parapets. Only two houses of the older type with delicately waved parapets survive, of which one is 71 Wale Street.¹⁴⁾ This kind of parapet could be seen on larger homes in the heart of the town, but they no longer exist. Being built in the 1760's, 71 Wale Street is the earliest dwelling-house in Cape Town to have kept its original form. Excepting for its unusual parapet, it is a typical example of the Malay Quarter dwelling-house.

Simplifying the Cape Dutch style of the Martin Melck House¹⁵⁾ in Strand Street, the builders of the Malay Quarter adopted only the central door flanked by

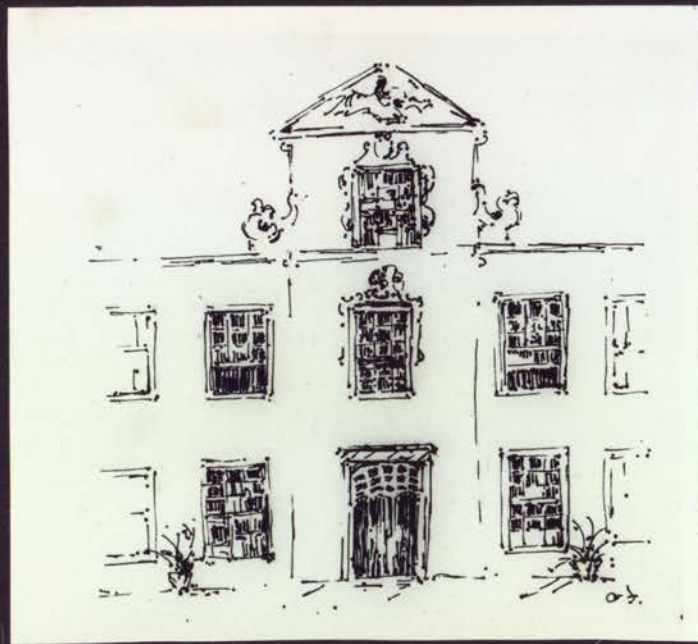
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- 13) Désirée Picton-Seymour. Born in London in 1923. Trained at Sutton and Cheam School of Art also at the Royal Drawing Society. In 1940 she came to South Africa. She illustrated 19th Century Cape Architecture and Transvaal Republican Architecture in two separate books.
 F.L. Alexander: Art in South Africa since 1900, p.167.
- 14) Rep. V, p.5a : 71 Wale Street. (Depicted by Désirée Picton-Seymour) in the Magazine Section of The Cape Times, September 27, 1958.
 Photograph and ground plan in Franssen and Cook, ibid., p.17.
- 15) Rep. VI, p.5b : Martin Melck House.

5a

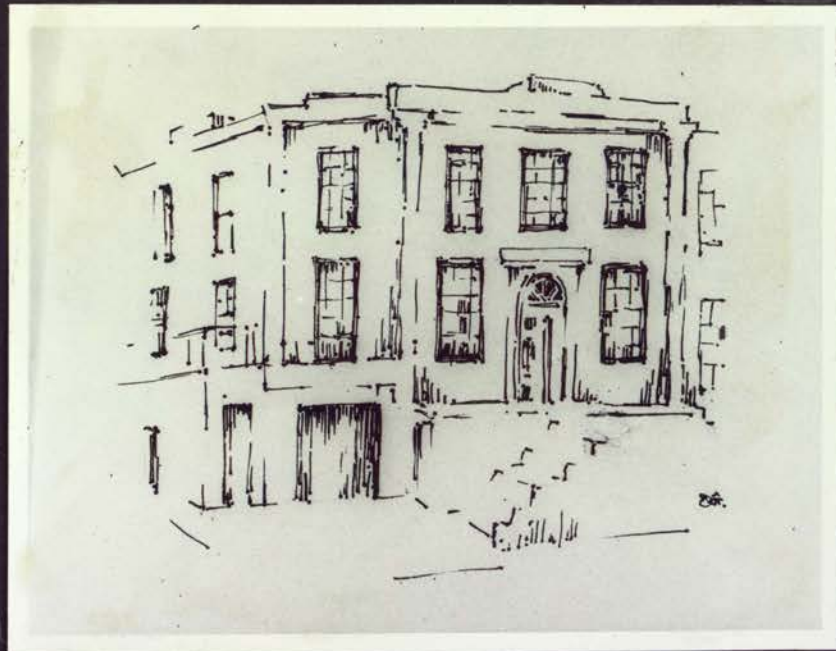


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two windows. The thatched, pitched roof was replaced by a flat one with a plain parapet, similar to that of The House on the corner of Leeuwen and Bree Streets.¹⁶⁾ A walled stoep with a bench at each side was added. The facade of the double storeyed house has the addition of a balcony enclosing a central door, with a window on each side of it. An example of this style of house is depicted in Malays¹⁷⁾ by Leng Dixon,¹⁸⁾ revealing the modern overcrowded Quarter. A rickety balcony projects from the second storey of a building featuring a stepped parapet. Leng Dixon's depiction is as recent as 1964.

In some cases mouldings like that on the old Cape Dutch gables was substituted for a parapet, for instance the small House in Wale Street.¹⁹⁾ Recently (1966) this delightful house's facade has been restored. Where the moulding on the parapet has become dislodged it has been replaced, assuming a smoother surface since the original grooves have been omitted. But the effect is not unattractive and on the whole the parapet retains its former appearance.

16) Rep. VII, p.5b : The House on the corner of Leeuwen and Bree Streets.

17) Rep. VIII, p.6a : Malays.

18) Leng Dixon. Born in Cape Town in 1916. Studied in London at the Camberwell School of Art under Cosmo Clark R.A., Eric Fraser and Vivian Pitchforth. Represented at the National Gallery, Cape Town and the East London Gallery. Exhibited in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town. Included in 1956 and 1960 Quadrennials and at the Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Exhibition in 1952. In pen and wash he depicts local Cape scenes.
Harold Jeppe : South African Artists, p.23.
Alexander adds that Dixon worked in London and returned to South Africa in 1939.
Alexander, *ibid.*, p.162.

19) P.5, footnote 14.

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VIII

CHAPTER 1NAUDÉ

As early as the Seventeenth Century, artists have been sketching and painting South African scenes, people, plants and animals. The paintings were sent overseas to relatives and friends to give them an idea of what life at the Cape was like. But generally these artists did not try to express the essence of the country.

From 1605 onwards voyagers who passed the Cape on their long sea voyage to India, placed letters¹⁾ under large stones on which they carved the names of their ships and the date. The shipmasters of the homeward bound vessels would gather the letters and take them to Europe.

The earliest paintings of the Cape are ascribed to these passengers and seamen. Few of them were able to draw but from their crude drawings and verbal descriptions, engravings in copperplate were made in Europe. The subjects of most of their pictures were Table Mountain and the Hottentots. Many of the book illustrations²⁾ published prior to 1750, are not accurate accounts of their subject. Table Mountain often looks like a "beetling crag." An example of this kind of distortion of the mountain can be seen in a painting by Francis Swaine (died 1782). And the Hottentots were depicted as wild savages "draped about with the entrails of animals which the early visitors believed to be their staple diet."

Although many drawings and paintings of the early Cape were not executed on the spot, the earliest known watercolour³⁾ of the Dutch Settlement from Table Bay still exists, being dated about 1655 or 1656, it is thought.

1) A. Gordon-Brown: Pictorial Art in South Africa, p.12.

2) Ibid., p.13.

3) Ibid., p.13.

Godee-Molsbergen reproduces it from the original in the Hague State Archives. This is a more or less accurate representation of Table Mountain and was obviously painted by an artist who worked directly from the subject.

The history⁴⁾ of the early Cape of the Eighteenth Century does not make any specific reference to pictorial art, but there is an exception and that is the oil painting Wreck of De Vis.⁵⁾ It depicts a vessel wrecked on the shores of Table Bay. Many people watched while the crew was being rescued in a huge copper cauldron which was used instead of a breeches buoy. Mainly because the costumes of the period are described with telling detail, this painting, is the most important work of the Seventeenth or Eighteenth Centuries.

The assertion⁶⁾ concerning paintings being done in Europe by people who had not actually seen the Cape, draws attention to Gombrich's statement that there is a long and difficult passage between perception and representation. Sixteenth Century landscapes are not actual scenes, but the result of an amassing of individual characteristics "they are conceptual rather than visual."⁷⁾

By means of a story told by Norgate⁸⁾ regarding this idea, one realises the significance of landscape painting as an invention. The first invented landscape painting was actually the product of two people, namely a painter and his friend, an art lover and frequent caller at his home.

4) Ibid., pp.13-14.

5) Wreck of De Vis: 1740, South African Public Library, Cape Town.
Ibid., Plate 5.
"DB": The Wreck of the Visch, *Africana Notes and News*, Vol. VII, No. 4, pp.120-123.

6) Ibid., p.12.

7) E.H. Gombrich: *Norm and Form*, p.116.

8) Edward Norgate 17th Century painter.
Ibid., p.107.

After the friend had visited the country of Liege and the forest of Ardenna, he returned home and gave the artist a graphic description of what he had seen. He mentioned strange cities and buildings and the beauty of the Alpine Rocks and old castles. Eventually the painter set aside the work he had been busy with. And while his friend continued describing the beauties he had beheld, the enthralled artist using a fresh canvas, created the scenes being described in a more vivid and impressive way than the verbal utterances of the other could achieve. The narrator, ready to leave was delighted and surprised to see how accurately his descriptions had been converted into a picture. It almost seemed to him as if his artist friend and he had witnessed the scenes together.⁹⁾

The importance of this anecdote is that the painter relied only slightly on his previous visual experiences regarding the scenes, but greatly on his imagination. And the artist's friend who gave him much assistance, was willing to recognise a stereotyped image of an Alpine rock or an old castle, as the same ones he had seen on his journeys. It is also of value to note that the painter and his friend were well acquainted. The art lover visited his friend often and after his journeys went specially to explain what picturesque scenes he had observed during his travels. Having a knowledge of the painter's work, his friend naturally realised what would interest him so that he chose scenes which were "conditioned by the images he had seen before in the paintings of his friend."¹⁰⁾

It seems logical to conclude that during the period between the Sixteenth and the Eighteenth Centuries, several paintings of the Cape were constructed in the same way as the invented landscapes of the Sixteenth Century discussed by Gombrich.

9) Ibid., p.116.

10) Ibid., p.117.

Long Street,¹¹⁾ a painting created during the Nineteenth Century by Langschmidt,¹²⁾ serves very admirably as a record of what the Malay Quarter and its people looked like in 1850. It does however not express the bright South African sunlight experienced in Cape Town and is more reminiscent of the subdued light of Europe.

In comparison with earlier artists, those of the Twentieth Century such as Pierneef,¹³⁾

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- 11) Rep. IX, p.10a : Long Street.
- 12) Wilhelm Heinrich Franz Ludwig Langschmidt 1805-1866. Born at Gustrow Mecklenburg, Germany. Studied under Prof. Kretchner in Berlin. Came to South Africa in 1842. Lived in Cape Town until 1851. Then retired to his farm near Elgin. He was a portrait painter and drawing master in Long Street, Cape Town. His best known painting is of his own home in Long Street, now in the Fehr Collection. Dr. E.H. Langschmidt of Knysna possesses a self-portrait and pictures by him. There are also works in the Africana Museum, Johannesburg and in private hands. Gordon-Brown, *ibid.*, p.104.
- 13) Jacob Hendrik Pierneef. Born in Pretoria in 1886, died in 1957. First training in Holland at the Rotterdam Academy. Studied under Frans Oerder. Held first exhibition in 1913 at de Bussy's when he had returned to Pretoria. State librarian in Pretoria for some time, then art master at Heidelberg Normal College until 1923. After that he painted in South West Africa. Back to Europe for further experience. First to bring a new, broader conception of the local scene. Departed from realist forms to those derived from European influences. These he introduced into our landscape, greatly influencing later painters. His forms have leanings towards abstraction and Cubism. Interesting and individualistic style. Most representative work at Johannesburg Station "each of which is a noble tribute to his wide conception and manual excellence." He released painting from narrow realism. Jeppe, *ibid.*, p.70. Alexander agrees with Jeppe, adding that Pierneef also studied under van Wouw. In Holland he studied at Hilversum as well. Painted murals in South Africa House, London. Mostly connected with the Lowveld scene. Lino-cuts are an essential part of his work. Alexander, *ibid.*, p.167.

10d



IX

Naudé¹⁴⁾ and Caldecott¹⁵⁾ had a different approach, in that they tackled the problem of revealing the inner life of the South African scene, by suitably applying knowledge gained in European art schools.

Whereas Pierneef is particularly associated with the Lowveld, Naudé and Caldecott painted mainly at the Cape, both producing a number of Malay Quarter paintings.

Naudé went to the Slade in 1889 therefore becoming the first South African Artist to study abroad.¹⁶⁾ After leaving the slade he went to Munich where he studied for four years and later worked at the Barbison School, Fontainebleau, outside Paris. He spent the rest of his life in Worcester and was awarded the Medal for Artistic Achievement by the South African Academy of Arts and Letters in 1939. The Hugo Naudé Art Centre in Worcester perpetuates his memory by continuing to work in his studio.

When Naudé returned from Paris and Munich, there was hardly any art worthy of the name in South Africa excepting

14) Hugo Naudé. Born at Worcester, Cape Province, 1869, died in 1941. Alexander, *ibid.*, p.166.

15) Harry Stratford Caldecott. Born in Kimberley in 1886, died 1929. Educated in Cape Town and Johannesburg. Studied in Paris in 1913. Back in South Africa in 1923. Pioneer of contemporary art. Helped to found the Kruger National Park. Lived and painted in Cape Town. Alexander, *ibid.*, p.161. Jeppe agrees with Alexander, adding that in 1912 Caldecott won a scholarship for study at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. He also wrote articles on art to Die Huisgenoot and the South African Nation. He is represented in the National Gallery, Cape Town, and the Johannesburg Art Gallery. Harold Jeppe: *South African Artists*, p.14.

16) Jeppe, *ibid.*, p.63.

that of Bowler¹⁷⁾ and Baines¹⁸⁾ which belonged to the past and the then present art of Oerder,¹⁹⁾ Van Wouw²⁰⁾ and Volschenk.²¹⁾ But the latter artists lived in the Transvaal which is a thousand miles away from the Cape. "But Naudé was a great man with an all-embracing character which enabled him to work in what was then a state of isolation and to express what he had learnt overseas. All this he moulded into his own personal style in landscape and portraiture, developed in loneliness but sustained by his broad humanity and dedication. For this reason alone, divorced from his actual achievement, he must be recognised and fully respected for introducing a new trend and outlook in the history of our art."²²⁾

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- 17) Thomas William Bowler. Born in England in 1813. Landed at Cape Town in 1833. Died in 1869 in London. Gordon-Brown, *ibid.*, p.78.
- 18) John Thomas Baines. Born in Norfolk, England in 1820. Came to Cape Town in 1842. Died in 1875. Gordon-Brown, *ibid.*, p.74.
- 19) Frans Oerder 1867-1944. Born in Holland. Arrived in South Africa in 1890. Kruger Government war artist. Left South Africa in 1908, returning near end of his life. Tutor to Pierneef. Alexander, *ibid.*, p.166. also Jeppe, *ibid.*, p.66.
- 20) Anton van Wouw. Sculptor. 1862-1945. Born in Driebergen, Holland. Studied at Rotterdam Academy. Arrived in the Transvaal in 1890. Made President Kruger statue in 1899. Known for Bantu studies, bronze Kruger in Exile and Vrouemonument in Bloemfontein. Suid-Afrikaans Akademie Medal of honour in 1937. Alexander, *ibid.*, pp.169-170. also Jeppe, *ibid.*, pp.137-138.
- 21) Jan Ernst Abraham Volschenk 1853-1936. Born in Riversdale district. Dutch by origin. Painted chiefly in home area. Landscapes are photographic. Visited Europe. He was one of the first South African-born landscape artists. Alexander, *ibid.*, p.170. also Jeppe, *ibid.*, p.106.
- 22) Jeppe, *ibid.*, p.63.

Naudé's painting A Busy Malay Quarter Street²³⁾ is unlike his Malay Courtyard Scene²⁴⁾ since it is less tranquil. Here the artist depicts the activity of the Malay in a restless variety of forms. From the shady foreground in A Busy Malay Quarter Street, where people are selling fruit, a building on the right extends to the top of the painting. The opposite side of the street is bathed in sunlight where a green-shadowed ochre building is represented, attached to a pale green one which forms part of a row of receding homes. Here, surrounded by light, one sees a woman hanging her washing. In the background the street narrows and the city beyond comes into view, with the mountain and sea in the distance. This painting differs from Malay Courtyard Scene because the paint is applied smoothly, almost laboriously, whereas the brush strokes in the latter have a vigorous brittle quality. The artist is overcrowding his composition in A Busy Malay Quarter Street. He depicts the activity of the Malays in their Quarter as well as the densely populated and clearly defined architecture of the rest of the city.

If one compares A Busy Malay Quarter Street to Malay Courtyard Scene it is hard to believe, that they are created by the same artist. On closer examination, after having observed how crammed the former work is, one feels let down by the colour scheme. The garish green shadows on the ochre building are very disturbing. How warm and subtle are the greens in Malay Courtyard Scene in comparison with the cold green which figures in the foreground of A Busy Malay Quarter Street, where tones of orange and red, which should lose their intensity in the background, do not appear to do so. A Busy Malay Quarter Street is not convincing as an expression of a work portraying a gradual recession of forms from the foreground into the distance.

23) Rep. X, p.13a : A Busy Malay Quarter Street.

24) Rep. XII, p.15a : Malay Courtyard Scene.

Malay Quarter, Cape Town,²⁵⁾ also by Naudé, may be regarded as a more successful work than A Busy Malay Quarter Street. Again figures in a street are depicted. The right side of the canvas is stressed by the forms of women handling their washing. Only small sections of houses and stoeps are seen whereas the opposite side of the canvas shows a row of flat-roofed houses. In the midground a sitting Malay is apparently busy with craft-work, while two standing figures appear in the background.

The composition of women whose washing almost obscures their small stoeps, suggests the bustling and lively atmosphere of the Malay Quarter. The washing heightens the effect of the glaring sun and its diagonal arrangement as well as that of the figures, draw attention to the other side of the street. And once again as in A Busy Malay Quarter Street the impoverished circumstances under which the Malays live, are shown in the crowded, dilapidated houses. But in Malay Quarter, Cape Town life is more leisurely, the figures more reposed.

Predominantly blue on the right and yellow on the opposite side, the two sections of the painting are united by a figure near the centre, in tones of green, yellow and blue. The delicate balance caused by the pale blue which weaves its way through the painting, adds to its compactness. The powerful rhythm effected by shadows on recessed surfaces and figures, further strengthens the composition of the work.

The mood in Malay Quarter, Cape Town is one of contentment, a result of the gratification derived from ordinary tasks.

By the elimination of unnecessary forms and a freer technique, Naudé has simplified this canvas, thus expressing the busy and contented character of the Malay Quarter more fully than in A Busy Malay Quarter Street.

25) Rep. XI, p.13a : Malay Quarter, Cape Town.

Malay Courtyard Scene depicts a woman washing in a sunken courtyard, with a view of the Quarter stretching above it and up the hill beyond.

In this painting Naudé focuses the light on the far side of the courtyard where the woman stands at her tub, and by means of equal strength of lighting, links this area with the Quarter stretching beyond. "Pierneef's talent for discovering the essential character of his scene and reproducing this in his painting, Naudé also possessed but practised it in a much more subtle way. In contrast to Pierneef's forceful composition and application of colour surfaces, Naudé uses an all-uniting fall of light on his landscape."²⁶⁾ The yellow ochre used to describe light surrounding the woman and pale blue in the shadows, also figure in the representation of light and shade on the walls of the flat buildings beyond. Even the darkness of the door behind the woman is no darker than a door in the street, directly above her. Not only is the courtyard's shadow connected with the dark green trees and deep-toned mountain beyond, but it encircles the unit created by more highly lit forms. In spite of being in shadow, the foreground of the courtyard is by no means neglected by the artist. His intention probably was to reveal the charm of light as it reflects from objects not exposed to direct sunlight. On the wall facing the woman boxes and a huge shrub are subtly suggested and a ladder with irregular rungs, placed against a wall still nearer the observer, lends an air of homeliness. A feeling of mystery is intensified by the dark suggestive door in the wall behind the woman and opposite the ladder. Creating a fleeting²⁷⁾

26) Prof. A.L. Meiring: Our Art I, p.26.

27) A.M. Hammacher: Amsterdamsche Impressionisten en Hun Kring, p.33
Development from use of tone traditional to 17th Century Dutch Landscape painters.

15 a



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mood as Naudé did in this canvas and the use of diffused light²⁸⁾ are both Dutch Impressionistic characteristics.

Diffused light seen in the shadowy part of the courtyard, gives the correct value so that it does not appear too heavy in comparison with lighter areas in the painting. The light section again, is broken by means of soft shadows on the walls and doors in order to prevent an overpowering effect.

"For Naudé there are no important or minor elements; everything contributes to the unity of his interpretation."²⁹⁾

The painting entitled Malay Quarter³⁰⁾ by Naudé, depicts a narrow lane. Contrasted with a light wall, the tree on the left plays an important part. In the foreground the tree unifies the architecture at its ground level with a cast shadow. Above, sky and foliage combine to bring together its highest point. In the resulting rectangle, Naudé defines the essence of the Malay Quarter atmosphere.

Poverty is symbolised by the neglected, crowded houses where the space separating them is narrow. Beyond the tree a figure stands at the end of the wall, whose shadow guides one's eye to the opposite sunlit side of the lane. Another figure painted in white and blue blends with the architecture behind, and reflects the blue, red and yellow ochre of the dark wall and houses in the street connected to the lane.

The verticals formed by the figures, the dark toned tree trunk and recessed surfaces of the architecture accentuate the restful rhythm of the shady wall. The atmosphere of peacefulness is also reflected on the

28) Wolfgang Stechow: Dutch Landscape Painting of the Seventeenth Century, pp. 57-58, 67-68.
Also Chapter II, pp.54-55.

29) Meiring, *ibid.*, p.26.

30) Naudé: Malay Quarter.

opposite side of the lane where the light is soft and mellow. Delicate nuances occur in the harmonious use of subtle blue, red and yellow.

Naudé has improved his style considerably during his artistic development. In Malay Quarter he no longer resorts to strong contrasts of light and dark as he does in Malay Courtyard Scene. Although there is an illusion of depth, it is done more subtly. The viewer is aware of the figure at the focal point, not because it forms a contrast to, but is in harmony with its surroundings. Strict simplification has limited this canvas to the bare essentials with which the artist has so aptly characterised the Malay Quarter.

It seems that Naudé chooses to paint the Malay Quarter when revealing his findings concerning the unusually bright South African light and the way in which it affects objects from which it is reflected.

It probably was not his aim to express the colourful appearance of the Malay Quarter or the gay and energetic outlook of the Malays. He did however realise that the Malay Quarter is picturesque because of its bright colours and the interesting structure of its architecture, as well as the appeal of its colourful people. And these characteristics feature in his works, but his main aim is the study of light itself.

In his painting A Busy Malay Quarter Street³¹⁾ Naudé makes use of a strong contrast of light and dark colour to form a unifying rhythm. And although his colour sometimes lacks subtlety, there is already a keen awareness that colour variations due to reflected light are fascinating, especially in the dark areas of the painting where they establish a harmony among objects enveloped by subdued light.

31) Chapter I, p.13, footnote 23 : A Busy Malay Quarter Street.

The composition of Naudé's Malay Courtyard Scene³²⁾ is consolidated by a light of even strength which links the background with the focal point, that is the woman at her tub. The shadow in the foreground is treated with great subtlety of colour variation. Here one finds soft purple, green, burnt sienna and blue which are closely related and also appear in the rest of the painting in lighter tones. This is a welcome change from the rather harsh blue, red and green which appear in the shady foreground of A Busy Malay Quarter Street. In Malay Courtyard Scene the immediacy achieved by Naudé's light and dark effects, is enhanced by his swift and sure brush strokes.

His painting entitled Malay Quarter reveals even a greater mastery in his use of light. Light and dark areas acquire a closer relationship than the artist is able to realise in his Malay Courtyard Scene, since shadows are more profoundly influenced by reflected light from sunlit areas which in turn, cannot escape the effects of the darker ones.

The subtle merging of light and dark results in a sense of repose which is already being heralded in Malay Courtyard Scene, but only in Malay Quarter does Naudé actually appear able to realise his aim.

NITA SPILHAUS

The sensitivity and essential honesty of Nita Spilhaus,³³⁾ work contribute largely towards our understanding and appreciation of the Malay Quarter. The

32) Chapter I, p.13, footnote 24 : Malay Courtyard Scene.

33) Nita Spilhaus. Born in 1878 in Lisbon, Portugal, grew up in Lübeck, Germany. Studied art under Fred Fehr and Adolph Hoalzel in Munich. In Paris she studied at the Thanlow Swedish Painting School. Came to South Africa in 1908. Similar outlook to Ruth Prowse. Influenced by Wenning. She has a place in the history of Cape painting. Memorable studies and etchings of trees. Jeppe, *ibid.*, p.92.

sketches and etchings of Nita Spilhaus deserve our attention. In them the real character of the Malay Quarter in which Eastern and Eighteenth Century Dutch architecture fuse, is expressed. Poverty is evident in the contrast created by flat-roofed houses next to tall elegant mosques, which are a symbol of religious fervour.

Technically the sketches are marked by simplicity of composition and sound craftsmanship. Only colours and forms which help the artist to express herself clearly are used.

Nita Spilhaus, in a sketch³⁴⁾ of the Chiappini Mosque, shows the combined use of semicircular and pointed arches. This mosque was built in 1850. Its minaret was altered in 1932. Nita Spilhaus' sketch was drawn after the alteration to the mosque.

It was executed in black ink with the addition of watercolour washes, yet it conveys the beauty of contrast achieved by the combination of simply constructed houses with more elaborate buildings.

Here she uses only a very pale pink watercolour wash for the mosque and a light blue one for the sky. For the rest, there are delicate pen lines in the lighter areas and heavier ones below the arches in front of the entrance, in the niches and on the roof. The pink wash which covers the building and ground forms a strong link between the mosque and the earth.

Nita Spilhaus treats the roof of the mosque lightly so as not to make it heavy and upset the balance of the dark shadows. It ends quite abruptly linking the building nearest the observer with the mosque. The pale blue wash which suggests the airiness of the sky and atmosphere enveloping the mountain, makes the warm pink buildings more immediate. Each line helps to express the solitary dignity and religious significance of the mosque and stresses its close relationship with the homes of the Malays.

34) Rep. XIII, p. 19a : Chiappini Mosque.

19a



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XIV

A photograph of the Chiappini Mosque³⁵⁾ taken from the same angle as the sketch, shows one how Nita Spilhaus has eliminated non-essential details. The wall in front of the mosque is sketched entirely without ornament and its angle is only slightly indicated. A little building adjoining the mosque on its far side, is merely suggested with a few lines and does not reveal the dark shadows caused by the recessed doors and the guttering as seen in the photograph. The row of windows of the building connecting the mosque with the street, is only suggested. Only windows which are essential to the rhythm of the sketch, are emphasized with dark tones of varying strength. The photograph states the windows without giving any special significance to them.

In her sketch the focal point is the mosque because of its centralized position and height. Whatever movement there is, like that of the architecture adjoining the mosque, leads the eye to the mosque. Nita Spilhaus is able to create a sense of peace and timelessness without introducing people, because the massed solidity of the buildings and their immediacy embody the devout outlook of the Malay.

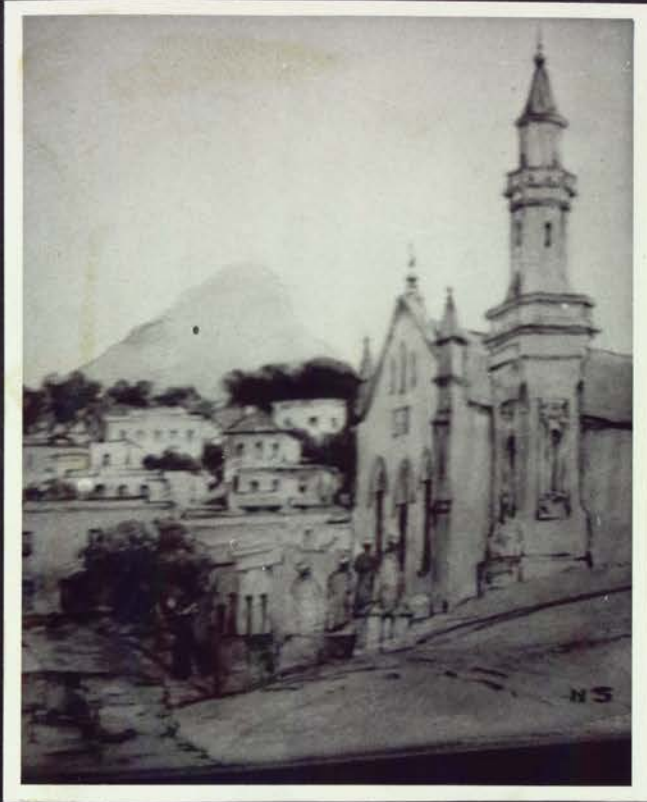
Her sketch Grey Mosque³⁶⁾ with adjoining, flat-roofed houses and more buildings higher up the mountain is predominantly portrayed in light grey, soft yellows, blue and pink. Grey like the sloping ground it stands on, the mosque rises to almost the full height of the composition on the right side and is linked with Lion's Head behind it. Four figures painted in subtle yellow, pink and blue, grouped in front of the mosque lead the eye to the adjoining architecture.

A decisive rhythm moving through the sketch is created by the dark forms of trees which are among the houses and in front of the mosque. They are depicted in tones of

35) Rep. XIV, p.19a : Chiappini Mosque.

36) Rep. XV, p. 20a : Grey Mosque.

20a



XV



LII

green and brown.

Although architecture plays an important part in Malay Women at Work³⁷⁾ by Ruth Prowse she cannot transmit her feelings without including figures, as can Nita Spilhaus who is able to express herself almost entirely through nature and man made constructions.

In Grey Mosque by Nita Spilhaus, the four figures in front of the mosque could quite readily have been omitted without detracting much from the meaning and composition of the sketch. The towering mosque in its prominent position is in harmony with the houses and nature, reflecting perhaps, the Malay's religious tendencies which have become part of his life. The strong rhythm of the dark green trees adds to this unity.

Nita Spilhaus' etchings are of importance to South African Art, because through them she has introduced our country to a technique which is traditionally European. She used it to express our sunlight whose brightness on clear days is often difficult to express.

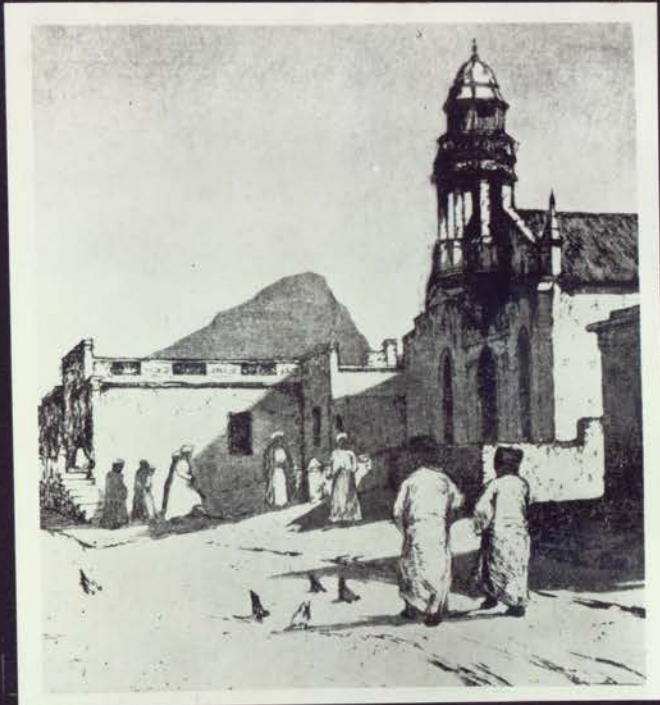
Her etching Old Chiappini Street Mosque³⁸⁾ depicts figures standing in front of, and approaching the mosque which is between Malay homes. Although not in the foreground, the mosque does not appear remote, because it is linked to the foreground by two figures in front of the nearest building on the right. These figures are placed in such a way that their white robes continue the movement of the light wall of the mosque and their deep-toned heads lead the eye from the dark wall and its cast shadow to the shady facade. Figures and architecture are closely connected to the earth by these areas of dark shadows resulting in a lively rhythm.

This etching is executed in black and white only, a medium through which the artist is able to describe soft shadow gradations on the walls in subtle tones in order to create a certain atmosphere. Harsh sunlight

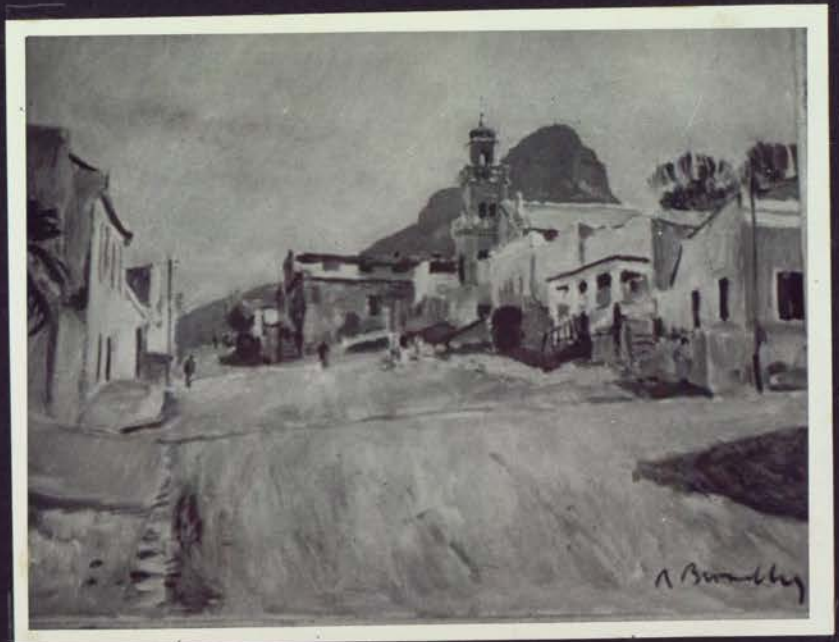
37) Rep. XXIII, p.26a : Malay Women at Work.

38) Rep. XVI, p.21a : Old Chiappini Street Mosque.

21a



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is described by very light areas and tiny flicks of the pen suggest textural qualities.

In Old Chiappini Street Mosque Nita Spilhaus depicts the mosque from the same angle as in her sketch Chiappini Mosque. In the etching the door has no platform to hold the minaret. The sketch shows this extension which makes the viewer feel closer to the mosque. And the sketch's foreground is reduced by the exclusion of part of the building which leads the eye from the street to the mosque. However, she expressed the dignity and inner significance of the mosque more fully in her etching Old Chiappini Street Mosque.

Broadley's³⁹⁾ painting entitled Chiappini Street Mosque does not seem to stress the significance of the mosque as such. It is merely a section of a scene, being distinguishable only because it is silhouetted against the background. And although the mosque and its surrounding buildings are simplified, Broadley's work is still too realistic to be direct and bold. It has no convincing power and the dramatic rhythm present in Nita Spilhaus' work caused by its composition of light and dark effects, is lacking.

39) Robert Broadley. Born in 1908 in Manchester, England, came to South Africa in 1927. His work recalls the French Impressionists. In 1947 he painted the Royal opening of Parliament. He is represented in the National Gallery, Cape Town.

Jeppe, *ibid.*, p.13.

Alexander adds : Broadley studied in Southport and London before coming to South Africa.

Alexander, *ibid.*, p.160.

Broadley evaded the strong light of a cloudless South African day with its bright blue sky and dark, colourless shadows.

Ibid., p.18.

Similar to contemporary painting, that of South Africa seldom includes the portrait. But portraiture and sculpture still interest the public and artists e.g. Broadley.

Ibid., p.39.

40) Rep. XVII, p.21a : Chiappini Street Mosque.

In his representation of the Loop Street Mosque,⁴¹⁾ Broadley simplifies its facade, merely suggesting the portal and windows. Attention is attracted to the mosque by its tall, stately minaret which appears more elegant than it actually is. His colours are restricted to yellow ochre, blue, terre verte, black and white, resulting in a cold and rather colourless canvas.

In Nita Spilhaus' Malay Quarter⁴²⁾ the centrally placed tall mosque forms the focal point in the interesting, counteracting diagonals of the houses and high mountain behind. Supported by unsteady poles, the washing echoes this rhythm.

The strong orange, green and mauve of the mosque are repeated in softer nuances in the background, contrasting their striking crispness⁴³⁾ in the foreground.

In this scene the mosque, without losing its impression of dignity, heightens the gaiety imparted by the brightly coloured forms surrounding it.

Although Malay Quarter has a sparkling impact, it seems that Nita Spilhaus, when depicting a whole village as she does here, sacrifices the clarity and simplicity revealed in her sketches and etchings. Confining herself to only a few colours and forms, she is more powerful and convincing.⁴⁴⁾

Whereas Naudé is primarily interested in the study of light as it affects objects and therefore has strong Impressionistic leanings, Nita Spilhaus differs from him in that her outlook is more realistic. Her desire to paint the Malay Quarter is probably not associated with the study of light in an effort to express a fleeting moment in time, but rather to reveal her emotions concerning the Malay's strong religious faith.

41) Rep. XVIII, p.4b : Loop Street Mosque.

42) Rep. XIX, p.23a : Malay Quarter.

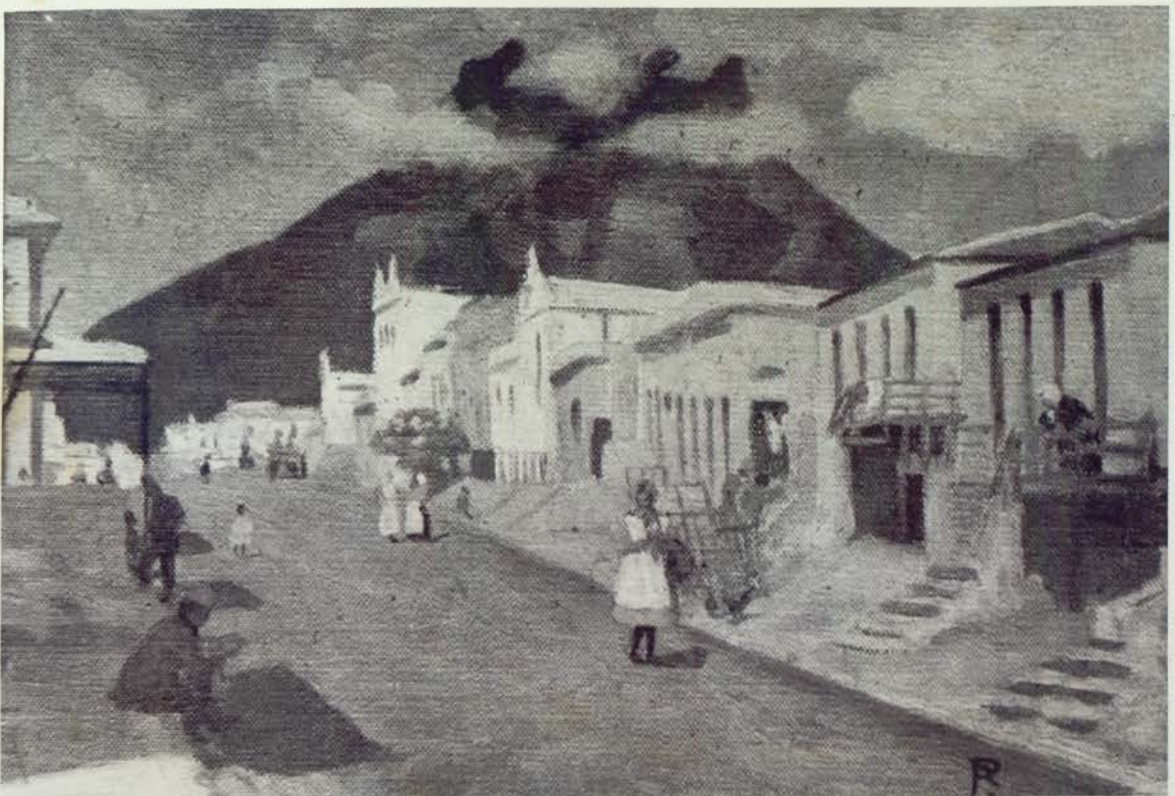
43) Magda Sauer : Our Art I, p.127.

44) A.C. Bouman: Kuns in Suid-Afrika, p.93.

23a



XIX



XX

She may be termed a realist since her subject is recognisable as the Malay Quarter with its interesting architectural combination of domed mosques and long rows of flat-roofed homes. But in Nita Spilhaus' efforts to express the deep-seated religious attitude of the Malay, she does not imitate the structure of the Malay Quarter, but exaggerates the importance of the mosque and its close association with humble Malay homes.

A strong unifying rhythm is employed. While light and dark effects are present, light is used only as a means to an end and does not figure as a major study as is the case in Naudé's work.

Old Chiappini Street Mosque in which she uses the strong contrasting effects of dark cast shadows and bright sunlight to form a unity in her composition, recalls the Dutch manner of construction which Naudé also resorts to. But again Nita Spilhaus adheres more closely to nature than Naudé does, in for instance, his Malay Courtyard Scene⁴⁵⁾ in which dark shadow forms a framework for the lighter areas of the painting.

When Nita Spilhaus resorts to the use of bright colour as she does in Malay Quarter, the treatment of her subject is as spontaneous as that of Naudé in Malay Courtyard Scene, excepting that her colours create a more sparkling effect, since they are less affected by undercoatings of paint.

Regarding the way these artists apply their paint, Naudé's brush strokes may be considered bolder and hastier than those of Nita Spilhaus.

Although the mosque as the focal point is a striking feature of Malay Quarter by Nita Spilhaus, the numerous small buildings surrounding it create a disturbing feature in this work. For this reason the simplification of form in Naudé's Malay Courtyard Scene renders the latter a more impressive creation.

45) Chapter I, p.13, footnote 24 : Malay Courtyard Scene.

RUTH PROWSE

Of Ruth Prowse⁴⁶⁾ Jeppe says "Ruth Prowse is closely identified with the encouragement, and the development, of the Cape naturalist tradition. With Hugo Naudé she was the first to introduce the principles of European impressionism to South Africa. Her work may be described as a kind of solid impressionism whose interest penetrates considerably deeper than mere atmospheric effect. Her numerous studies of Cape Town and its Malay Quarter are amongst the most affectionately honest and craftsmanlike studies ever made on this subject."⁴⁷⁾

Ruth Prowse depicts the Malay people and their surroundings with great accuracy due to her sound knowledge of the subject and her skill as a painter.

In Ruth Prowse's depictions of the Malay Quarter one strongly feels her admiration and love for its colourful people.

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- 46) Ruth Prowse. Born in Queenstown. Received training at Cape Town Art School. At Slade and the Royal Academy Schools and later in Paris. Returned to South Africa in 1908. Since then contributed greatly to our art. Exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1938. Trustee of the South African National Gallery from 1948 to 1960. She was chairman of the New Group. Represented in the National Gallery, Cape Town. Included in the Van Riebeeck Tercentenary (1952), the Rhodes Centenary, Bulawayo (1953) and the 1956 Quadrennial. Keeper of the Michaelis Collection from 1928 to 1956. Jeppe, *ibid.*, p.77. Alexander adds to Jeppe's statement giving Ruth Prowse's date of birth as 1883 stating her as being a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. Alexander, *ibid.*, p.167. Works in the National Art Gallery, Cape Town. Great Church Tower with date of death of Ruth Prowse as 1967. Suid-Afrikaanse Panorama September 1969, p.29. Portrait of Maggie Laubser. Eldred Green: South African National Gallery, Lantern, March, 1966, p.19.
- 47) Jeppe, *ibid.*, p.77.

One of her earlier portrayals of the Malay Quarter⁴⁸⁾ of 1912 gives a good idea of her abilities as a painter. In this painting Ruth Prowse depicts a street in the Malay Quarter using her characteristic warm yellows, pinks, pale blues and white. Along the right side of the street the houses form a strong movement towards Lion's Head. On the opposite side only a section of the architecture is visible. The artist has managed admirably in creating an harmonious atmosphere between eastern and western elements which are characteristic of this area. Figures standing and moving about in the street blend with their surroundings, and do not attract particular attention. Unfortunately the painter made too much of the mountain capped with clouds, allowing it to seem darker and more dominant than any object in the foreground.

The strong movement and colour of the buildings behind the rather insignificant figures, show that Ruth Prowse wishes to draw attention to these man made structures rather than to their inhabitants.

In Corner of Buitengracht Street,⁴⁹⁾ Ruth Prowse's main motive is to describe the colourful shop and houses. The architecture in the canvas is not arranged in a particularly exiting composition but forms a horizontal movement. Balance and interest are maintained by vertical forms such as figures, doors, windows and chimneys. The tranquil foreground is executed in the same dull greyish green which occurs in the distance. Against this quiet setting the buildings are depicted in warm yellows and rich pinks, with touches of green. Because of these glowing colours the houses attract special attention and provide a setting for the figures which, blending with the architecture, add a vital element which greatly enhances the work. Besides conveying a

48) Rep. XX, p.23a : Malay Quarter.

49) Rep. XXI, p.26a : Corner of Buitengracht Street.

26a



XXI



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communal feeling and a sense of repose, these figures together with the other vertical elements, form a strong rhythm throughout the painting.

Ruth Prowse describes the lives of the Malays in a calm objective manner, not forgetting her role as an artist, "but her eye is a painter's eye and it does not allow these details to obtrude; they take their place in the general arrangement and tones of the picture."⁵⁰⁾

The artist does not date her works but Corner of Buitengracht Street seems to belong to the same period as Malay Quarter, Cape Town,⁵¹⁾ mainly because she has employed the same warm yellows, ochres and pinks in both. In the latter painting, the use of white on the tallest building on the right draws attention as the most dominant element of the composition. Less vital yet very expressive is the row of houses higher up. Ruth Prowse's use of white is similar to that of Wenning, who in his painting Malay Quarter,⁵²⁾ uses white only on his most important focal point and limits the other elements to blue and yellow. Wenning's work being more simplified is less confusing than Ruth Prowse's. In her canvas the foremost group of figures walking towards the buildings, attracts attention. Although the buildings are much taller than the human forms, the cosy atmosphere they create does not escape the viewer. Once again a powerful rhythm is formed by the strong contrast between light and dark figures and houses.

Ruth Prowse's Malay Women at Work⁵³⁾ reveals her growing ability to portray her subject. All forms give a sense of belonging and so contribute towards the creation of a delicately balanced work.

50) Prof. Rupert Shephard: Our Art II, p.92.

51) Rep. XXII, p.26a : Malay Quarter, Cape Town.

52) Rep. XLVII, p.57a : Malay Quarter.

53) Chapter I, p.21, footnote 37 : Malay Women at Work.

The canvas describes the intimate lives of women in the back yard of their homes. It stresses the dignity of hard work and co-operation which exists among the Malays. Children whom one naturally associates with these apparently contented women are part of the scene. The homes which play a very important part in the lives of the women are stressed and each form is of value in the composition, colour and tone. The figures in green and turquoise on the right lead the eye to the most striking figure which is on the opposite side, dressed in red. From here a dark green tree guides the eye to the tall minaret of the mosque. Lion's Head is finally seen behind light yellow and pale green houses which lead the rhythm to its dark, reddish green summit. The red and blue-green of the figures echo the mountains and the sky respectively, creating a subtle balance of colour. The houses symbolise the contentedness and reliability of the people through their solid construction. The colours chosen for the figures almost flow into one another and form part of their surroundings. Human and architectural forms appear to grow out of the rich green mountains behind them and a harmony is achieved.

In Malay Women at work Ruth Prowse paints in quieter tones. And instead of employing warm yellows and pinks as she does in previous Malay Quarter works e.g. Malay Quarter and Corner of Buitengracht Street, yellow ochre, pale blue, burnt sienna and warm green predominate here.

Malay Women at Work may be compared to Coloured Nurse and Baby⁵⁴⁾ by Cecil Higgs⁵⁵⁾ who, similar to Ruth

54) Cecil Higgs: Coloured Nurse and Baby.
A.C. Bouman: Painters of South Africa, pp.111, 113.

55) Cecil Higgs. Born in the Orange Free State. Trained at Goldsmith's School of Art, London and the Royal Academy schools under Walter Sickert. And under André Lhote in Paris. Studies sea life forms in particular. Lives in Cape Town.
Jeppe, *ibid.*, p.40.
Alexander agrees with Jeppe adding: Born in 1906.
Alexander, *ibid.*, p.164.

Prowse uses cool colours such as pink and blue to contrast her warm ones. The creations of both artists express the joy of life, although in Ruth Prowse's canvas the figures are more reposeful than those in Coloured Nurse and Baby. Ruth Prowse's standing figures show only a slight movement of the body echoing the peaceful spirit of the upright houses behind them, whereas a swinging movement which is further enhanced by an oval round the middle group, is introduced in the rocking body of the girl in Cecil Higgs' work. The homes and walking figure join in the happy dance of a youthful maid.

A Rear View of Malay Quarter Houses⁵⁶⁾ by McCaw⁵⁷⁾ showing the old Chiappini Street mosque is a less satisfactory painting than Malay Women at Work by Ruth Prowse. In McCaw's painting neither the homes nor the mosque surrounded by transverse planes, can counter-balance the monotonous horizontal movement of the remaining architecture. The bare undulating foreground is meaningless as it does not change the effects caused by the architecture which is mainly horizontal. The solitary figure working on this disturbing yellow ground is almost white and insignificant, expressing a feeling of desolation. The

56) Rep. XXIV, p.29a : A Rear View of Malay Quarter Houses.

57) Terence John McCaw. Born 1913 in Pilgrims Rest, Transvaal. Trained at Johannesburg Art School and the Central School of Arts and Crafts and Heatherley's, London. Worked in Europe for two years. Worked at the Cape from 1937. Later served as war artist with the South African Army in North Africa and Italy. Alexander, *ibid.*, p.165.
 Jeppe adds: Exhibited throughout South Africa, Nairobi and Ireland. Group exhibitions in London, Edinburgh, Paris, Brussels, Rome, Florence and Venice. Represented in the National Gallery, Cape Town as well as the Johannesburg and Durban Galleries. Paints landscapes of the Cape and Basutoland. Jeppe, *ibid.*, p.60.

29a



XXIV



XXV

movement of this figure is not gently rhythmical, but rather jarring in its effect and does not merge with the houses behind it, whereas Ruth Prowse's reposeful figures blend with their surroundings. The homely atmosphere in her work is largely due to a warm human element which is lacking in McCaw's painting.

There is a big difference between the work of Ruth Prowse and that of Caldecott. Traces of the French Impressionistic influence present in his canvases cannot be detected in her paintings. "When one compares this style of painting with that of an impressionist like Caldecott, the difference at once becomes evident. With Ruth Prowse there are no fleeting brush strokes, no hurry, no colours hastening to overtake each other."⁵⁸⁾ Caldecott's brush strokes are almost feverish and his figures express a great deal of movement. This quality is especially noticeable in The Cricket Match.⁵⁹⁾ In The Goat, Malay Quarter⁶⁰⁾ there is action, but it is more controlled, e.g. the boy wheeling a cart expresses movement, but is not allowed to overpower the other components of the work. Ruth Prowse's work is quiet, almost lacking in movement and the effect is that of repose, not haste.

In her painting From a Window, Wale Street, Cape Town,⁶¹⁾ Ruth Prowse concentrates on the figures. She looks down on her subject and has to contend with the diagonal lines of the rails on the ground, the turquoise fence and a grey wooden enclosure at the top of the picture plane. The window sill itself forms a marked diagonal. She counteracts the diagonal movement which starts on the left edge of the canvas and continues across to the right until halted by the dark

58) Bouman, *ibid.*, p.17.

59) Rep. XXVIII, p.37a : The Cricket Match.

60) Rep. XXIX, p.37a : The Goat, Malay Quarter.

61) Rep. XXV, p.29a : From a Window, Wale Street, Cape Town.

vertical frame of the window. Figures are arranged in a powerful triangle which dominates the work in which diagonals consolidate the composition. The three standing figures together with the post on the left of the fence, form a movement in the opposite direction. Ruth Prowse reveals her knowledge of the physical demands to which the workmen are subjected. The erect human forms do not only reveal a mental and physical need for rest, but together with the posts of the fence and window frame, they lend a peaceful atmosphere to the painting.

The turquoise fence plays an essential part in the composition. But its cold quality which hardly varies, would have been a disturbing influence if it were not for the warm rose-coloured ground behind it. And the frame of the window in tones of dark blue and purple with touches of grey, focuses the attention on the labourers. Its weight and simplicity draw the viewer's eye into the canvas, controlling the strong diagonal movement.

In Rose Street, Malay Quarter⁶²⁾ Ruth Prowse depicts a street scene. On the right side of the street a woman tends children and on the left more small figures are seen. A severe drop of ground with trees growing on its summit links the houses with the background. An atmosphere of intimacy is created by the small, crowded houses.

The artist exaggerates the sense of restriction of space in this area by placing the focal point only slightly to the left of the centre. The children and the woman whose seat is uncomfortably close to the wall, are confined to a limited space and there is a feeling of excitement, of urgency. Holding one child on her lap the woman leans over to pay attention to another.

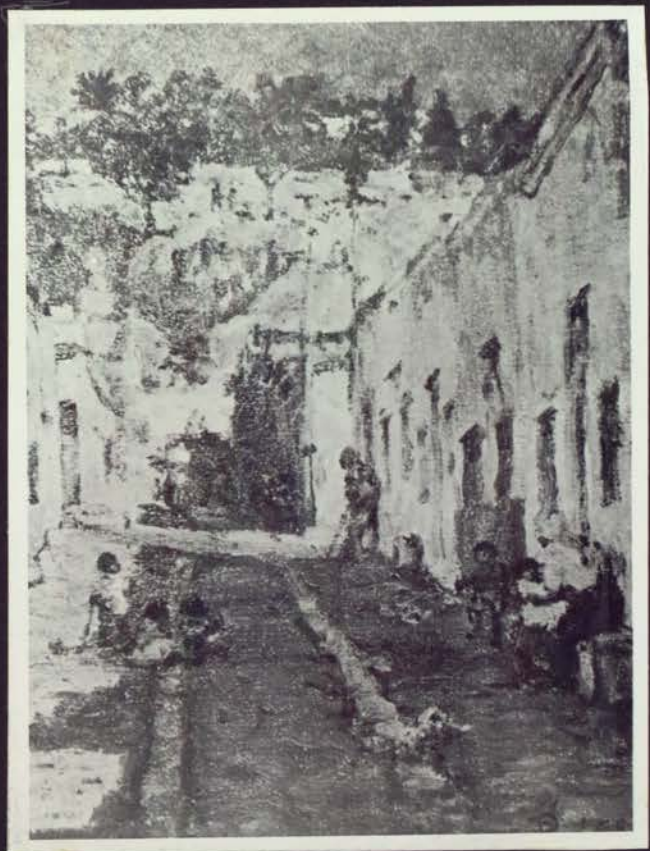
This scene is different from Ruth Prowse's other canvases dealing with the Malay Quarter subject. Here she has created a soft, dappled effect. The walls of the houses are painted in subtle tones of white, yellow

62) Rep. XXVI, p.31a : Rose Street, Malay Quarter.

31a



XXVI



ochre and pale green. Touches of rose are seen. The pale blue of the sky is reflected in the dark grey shadow which falls across the street. A comparatively strong light which is too contrived and arresting, connects the houses in the middle-distance. For the rest there is an excellent distribution of light, which draws the forms in the foreground subtly together. The use of white has now taken its rightful place. It draws the attention of the spectator gently but firmly, then guides it to the colourful foreground where figures and houses blend with their surroundings, just as the more distant architecture forms a unit with the mountain behind it.

Rose Street, Malay Quarter may be regarded as one of Ruth Prowse's best paintings. Its charm lies in its being small but complete; gentle and meaningful.

In general Ruth Prowse's work is realistic, a truthful expression of her careful observation of the world she lives in.

Ruth Prowse, like Nita Spilhaus, is not simply interested in the Malay Quarter for its own sake.

They differ however in their approach to their subject. Nita Spilhaus suggests that the stability of the Malay has its origin in his religious outlook, adding a sense of mysticism⁶³⁾ to her approach.

She manages to transmit this feeling whether human figures are included in the work or not. An example of the former is Grey Mosque⁶⁴⁾ while Chiappini Mosque⁶⁵⁾ illustrates the latter.

Ruth Prowse on the other hand finds beauty in the everyday, rather ordinary activities of the Malay.

63) A.C. Bouman: Kuns in Suid-Afrika, p.93.

64) Chapter I, p.20, footnote 36 : Grey Mosque.

65) Ibid., p.20, footnote 35 : Chiappini Mosque.

People⁶⁶⁾ are described performing a variety of tasks while closely associated with their fellow men and their environment e.g. Malay Women at Work.⁶⁷⁾ And since Ruth Prowse's compositions deal with a more readily understood subject, her work, though highly imaginative and tender, does not reveal the mystical quality present in that of Nita Spilhaus. In spite of concentrating on different aspects of the Malay's life, both these artists' creations are calm and serene.

A comparative study of the techniques of Ruth Prowse and Nita Spilhaus reveals the latter's as more delicate in contrast with the rather decisive brush strokes of the former.

Ruth Prowse's use of colour differs from that of Nita Spilhaus, since the former is affected by the harshness of the South African sunlight, using mainly soft blue, yellow ochre, burnt sienna and warm green e.g. Malay Women at Work. Nita Spilhaus' colours on the other hand are brighter, since she uses strong orange, green and mauve as well as clear yellow and white e.g. Malay Quarter.⁶⁸⁾ But Nita Spilhaus' most poetic work is not always executed in bright colour and her sketches for example Grey Mosque which is simpler regarding form and colour, is more appealing than Malay Quarter.

Ruth Prowse's use of colour on the other hand does not hamper her power of expression but instead contributes towards the desired effect.

CALDECOTT

By competent adjustment of the French Impressionistic style of painting to South African conditions, Caldecott has interpreted the beauty of the Malay Quarter in a most personal style as seen in his creations

66) Shephard, *ibid.*, p.92.

67) Chapter I, p.21, footnote 37 : Malay Women at Work.

68) *Ibid.*, p.23, footnote 42 : Malay Quarter.

The Cricket Match⁶⁹⁾ and The Goat, Malay Quarter.⁷⁰⁾
Caldecott⁷¹⁾ has not yet received the acclaim⁷²⁾
which is undoubtedly due to him. But the public can
hardly be blamed for failing to appreciate what this
artist has done for South African art, because he only
really painted in South Africa for a very short period,
from 1924 to 1928 and after his death in 1929 his widow
took possession of his paintings and drawings. There
were, as far as is known to South African art lovers,
only thirty-one oils, two large drawings in ink and
crayon with watercolour as well as some smaller drawings
and sketches. A small number of these works are in
public hands. Fortunately the National Gallery in
Cape Town and the Municipal Gallery in Johannesburg possess
some of Caldecott's work. For the rest, those who were
privileged enough to know his widow,⁷³⁾ were able to
see Caldecott's fine works of art. In Caldecott's
memorial exhibition⁷⁴⁾ of 1956, thirty-eight of his
works were shown. For various reasons the remainder
could not be traced.

69) Chapter I, p.30, footnote 59 : The Cricket Match.

70) Ibid., p.30, footnote 60 : The Goat, Malay Quarter.

71) Ibid., p.11, footnote 15.

72) Prof. J. du. P. Scholtz : Strat Caldecott, Our Art I,
p.67.

73) Florence Zerffi-Caldecott 1882-1962. Born in
London. Studied in London and Berlin. In 1916
she settled in South Africa. Married Harry
Stratford Caldecott. Had influence as an art
teacher.

Alexander, *ibid.*, p.171.

Jeppe agrees with Alexander adding that Zerffi was
keeper of the Michaelis Collection, Cape Town from
1921 to 1924. Married Caldecott in 1924. An
original member of the New Group. Exhibited in
Cape Town and East London. Represented in the
National Gallery, Cape Town by a portrait of
Caldecott. Went to England in 1956.

Jeppe, *ibid.*, p.117.

74) National Gallery, Cape Town.

Caldecott practised the basic principles of French Impressionism in⁷⁵⁾ South Africa, where the light does not always lend itself suitably to this method because it defines shapes and outlines much more clearly than the soft light experienced in Europe. "It was only H. Stratford Caldecott who in his short life succeeded in adapting impressionist methods of painting to South African conditions."⁷⁶⁾ Although Caldecott should receive credit for having successfully painted in the Impressionistic style to suit South African conditions, Goodman⁷⁷⁾ should not be overlooked since he also achieved

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- 75) The application of paint by means of obvious strokes helped the Impressionists to blur the outlines of objects, allowing them to blend with their surroundings. This method also facilitated the introduction of one colour into another's area without losing it, but rather enhancing the colour effects. The perceptible strokes had in addition "helped to express or suggest the activity, the scintillation, of light, and to recreate these to a certain extent on canvas." The technique of obvious strokes was suited, it appeared, to their aim of expressing constantly changing aspects. The painter had to evolve a system whereby he could, with speed record the quick changes registered by his perceptions. John Rewald: The History of Impressionism, pp.272-273.
Light studied rather than the object. Aided by science, Impressionists defined colour as resulting from light rays of varying lengths. The visual impression captured at a particular moment of the day was important, not the event. Reality became a luminous fog. Since 1870 bright, fresh colour replaced the greyish-brown tones of earlier paintings. The sparkling effect resulted from a lack of drawing as the basis for painting and shadows which are a mixture of pure colours without black. Sheldon Cheney: A New World History of Art, p.575.
- 76) Alexander, *ibid.*, p.18.
- 77) Gwelo Goodman 1871-1939. Born at Taplow on the Thames. Painted landscapes, still-lives, interiors and architectural subjects. Exhibited at the Royal Academy. For a long time he was South Africa's most productive academic artist. Realism and technical skill are seen in his pastels. *Ibid.*, p.163.
Also Jeppe, *ibid.*, pp.36-37.

success in this field.⁷⁸⁾

Caldecott used black in his shadows to express their intensity. "Strat Caldecott dared to show the harshness of South African light and shade using black in his palette but his work still remained colourful."⁷⁹⁾

In his painting The Wash Line,⁸⁰⁾ Caldecott gives us a vivid representation of poverty, a salient feature of the Malay Quarter, symbolised by the crowded, simply constructed houses and the wash line. He exaggerates the humble appearance of the houses in not only viewing them from a high vantage point, but also surrounding them by tall forms. The viewer's eye is guided by the row of Malay houses on the left towards a tall tree placed immediately behind them. In the distance buildings can be discerned. A powerful rectangle is formed by the wall of a building which extends vertically from the foreground and which is separated from the other buildings by a narrow street. Heavily laden, the wash line sags across the street drawing attention to a dark blue shadow and a small figure. It records the tale of tiring work, poverty and lack of space. In spite of hardships endured by the Malays, they are contented. A calm mood is revealed by the quiet dignity of each form. Only the rectangular wall on the right is slightly out of harmony with the others.

Its surface should have been more simplified, lightened. For the rest the pale blue light which permeates the painting is well distributed, so that the eye notices first the washing and houses in the foreground. Other objects, necessary but less important, draw secondary attention.

Delicate reds, greens and yellows feature beside pale and darker blue, the whole colour scheme being well balanced.

78) Joyce Newton-Thompson: Gwelo Goodman, p.65.

79) Alexander, *ibid.*, p.45.

80) Rep. XXVII, p.36a : The Wash Line.

36a



XXVII



In The Cricket Match Caldecott portrays children at play in the foreground. The background shows houses forming an arc that leads the eye down to rocks which partially surround the children. Excitement is expressed in the children's animated movements which are accentuated by the bold, colourful rocks near them.

The vast expanse of open ground is important to the composition. There is a suggestion of freedom in its appearance of boundlessness and this feeling is intensified by the depiction of light and air in vigorous brush strokes.

The buildings have no individuality, they are low, small and crowded. They are portrayed in light tones and form a semicircular movement which is linked to the curve of the dark rocks that surround the children without robbing them of their atmosphere of freedom.

With an Impressionistic technique Caldecott has successfully expressed the parched ground and strong flickering light which is so typical of South Africa, adding black to intensify the shadows. The laws of perspective are not followed in that the homes in the background appear bigger than the children in the foreground. Not only are the houses simplified, but black lines are also used to define their forms. Rocks and figures are treated in a similar way. Strong dark red and black are used to contrast the white, yellow, pale blue and light red of the rocks.

Even though Caldecott's Cricket Match cannot be termed truly Impressionistic, he can be said to have avoided the main pitfall of Impressionism, namely the loss of form. His colour is clear, bold and constructive.

In The Goat, Malay Quarter, we see that the artist has been able to apply the impressionistic theories more fully. A striking difference is that no longer use is made of dark, rich, red and yellow, but that he has changed to the cooler colours like mauve, blue, black and white alternated by light tones of yellow and red.

37a



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As in The Cricket Match, we have again the expanse of earth in the foreground with the houses placed beyond it. The buildings enclose the farthest boundaries of the ground, yet are nearer the viewer and closely associated with the figures in front. The homes are arranged so that they form a courtyard which lends a certain intimacy to the scene. The triangular cast shadow at the lower edge of the painting, makes the viewer aware of a pitched roof behind or in line with him. A goat standing near the shadow, holds a prominent place in the composition. Had it been placed farther to the right or lower down the goat would have upset the composed tension it forms with the figures.

The movement of the boy wheeling his cart, although not drawing too much attention, is counteracted by the quiet dignity of the other figures. These two figures and the goat are treated in dark blue and black to give them solidity. They rhythmically re-echo the dark recesses behind them. A factor which also greatly contributes towards balance, is the sensitive approach of Caldecott to all forms. The houses, although in the background, are by no means neglected and show subtle changes of tone where the light falls, as well as in the dark shadows of recessed doors and windows.

Caldecott avoids strong contrasts allowing the light to flow softly from the sunlit side of the walls into the shade without harsh distinction. In this way he subtly suggests the architecture, without distracting attention from other important forms. The hat and shirt of the boy with the cart are white and blend with the homes. Only the dark outlines of the lower part of his body link him to the foreground. The "courtyard" is described as are the walls, in tones of ochre and white.

To be noted further are the very interesting and important cast shadows in mauves, blues and black. In them there are subdued reflections of sunlight from

surrounding forms. The whole painting vibrates with atmospheric effects without any loss of form.

In all forms there is a delicate balance between harmony and tension.

Caldecott painted The Goat, Malay Quarter in 1927 and his close association with Zerffi from 1924, brought improvement in his work as a painter after they met. He certainly shows a calmer and more analytical approach in 1927 than he does in The Cricket Match of 1926 with its strong dark colour, less compact composition and lack of thought regarding values. Here changes of tone appear to be just incidental, not carefully calculated as in The Goat, Malay Quarter. Zerffi's painting Malay Quarter⁸¹⁾ in general resembles Caldecott's representation of the same subject because she uses similar cool blues and reds. And in this canvas buildings appear along the mountain in the background forming a strong unity as is the case in The Goat, Malay Quarter.

Zerffi's work however, differs from that of Caldecott in that it is dark and mysterious. There is also a lack of activity in her painting. The only sign of the human element is indicated by the washing on the line, which adds to the sense of desolation. The painter draws attention to its shapeless forms which compete with the solidly constructed, small buildings which surround it. It seems as if the homes are trying to escape from a threatening storm. The dark blues used in describing the architecture are repeated in the sky, forming a dark blanket which only lifts slightly from the earth in the centre to reveal a dull pink sky with tiny white clouds. Zerffi is using a Malay scene, not to tell us more about the Malays, but to express her feelings about the enigma of life. Buildings in the middle-distance are merely suggested and blend with the colour of the distant mountains. Zerffi has a

81) Rep. XXX, p.37a : Malay Quarter.

controlled sense of colour and uses only blue, red and white. The sky, ground and buildings form a strong unit, in fact it seems as though a part of the sky were dragged onto the ground to form a powerful zigzag movement between sky and ground. The light which is strongest in the foreground is subtly repeated in the rest of the composition. Its intensity decreases on more distant forms. The narrow streets and flat roofs, as well as the gaiety and come-what-may attitude of the Malay are sadly missing. It is evident that Zerffi found the South African light very harsh and continued to paint in the European subdued style. It was mainly because of her retiring temperament that she found it difficult to express the brilliance of the South African sunlight. "Her modest approach shrinks from South Africa's often too brilliant sunshine, she feels this scorching heat, this sometimes cruel light as a threat rather than a blessing." And Zerffi's own words: "The sunlight here kills everything, it makes the world fallow, no colour can stand up against its cruelty."⁸²⁾

It is clear that the artists Naudé, Nita Spilhaus, Ruth Prowse and Caldecott consciously kept in touch with the European tradition of painting. On the whole they have attempted to follow the principles of the Impressionist Movement. But it is difficult to paint in an impressionistic⁸³⁾ way in South Africa since Impressionism originated in France where climatic conditions cause a subdued light. Since the light in South Africa is exceptionally bright, causing infinitesimal changes of colour and strong dark shadows, artists in this country have had to adapt their knowledge of Impressionism to its unusual characteristics. Consequently South African painters have on the whole resorted to the use of subdued colours instead of attempting an expression of colour in a sharp light.

82) A.C. Bouman: *Painters of South Africa*, p.59.

83) Alexander, *ibid.*, p.18.

CHAPTER II

BOONZAIER

Although Wenning¹⁾ and Boonzaier²⁾ both represent the Malay Quarter in a most personal and individual style, it is noticeable that Boonzaier is often influenced by his predecessor Wenning. Boonzaier is the younger artist by thirty-five years.

As a child Boonzaier had the opportunity of studying Wenning's work and observing him while painting, as the latter was a close friend of Boonzaier's father who did his utmost to foster Wenning's work. Wenning realised that Gregoire Boonzaier had talent and encouraged his interest in art.

Boonzaier started drawing³⁾ when he was six years of age. One of the first people to recognise his talent was Bernard Lewis, then a Cape art critic writing under the nom-de-plume of "Brander." "He commented:

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- 1) Pieter Wenning. Landscape painter born in Holland in 1874, died in 1921. Came to South Africa in 1906. Assistant in bookshops. At first painted in his spare time. Style like that of the Hague. Bringing the Hague tradition to South Africa he established a school of painting in Cape Town. Left drawings and etchings as well as paintings. F.L. Alexander: Art in South Africa since 1900, p.171. Jeppe agrees with Alexander but says that Wenning was born in 1873, came to South Africa in 1905. Left Pretoria for Cape Town in 1916. Visited Durban and Lourenco Marques. Died in Pretoria. Harold Jeppe: South African Artists, p.112.
 - 2) Gregoire Boonzaier. Born in 1909. Studied at Heatherley and Central Schools of Arts and Crafts, London. Returned to South Africa in 1936. Medal of Honour awarded by Die Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie in 1958. Alexander, *ibid.*, p.160. Jeppe adds: After England Boonzaier visited Paris, then Spain. Returned to South Africa in 1938. Born in Cape Town. Jeppe, *ibid.*, p.9.
 - 3) F.P. Scott: Gregoire Boonzaier, pp.12-13.

'These drawings by a child were indeed childlike but already displayed that feeling for composition which is one of Gregoire's characteristics.'

Both Wenning and "Brander" expressed admiration for Boonzaier's drawings of netsukes in his father's collection and his copies of Japanese prints. Boonzaier also received encouragement and support from Kottler the sculptor and Brandon Davis a Johannesburg attorney and art lover.⁴⁾

The work of Wenning and Boonzaier is similar in that they both use the rich soft colours which one experiences on a rainy day at the Cape and they often employ dark outlines to define their forms.

Seeing that these artists gained greatly from their study of Japanese woodcuts,⁵⁾ it is interesting to note how each differs in his application of the Japanese theories.⁶⁾ In the paintings of Wenning and Boonzaier an illusion of depth is created by the use of flatness of composition, showing hardly any modelling of form which is a feature of Japanese art. Space is a living part of the design, whereas depth is suggested rather than stated. Disregarding shadows, decorative details which the artist thinks important for his purpose, are included.

In The White House, Malay Quarter⁷⁾ Boonzaier keeps the colour of the hill, trees and sky in the background as deep in tone as forms in the foreground. He paints all forms as solid and unchanging. Due to this, Boonzaier's dark outlines move slowly and deliberately

4) Scott, *ibid.*, pp.12-13.

5) The Artist Pieter Wenning: South African Panaroma, May 1963, p.20.
Influence of Japanese art on Wenning. Written with acknowledgement to Gregoire Boonzaier and Lippy Lipschitz for excerpts from "Wenning" and "Ons Kuns".

6) Sheldon Cheney: A New World History of Art, p.583.

7) Rep. XXXI, p.42a : The White House, Malay Quarter.

42a



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XXXI

over the entire surface of his canvas. His architecture is constructed in flat, simple planes and the clear definition of each step of the "white" house and its door, serve as a decorative element.

Boonzaier does not seem to be interested in atmospheric effects. He depicts the rectangular planes observed in the Malay Quarter to reveal his sense of the decorative in flat linear patterns. His forms are not rigid; yet they are not intended to convey movement, but only to add to the decorative value of the canvas. Even forms as flexible as trees and figures do not express movement in themselves, but only through their rhythmic pattern.

If one could regard this canvas as purely decorative, the idea of its not expressing the spirit of the Malay people and its architecture may be forgotten in the sheer enjoyment of its colour patterning.

Boonzaier has mainly based his vision⁸⁾ on the traditions of the Hague School, French Impressionism and Japanese art, although he was guided by Wenning's approach to painting, in his earlier atmospheric paintings e.g. Cottage and Two Oaks, Newlands.⁹⁾ But his later works reveal no Wenning influence, instead that of Cézanne¹⁰⁾, Utrillo¹¹⁾ and Braque¹²⁾ e.g. Bare Oak and Devil's Peak.¹³⁾

In The Yellow Street, Malay Quarter, Cape Town,¹⁴⁾ Boonzaier makes an attempt at expressing the South African

8) Scott, *ibid.*, p.21.

9) *Ibid.*, No. 11 Cottage and Two Oaks, Newlands.

10) Paul Cézanne Neo-Impressionist 1839-1906.
John Canaday: *Mainstreams of Modern Art*, p.234.

11) Maurice Utrillo 1883-1955. His work reflects Fauvism, Expressionism and Cubism.
Canaday, *ibid.*, p.440.

12) Georges Braque 1882-1963. Cubist painter.
Norbert Lynton: *The Modern World*, p.80.

13) Scott, *ibid.*, No. 37 Bare Oak and Devil's Peak.

14) Rep. XXXII, p.43a : The Yellow Street, Malay Quarter, Cape Town.

43a



XXXXII

sunlight. His palette brightens and he uses strong yellow ochres and burnt sienna predominantly. And yet he has not come any nearer to interpreting the brightness of our light. Since this canvas obviously does not portray a dull, rainy day, one does expect strong sunlight not only on the architecture but reflected in the street as well, emphasizing the unity of these forms. The houses are painted in warm, deep tones of burnt sienna and yellow ochre with the addition of touches of blue, green and red, whereas the street is a leaden blue. In spite of the sunlight there are only soft shadows which show very little variation in tone to link the architecture and the street with the dark blue sky.

And although Boonzaier has painted the two neat rows of houses strictly according to the rules of recession, he does not consider colour perspective. Placing a house painted in white and burnt sienna at the focal point, he guides the eye of the onlooker to forms in the foreground. The neat Malay houses do not convey the conditions of squalor under which the Malays live. The buildings are seen as a decorative and colourful pattern. Boonzaier's work soothes the spectator because there is nothing unpleasant in it. As a decorative painter he is more successful in The White House, Malay Quarter. His colours here are warm, soft and harmonious and his aim is a decorative, rather than a realistic one.

Boonzaier is an able interpreter¹⁵⁾ of the Eastern Free State scene. Thus far only Pierneef had been able to depict the clear skies and ever-changing brilliant colours of winter as experienced in bright sunlight. Pierneef concentrated on the "architectonic and rhythmic line" and his compositions developed into monochromes, but Boonzaier expresses the mood of the scene in strong colours

15) Scott, *ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

"Pierneef reveals the majesty of the scene through a cold monumentality while Gregoire, by means of his wider colour range, arrives at a more romantic expression of mood with an atmospheric reality and liveliness." e.g. Mount Ararat from the Donga.¹⁶⁾

While in England, Boonzaier came into contact with the artist Christopher Wood and the result of the new influence can be seen in Malay Quarter Street¹⁷⁾ done in 1938 and Keigwan Arms,¹⁸⁾ a work completed in Cornwall. Painting under the influence of Wood, Boonzaier constructed in large flat planes and his work is greatly simplified, as can be seen in Keigwan Arms. He no longer lends an outward charm to his subject but states it in a rather hard, cold manner exaggerating the height and solidity of the architecture. Simplification lends power, but Boonzaier has gone to the other extreme and his window recesses show a hard unvarying outline which is flat and insensitive. This is most evident in the building farthest from the spectator.

Although Boonzaier is not consciously being decorative in his approach, he cannot break himself of the illogical use of shadow, as seen on the roof of the house with the massive pillars, facing the street. The cubist approach is noticeable in this painting since the forms are simplified, large and angular being created without regard to light and shade.

Boonzaier's canvas Malay Quarter Street dated 1938, is in many ways similar to Keigwan Arms, but he no longer rigidly simplifies his subject. He concentrates on its rectangular planes exaggerating their height. The canvas would have been more impressive had he not included the three small homes on the horizon, since their planes do not conform to those in the foreground.

16) Ibid., Plate E. Mount Ararat from the Donga. Compare Pierneef's Landscape near Lydenburg. Alexander, ibid., Plate II.

17) Rep. XXXIII, p.45a : Malay Quarter Street.

18) Rep. XXXIV, p.45a : Keigwan Arms.

45a



XXXIII



XXXIV

Boonzaier is beginning to reveal the power of expression through an inner rhythm caused by overlapping and intersecting planes.

The figures are purposeful and natural, they do not look like flecks of colour used to beautify the canvas and they are there within their own rights as people adding the human touch to their environment. This depiction radiates a sense of peace because it makes use of simplified shapes. The planes have soft mauve, blue and green hues divided by subtle nuances which hardly change within themselves. There is almost no variation in the colour of the light blue wall extending along the shady side of the street. The absence of the dark, warm colour and lines surrounding forms does not in any way detract from the decorative effect of this canvas, since the pale shades used to depict forms are pleasing and effective. In this painting it is obvious that Boonzaier is trying to reveal the harmony of forms.

Boonzaier has gained from his encounter with the primitive¹⁹⁾ style of Wood who possessed great talent. Wood's influence is evident in Narrow Street, Cornwall, England²⁰⁾ and Keigwan Arms, Mousehole, Cornwall²¹⁾ as well as early Malay Quarter scenes.²²⁾

Bouman also recognises the benefits of Wood's influence on Boonzaier. Of Narrow Street, Cornwall, England he says "Here is a delicate interplay of colours, all in larger volumes:" And these are the olive green on a wall of the central building, the purple shadow on its roof, varying blues and whites on the other gables, contrasted by the dark-toned bases of three buildings. The strong blue and yellow of the children's clothes

19) Direct, vigorous naïve, non-realistic, plastically alive. Cheney, *ibid.*, p.5.

20) Scott, *ibid.*, No. 30, Narrow Street, Cornwall, England.

21) *Ibid.*, No. 14, Keigwan Arms, Mousehole, Cornwall.

22) *Ibid.*, p.15.

draw attention, since they differ from the larger colour volumes.²³⁾

Boonzaier was able to develop a style of his own while combining knowledge gained from influences such as Wenning, Cézanne and Wood but "he has failed to give anything new of himself in his paintings" from the time he was twenty-six years of age.²⁴⁾

In Table Mountain from the Malay Quarter,²⁵⁾ Boonzaier expresses the compact power of intersecting and overlapping planes and this work is an improvement on his Malay Quarter Street of 1938. Each house is of vital importance among the vertical rectangular planes, which comprise the downward slope of the hill and its subsequent incline. In his painting of 1938, the small houses on the rise are too insignificant and isolated to strengthen the overall impression of power created by the large planes in the foreground. Here Boonzaier is actually revealing the character of Table Mountain. The buildings on the left rise vertically, echoing the stepped quality of the flat-topped mountain as it descends to the sea. As the closely packed planes of the houses ascend Signal Hill, they force the viewer to appreciate their affinity to the majestic impressiveness of Table Mountain. The feeling of quiet but forceful movement in the architecture, is enhanced by the vaporous clouds and slow-moving, contented figures.

Boonzaier's Mosque, Loop Street, Cape Town²⁶⁾ contrasts his early work. His aim is to express the feeling of movement which a violently windy day at the Cape imparts to all forms. The buildings and telegraph poles seem to lean and sway in harmony with the wind, as

23) A.C. Bouman: *Painters of South Africa*, p.47.

24) David Lewis: *The Naked Eye*, p.35.

25) Rep. XXXV, p.47a : Table Mountain from the Malay Quarter.

26) Rep. XXXVI, p.47b : Mosque, Loop Street, Cape Town.

47a



XXXV



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XXXVI



it whirls round them. The clouds themselves, pale and billowy against a dark sky, echo the raptures of the wind, as they drift hastily towards the minaret of the mosque.

In this canvas Boonzaier has captured the very essence of a windy day in Cape Town. Everywhere there is evidence of light, rapidly moving atmosphere which, by means of its surging clouds, portends a storm. The main colours of this composition are red, blue, yellow and white. In contrast to the previous painting Boonzaier's The Harbour from the Malay Quarter²⁷⁾ depicts a calm day at the Cape. The rectangular shapes of the architecture in varying tones of green and burnt sienna, romp down the steep slope of the hill where a group of white houses joins them on their way to the sea. Pale blue clouds spread an almost transparent layer of lace across the sky. The whole setting of the work with its delicate blues and mauves, blending into the dark tones of green and sienna, makes one feel that this is but a transient moment of the day.

Malay Quarter, Cape Town²⁸⁾ by Boonzaier, is an almost abstract work in which rectangular cubist forms feature prominently. To the quiet blue, red, yellow and green tones, black and white add liveliness.

The artist has greatly simplified his subject, and is more effectively conveying the rhythmic excitement of forms shown as planes placed at different angles to create a unit. Compare this canvas with The White House, Malay Quarter.

The yellow, green, blue and red used in the centre of Malay Quarter, Cape Town, are reflected in the rest of the work in darker tones. Crisp white sections, more concentrated in the middle are also echoed throughout the painting.

27) Rep. XXXVII, p.48a : The Harbour from the Malay Quarter.

28) Rep. XXXVIII, p.48a : Malay Quarter, Cape Town.

48a



XXXVII



XXXVIII

Even though Boonzaier might be inspired by Wenning, he does not merely follow the latter slavishly, but realises that aided by this particular style he is able to express his own contemplative spirit. When one studies Boonzaier's Yellow Street, Malay Quarter, Cape Town in which his palette brightens, it becomes clear that this artist's light tones are not very crisp because of his sparing use of white. Even at the focal point white is toned down with delicate hues of yellow and green. For this reason his work reveals a velvety glow rather than a bright one which is required to express the sharp South African light.

Boonzaier does not wish to hurry the spectator, but is inclined to reveal a lingering view of his subject. It seems that Boonzaier has chosen a more difficult path than Wenning has, because of his deliberate analysis of objects in an unchanging light. In so doing his forms become more static arousing a gradual response.²⁹⁾ But Boonzaier does not only analyse, he also simplifies and where one discovers detail as a result of his careful scrutiny, it is employed as part of the decorative design of the work.

In The White House, Malay Quarter Boonzaier has succeeded in creating a decorative work, rich in aesthetic value, but not revealing the decadent state of the Malay Quarter and its people. But underlying the beauty of this painting there may well be, not a denial of the squalor, but an affirmation of the cheerful and religious approach of the Malay, which is perhaps not vitally affected by the degrading conditions under which he is forced to live.

Since Boonzaier's style is not very spontaneous one is more likely to be disturbed by the fact that he does at times use colours which seem in conflict with his

29) Herbert Read: *The Meaning of Art*, pp.191-192.
Refers especially to Boonzaier.

general statement³⁰⁾ e.g. The White House, Malay Quarter. It must be remembered though, that a high degree of spontaneity is present in some of Boonzaier's later works such as Mosque, Loop Street, Cape Town. In spite of the dynamism of this canvas, the viewer is aware of an all pervading reticence which is a characteristic of Boonzaier's style.

Boonzaier uses his sketches to emphasize the structure of forms. Flickering light does not cause a difference to the solidity and clarity of his objects.

Boonzaier's sketch Malay Quarter Houses³¹⁾ depicts a double storeyed house in the foreground to which access may be gained through the open gate of its courtyard. Behind it houses built close to one another recede into the distance. Here the artist reveals the dilapidated state of the Malay Quarter and adds some active figures who form part of their surroundings. Using the grey of the paper as a mid-tone, the sketch is executed in yellow ochre, burnt sienna, mauve, blue and black washes.

Poverty has become part of this area and its inhabitants. This mood is achieved by means of depicting every building distinctly. One is made to feel that the architecture grows more attractive with time and that there is no haste, - step by step Boonzaier records the changing scene in all its beauty.

Even when Boonzaier depicts the dilapidated condition of the Malay Quarter architecture as he does in Malay Quarter Houses, the figures appear energetic and contented in spite of their surroundings. They do not seem to be affected by their environment, even though they are closely associated with it.

30) A.C. Bouman: Kuns in Suid-Afrika, p.31.

31) Rep. XXXIX, p.50a : Malay Quarter Houses.

50a



XXXIX



L

Boonzaier's Malay Quarter Scene³²⁾ is drawn on grey paper in black ink. He depicts a group of houses with a bare tree growing among the slabs of concrete and corrugated iron in the middle-distance. Again, as in Malay Quarter Houses the architecture in the distance is well defined excepting that it is smaller. Instead of using colour to make forms appear nearer and more solid, the artist achieves this effect by means of lines which describe texture and form. The dark tones of recessions and the tree are created in the same way. Only one strength of light, the pale grey tone of the paper pervades the entire sketch.

Limiting himself to black and grey, Boonzaier has produced a sketch which appears less attractive than the previous one but is far more searching. It is a deliberate study of forms for the sake of their own character and as representative of their environment.

Boonzaier's sketch Malay Craftsmen at Work³³⁾ is different from his former sketches portraying the Malay Quarter, since he focuses the attention on its inhabitants excluding their surroundings entirely. Here he effects a leisurely and deliberate study of the craftsmen's actions. A feeling of intimacy is revealed in their relaxed attitudes and their activities. And the diagonal arrangement of the figures heightens this effect.

In a classification of the two lino-cuts Moslem Quarter³⁴⁾ and Malay Quarter Scene³⁵⁾ by Boonzaier, the former has greater significance. A row of houses is depicted extending to the horizon, placed high in the composition. Black planes are powerfully contrasted by white ones. Simple flat-roofed houses consisting of stark black and white express a calm dignity. In the

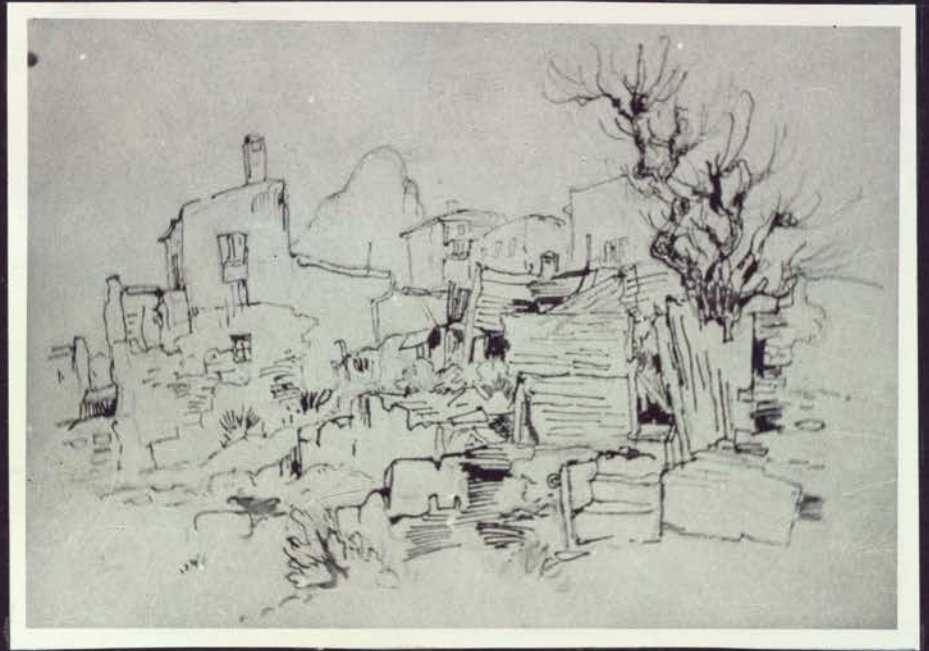
32) Rep. XL, p.51a : Malay Quarter Scene.

33) Rep. XLI, p.51b : Malay Craftsmen at Work.

34) Rep. XLII, p.52a : Moslem Quarter.

35) Rep. XLIII, p.52a : Malay Quarter Scene.

51a



XL



LI

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XLI

foreground the architect's gouge is used effectively to emphasize the rectangular character of the buildings. Triangular cuts give texture to a pitched roof in the distance and to the tops of pillars in the foreground whereas the pavement, street and sky are described by textural chips similar to those used for the depiction of the building nearest the viewer. The focal point is concentrated on a bent tree in the middle-distance, its shape being reflected in the round-headed door in the foreground and blending with the mountain behind and the street in front. The light and dark areas create a tension within the rhythmic unity.

Malay Quarter Scene by Boonzaier describes both sides of a street. In some of the buildings in the foreground light areas are indicated in a rather crude way. He has on the whole, not tried to express the rectangular nature of these forms, but to integrate human activity and man made structures with their natural surroundings.

Malay Quarter, Cape Town³⁶⁾ proves that Boonzaier is able to handle the gouge more sensitively. Architectural as well as human and tree forms can be understood by the hastily drawn lines.

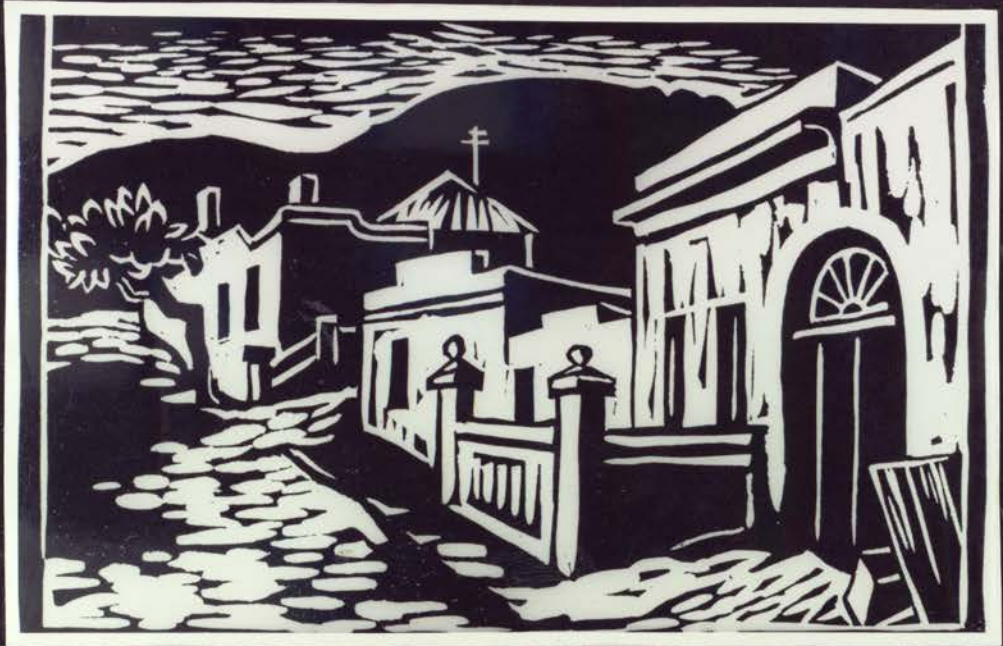
Though not quite as disturbing as in the previous work, the artist has again failed to create a convincing work because he has complicated and confused his foreground.

WENNING

Wenning was deeply influenced by Chinese and Japanese prints which he studied during his early years while working at de Bussy's bookshop in Pretoria. As a result his style and technique improved. "Their simplicity and refinement taught him to eliminate those

36) Rep. XLIV, p.52a : Malay Quarter, Cape Town.

52 a



XLII



XLIII



XLIV

superfluous details which had marred his early work, so that in later years he was able to express with a few deft strokes the essentials of any subject." Drawings in pen-and-ink, charcoal, pencil and crayon followed and are works of a high standard representing scenes from life, such as backyards, native scenes, twisted trees and piccaninnies.³⁷⁾

Wenning as a landscape painter, put to effective use a wide range of greens, such as the delicate green of the Cape spring, the autumn tints of gold, the brownish-yellow grass of the Transvaal highveld, as well as the warm greens of the mossy Newlands oaks. And he used rich browns and reds tellingly, while his impressive use of black and white has its origins in his knowledge of Japanese art. But Wenning's grey in which there are many changes of tone and colour has the greatest expressive value in e.g. Cottages in the Rain.³⁸⁾ Of this painting Boonzaier says: "This harmonious study of two tin-roofed cottages seen across a grey-green field on an afternoon in late autumn is a little symphony in greys."³⁹⁾

It can be understood that at first Wenning's work was not appreciated by the public. The accepted standard of beauty of the Cape which was derived from photographs or idealised depictions from nature, was not in accordance with Wenning's selection of motifs, since he did not paint the impressive, but rather the unobtrusive in his environment. Whereas other successful artists of his time painted pale yellow gables and mountains tinged with pink under bright blue skies, there is only one unusual sketch by Wenning depicting a gabled house in the Ter Beek Collection. And only a few Wenning include a mountain which merely serves as a silhouette to enhance the composition.⁴⁰⁾

37) Gregoire Boonzaier and I. Lippy Lipschitz: Wenning, pp.5-6.

38) Boonzaier and Lipschitz, *ibid.*, Plate 41: Cottages in the Rain.

39) *Ibid.*, pp.54-55.

40) *Ibid.*, pp.49-50.

In view of the fact that Wenning was influenced by the Hague School of Dutch Impressionism, a discussion of its characteristics is needed.

In a comparison⁴¹⁾ between French Impressionism and the Dutch Impressionism of the Hague School, one must take into account the clear atmospheric conditions which exist in France as against the cloudy, damp climate of Holland. Therefore the main French Impressionists such as Monet⁴²⁾ and Pissarro⁴³⁾ concentrated on colourism. The opposite may be said of the Dutch Impressionists of the Hague who laid emphasis on tonal values. Contrary to the French Impressionists, they did not use dots of primary colour but rather an atmospheric grey⁴⁴⁾ over which all colour are imposed to create a uniform colour scheme.

Whereas the Hague School may be termed nature impressionism, Amsterdam Impressionism⁴⁵⁾ was more concerned with city life while not entirely excluding nature from its subject matter. Still, the artists' inspiration derived from the restless character of the city.

In his impressive technique, Breitner⁴⁶⁾ an Amsterdam Impressionist, used rich tones of black, yellow, bronze, red and subtle greys with sureness and control, so that he may be compared favourably with Rembrandt⁴⁷⁾ and

41) Jos de Gruyter: *Wezen en Ontwikkeling der Europeesche Schilderkunst na 1850*, pp.114-115.

42) Claude Monet 1840-1926.
Ibid., p.110.

43) Camille Pissarro 1830-1903.
Ibid., p.110.

44) According to Miss. G.H. Marius the aim of achieving unity of colour by means of grey, reveals the origin of Dutch Impressionism i.e. the Dutch landscape painters of the 17th Century.
Ibid., p.115, footnote 1.

45) A.M. Hammacher: *Amsterdamsche Impressionisten en Hun Kring*, p.105.

46) George Hendrik Breitner 1857-1923.
De Gruyter, *ibid.*, p.118.

47) Harmenszoon van Rijn Rembrandt 1606-1669.
Cheney, *ibid.*, p.674.

Hals.⁴⁸⁾ Thus the old values were revived by modern enthusiasm for life, spontaneity and accuracy of vision.⁴⁹⁾

Wenning's style is reminiscent of the Hague School in his choice of the unobtrusive as subject matter using subdued colour in which greys and black play an important part. This technique is especially suited to the atmospheric effects which prevail on rainy days at the Cape.

Wenning's forms seem to be subjected to constant atmospheric change. His dark outlines move swiftly, varying greatly from solid brush strokes to wisps which hardly exist, resulting in compositions which are completely without detail e.g. Cottages in the Rain.⁵⁰⁾ And here Wenning expresses a fleeting moment where each form is surrounded and permeated by quivering air. The observer feels that the scene before him is alive and changing constantly.

Wenning suggests distance by means of painting his foreground a bright green and the mountain which appears near, because it is not very high in comparison with the houses, is a delicate blue.

Since Wenning aims at expressing the effect of moist air in Cottages in the Rain, he applies his paint thinly, almost like washes over white canvas resulting in a transparency which is most evident in the lighter parts of the work, especially in the sky and houses where the texture of the canvas is clearly visible.

Wenning attaches a great deal of value to his materials⁵¹⁾ and feels that they should play a part in expressing his ideas. In this painting the texture of the canvas helps to create the effect of a dull, rainy day,

48) Frans Hals 1580-1666.
Ibid., p.669.

49) Hammacher, *ibid.*, p.107.

50) Wenning: Cottages in the Rain.

51) A. ter Beek: *Lantern*, February 1951, Vol. I,
No. II, p.6.

because the white of the canvas causes the colours to appear hazy. Although he employs this hasty manner of painting and often merely suggests forms, he reveals an intimate knowledge of his subject, while ignoring the non-essential details.

In Cape Town, Moslem Quarter,⁵²⁾ Wenning makes a conscious effort at adapting his technique to the South African sunlight, which is harsher than that of Europe. Working on a dark canvas, he applies thick layers of lighter paint leaving open sections of canvas to indicate dark contours. Many tones of grey are used, ranging from the dark grey of the mountain to very light greys delicately coloured with blue, green or yellow. These are suggested in the distance and more strongly evident in the foreground, where the light is strongest and where they are contrasted with the blue and white of the homes on the left. The well-lit foreground is mainly orange and yellow ochre. But the viewer's attention is focused on the cold white, blue and grey group of houses because of its central position and striking contrast with the dark orange wall in the immediate foreground. This wall being dark in tone melts into the background. The Dutch Impressionist manner of uniting a painting by means of strong contrasting⁵³⁾ tones is apparent in this work. The painter emphasizes the beauty of these houses by exaggerating their simplicity in light tones.

The contrast of the smooth surfaces of the architecture on the left and the rough uneven walls of the house opposite and its matching, warm-coloured foreground strewn with ruins, have a special appeal to the onlooker. In this setting Wenning stresses the inherent beauty of the colour and form of ruins.

52) Rep. XLV, p.56a : Cape Town, Moslem Quarter.

53) Chapter I, p.16, footnote 28.

56a



XLV



XLVI

Wenning's Cape Town, Moslem Quarter inspires the viewer to deep contemplation because every form is stated with clarity and sincerity, showing beauty to exist in spite of poverty. One is able to feel the tranquility and strength which follows the weathering of many storms.

In Wenning's Malay Quarter View,⁵⁴⁾ a painting to be seen in the Kimberley Art Gallery, he employs the same colours as in Cape Town, Moslem Quarter. Again he paints the Quarter so that the ruins of the old buildings appear in the foreground.

This canvas shows two mosques set well back while the beauty of the rocks and slabs of concrete in the foreground are stressed. These realistic forms add greatly to the decorative value of the work, and although they seem to be strewn about haphazardly, they are actually an integrated part of the composition.

From the dark orange-brown rectangular concrete block in the left lower corner, the eye is led diagonally across the painting to the large mosque on the opposite side. There the attention is held by a light red block of concrete. Only then the observer notices the blue and white building and the smaller mosque above the large light red concrete slab. Wenning conveys more about the actual state of the Malay Quarter by forcing the viewer to see, first the ruins and subsequently buildings in fairly good repair.

Wenning's Malay Quarter⁵⁵⁾ executed mainly in blue and yellow is striking because of its strong contrast in light and shade. Light tones of yellow, blue, black and white figure in the central section of the work. And in the foreground the tall dark blue building is linked with the house on the other side of the street, by means of its own strong cast shadow. In this manner a heavy frame of dark tones in the foreground encloses the light-coloured focal point. This

54) Rep. XLVI, p.56a : Malay Quarter View.

55) Rep. XLVII, p.57a : Malay Quarter.

57a



XLVII



painting although still under the influence of the Hague School's sombre colours, shows that Wenning is beginning to understand our bright light.

Especially in Malay Quarter, Cape Town⁵⁶⁾ by Wenning, this becomes clearly evident. He no longer paints predominantly in cold colours such as blue, black and white, which are only counteracted by a few warm ones. The whole canvas reflects warm yellow, green and burnt sienna and gives the impression of being bathed in bright sunlight. The foreground leading up to the buildings portrays a sun-drenched bare street which guides the spectator's eye to a small, but intimate sunlit group of houses on its left. The effect of the strong light is heightened by means of the tall building on the right and its cast shadow.

A Lane in the Malay Quarter⁵⁷⁾ by Naudé shows the resemblance between his work and that of Wenning, who was influenced by the Dutch Impressionism of the Hague School.

Bathed in sunlight the crowded buildings in A Lane in the Malay Quarter predominate, occupying almost the entire height of the canvas. From the foreground they extend diagonally more than two thirds across the picture plane ending about half-way from its lower edge. The architecture opposite is higher, its base being even nearer the viewer. A cast shadow links the two sides of the lane, while three figures are seated in the shade of the highest building, and one is seen walking at the far end of the lane.

Wenning's Malay Quarter, Cape Town also depicts buildings, but there is a huge bare foreground. The sunlit houses to the left are not high and recede quickly to the horizon which is slightly above the middle of the canvas. Nearer the observer, tall shady buildings oppose those in the sun, casting a strong shadow to

56) Rep. XLVIII, p.42a : Malay Quarter, Cape Town.

57) Rep. XLIX, p.15a : A Lane in the Malay Quarter.

join the one side of the street to the other.

Both Naudé and Wenning have succeeded in creating a sense of immediacy by means of subtle changes of tone which lend vitality and interest to their works.

A feeling of peace and leisureliness is present in Naudé's Lane in the Malay Quarter as walls in the shade and their adjoining cast shadows seem to offer refuge from the heat of the sun. The three squatting figures in this canvas make one aware of its mood of contentment.

One is prepared for the contentment expressed in Wenning's architecture and the dozing figure in front of it, by the well-lit spacious foreground. The drooping attitude of the figure is reflected in the dilapidated houses, surroundings in which he is completely at ease and which reflect his own personality.

In Naudé's painting the foreground is less spacious. In this way the artist accentuates the crowded, compact structure of the architecture. As the sunlit buildings in his painting recede, they become smaller, the light on them diminishes and is hardly noticeable. Here, at the focal point, the walking figure is surrounded by light, is upright and has become part of the rhythm formed by the vertical recessions of doors and windows of the houses. Wenning only depicts the foremost houses clearly in a good light, the rest are only suggested. He does not stress the focal point, but represents it by means of a small house painted in soft tones of grey. Yet his sunlit house and figure are noticed because of white forms situated near them.

Both artists have succeeded in depicting the Malay Quarter atmosphere of colourfulness and intimacy, despite the presence of poverty and decadence. Wenning concentrates on its mood of resignation, Naudé, its active interest in life.

Mainly due to the fact that Caldecott was influenced by the French Impressionists, we see differences between his work and that of Wenning who was affected by the

Hague School of Dutch Impressionism and Japanese Art. Wenning's painting Cape Town, Moslem Quarter depicts houses in the foreground, handled in a bold, simple style. Whereas walls facing the light are almost white in tone, those turned from the light are a pale grey. They are defined by dark outlines and not changes of tonal values. The ground in front leads the eye of the spectator from houses on the left, to a dilapidated building on the right. Although Wenning depicts its walls and roof as uneven surfaces, there is no vibrating light. The dark background which consists of a grey mountain with a dark green tree in front of it, strongly contrasts the light houses in the foreground. The Hague School influence reveals itself in this manner of drawing attention to light forms by contrasting them with dark ones to achieve a more expressive content.

Rigid simplification, dark outlines, suggested rather than emphasized depth evident in the dark background, seem to be the result of a Japanese influence. Caldecott has a different approach in his work, The Goat, Malay Quarter.⁵⁸⁾ Malay homes are depicted in the background while animals and people fill the foreground. In Wenning's painting, there is very little activity, while the houses are placed dramatically in the foreground against a dark setting.

Caldecott does not wish to lay emphasis on any form in particular. He shows how vibrating light flows over and round objects, uniting them in one flowing rhythm.

Wenning's canvas is executed in a much darker key than that of Caldecott. The pale blue washing and the house behind it, are the only forms which are fairly light in Wenning's painting. There is no flickering light in this work similar to that seen in Caldecott's

58) Chapter I, p.30, footnote 60 : The Goat, Malay Quarter.

paintings which are alive with reflected light.

Wenning's suggestive and spontaneous style certainly has an immediate impact on the imagination of the spectator. And this is quite easily understood since the fluctuating light employed by Impressionists such as Wenning gives rise to a subtle expression of the evanescent⁵⁹⁾ in nature. And here only essentials can be stated because of the artist's desire to capture a brief moment in time. The resulting statement is simple, direct and powerful. Wenning's use of soft, warm colours and dark outlines is well suited to his sensitive nature and frail physical condition.⁶⁰⁾

It is important to note that his technique has a unique quality which lends an almost shiny⁶¹⁾ appearance to objects. This characteristic is noticeable in the works in which he begins to express an awareness of our bright South African light e.g. Malay Quarter and Malay Quarter, Cape Town. In the latter especially, Wenning's use of white to express light is practically pure white at the focal point and not affected by under-painting.

Wenning's technique in which a dark undercoating⁶²⁾ is used, is on the whole successful but can cause him to neglect certain areas of the painting, as witnessed in the foreground and sky of Malay Quarter, Cape Town. In this canvas the sky is simply a flat, darkish-blue tint without variation of tone to suggest depth or cloud formation. And the foreground which leads the eye of the observer to the focal point, cannot be said to hold his interest for more than a brief glance. This is especially noticeable when one compares this painting's foreground with that of Malay Quarter, which is fascinating yet serves the same purpose as the foreground of the

59) Read: *ibid.*, p.194.

60) Bouman, *ibid.*, p.11.

61) *Ibid.*, *Kuns in Suid-Afrika*, p.113.

62) *Ibid.*, p.114.

former painting. It seems as though Wenning sometimes relies too heavily on the dark underpainting to add constructive features to planes such as the sky and foreground which guide the eye of the viewer to the focal point.

The spontaneity of Wenning's style makes one able to overlook signs of immaturity⁶³⁾ which might have been eliminated if he had been able to develop his style fully. Even so his short career as a painter remains astonishingly fruitful.

A comparison between Malay Quarter, Cape Town by Wenning and Boonzaier's Table Mountain from the Malay Quarter,⁶⁴⁾ in both of which the technique employing a dark undercoating is used, reveals interesting changes of tone in the sky of the latter. And these create an airy effect heightened by the contrasting solidity of the buildings. And the mountain's stony appearance is reflected in the construction of the foreground which leads one to the focal point, thus establishing a relationship between the distance and the street in front.

In summing up the achievements of Wenning and Boonzaier concerning their depictions of the Malay Quarter, it may be concluded that Wenning captures both a fleeting moment in time as well as the spirit of his subject e.g. Cape Town, Moslem Quarter. Boonzaier's vision of the Malay Quarter on the other hand, is a lingering one in which he does not seem to be concerned about the character of his subject, but rather the relationship of its forms.

The paintings of Wenning and Boonzaier have contributed largely towards the development of art in South Africa. Together with Naudé and Pierneef, they used the knowledge they had gained in Europe to express the unusual beauty of our country.

63) Ibid., Painters of South Africa, p.11.

64) Chapter II, p.47 footnote 25 : Table Mountain from the Malay Quarter.

Wenning's power of suggestion is most impressive in his sketches. This characteristic is even more powerful here than in his paintings. Rhythm exists in his depiction of light and air and in the way he captures the spirit of the Malay Quarter.

His sketch Above the Malay Quarter⁶⁵⁾ depicts a tree in the immediate foreground with houses behind it forming a semicircular composition. And on the hill beyond, trees repeat this curve. Its rhythm unifies the composition and brings out the essential character of the area. The sketch is executed in apparent haste and much is suggested rather than stated. This is particularly noticeable in the building on the right, which appears to be nothing more than a tin shanty.

In this sketch homes in the foreground are indicated lightly, windows and doors are merely suggested as recessed surfaces or only outlined vaguely. The tree in the foreground is defined by a few lines and a wash in watercolour. But trees in the distance appear as strong in tone as the recessions in the foreground.

In Wenning's Street Scene in the Malay Quarter⁶⁶⁾ the architecture on which the light falls is hastily indicated by delicate horizontal and vertical lines. Being light, the architecture is strongly contrasted by dark accents on the opposite side. A cart standing in the shadow of a tall building re-echoes the rectangular character of the buildings behind.

In the following sketches by Wenning and Boonzaier the differences in outlook are more obvious than the similarities. Boonzaier's Malay Quarter Houses⁶⁷⁾ achieves a feeling of recession by means of reducing colour towards the distance, yet retaining a clear definition of distant buildings. Wenning's Above the Malay

65) Rep. L, p.50a : Above the Malay Quarter.

66) Rep. LI, p.51a : Street Scene in the Malay Quarter.

67) Chapter II, p.50, footnote 31 : Malay Quarter Houses.

Quarter on the other hand suggests shallow space since trees in the background are as deep in tone as recessed surfaces in the foreground.

Wenning relates his buildings more closely to nature than Boonzaier does. Their shape as a whole is reflected in the mountain behind them, whereas Boonzaier does not see the architecture in his sketch as a part of nature. It gives one the impression that time passes slowly creating a sense of peace.

Wenning's Street Scene in the Malay Quarter is similar in approach to Malay Quarter Scene⁶⁸⁾ by Boonzaier. The twisted shapes formed by the tree in Boonzaier's sketch recall the pieces of concrete and shrubs in the foreground, while its dark trunk is part of the rhythm of recessed shadows. The tree in Wenning's sketch leans over uniting one side with the other and echoing the domes and the semicircular shape of the cart-wheel in the immediate foreground.

Again as in the two previous sketches by these artists, the moods differ in that Wenning depicts a fleeting moment of the day and Boonzaier one of time held in abeyance.

Wenning's sketch Long Street Mosque⁶⁹⁾ is executed on greyish paper in Indian ink. In Nita Spilhaus' sketch entitled Grey Mosque⁷⁰⁾ the paper remains white to express the background while grey tones are used to a large extent to reveal forms nearer the viewer. Wenning's sketch, although as solidly constructed as that of Nita Spilhaus, appears colder. It does not give the impression that he is trying to transmit the religious atmosphere which usually surrounds a place of worship. Instead his aim is to create a scene suggesting a fleeting moment of the day. Unfortunately it seems as though he becomes too interested in the uncommon semicircular

68) Chapter II, p.51, footnote 32 : Malay Quarter Scene.

69) Rep. LII, p.20a : Long Street Mosque.

70) Chapter I, p.20, footnote 36 : Grey Mosque.

arches above the door and window frames. The result is a pale, static mosque with only the slightest indication of dark recessed surfaces which show little variation in character and fail to create a unifying rhythm.

Even though Wenning's sketch is not created in his usual hasty manner, it does not lend itself to the same sense of peacefulness which pervades Nita Spilhaus' sketch. In her work the darks of the trees together with door and window recesses, form a strong rhythm giving stability and repose. This feeling is strengthened by the colours. The back and foreground are united by warm colours which are more intense nearer the beholder. In this way the more distant homes are linked with the mosque.

If Wenning had suggested a few figures in his sketch, he would probably have added the element of human activity and counteracted the filigreed effect of the mosque. Although Nita Spilhaus' figures are not very prominent, they make the human presence felt.

Wenning's Lane, Malay Quarter⁷¹⁾ can be compared with Nita Spilhaus' Grey Mosque. Here Wenning again reveals his impressionistic qualities. These characteristics make his work different from Nita Spilhaus', hers being more realistic. He draws attention to the buildings on the left side of the sketch, by strong contrast in tone. A deep shadow is seen on a wall near the spectator. Solid black is used for the window recesses. The houses opposing these are only slightly suggested. Nita Spilhaus does not resort to strong contrast in tone to emphasize objects, but instead places them near the viewer. The mosque in her sketch fills the scene. Its base stretches almost half-way across the width of the picture plane.

Wenning's suggestion of depth is created by means of sketching the background lightly. But one realises

71) Rep. LIII, p. 65a : Lane, Malay Quarter.

65a



LIII

that there is distance between the sheer fall of ground and the architecture in front of it. Leading us more gradually into the background, Nita Spilhaus depicts her distant houses as small but clearly visible. Lion's Head still further away, blends with the sky, acquiring its airiness. Her figures do not show a feeling of immediacy as Wenning's solitary, walking figure does.

In both sketches the character of the Malay Quarter architecture is seen in its narrow streets between crowded, solidly constructed buildings. A unifying rhythm of alternating dark and light areas, plays an important part in these sketches, although in Wenning's work the effect is stronger because the transition from black to white is not gradual as witnessed in Nita Spilhaus' sketch.

Artists who have been greatly influenced by the works of Wenning and Boonzaier are David Botha⁷²⁾ and George Enslin⁷³⁾ in whose work there is a certain lack

72) David Botha. Born in 1921 in Graaff-Reinet, Cape Province. Trained at the Cape Town Training College from 1950 to 1952. Teaches art at Paarl. Paints in the Wenning tradition. Realistic landscapes, still-lives and street scenes.

Alexander, *ibid.*, p.160.

Jeppé adds: Botha was educated at Paarl, besides, at Camberwell School of Art, London, also France, Spain and Italy. Has exhibited in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Bloemfontein.

Jeppé, *ibid.*, p.10.

73) George Enslin. Born in 1919 in England. Lived in South Africa since childhood. From 1949 to 1950 studied at Heatherley's in London. At Grande Chaumiére in Paris. At the Carrara Academy in Italy he studied sculpture.

Alexander, *ibid.*, p.162.

Jeppé adds: Enslin came to South Africa in 1920, was educated in Stellenbosch. Studied under Podolini in Cape Town from 1938 to 1939 and Maurice van Essche in 1946. Since 1948 has exhibited in Cape Town, Pretoria, Johannesburg, Durban and Bloemfontein. Paints the Malay Quarter and fishing villages mainly. "all done with verve and sureness of touch."

Jeppé, *ibid.*, p.27.

of vitality and integrity since these influences have not been fully digested and adapted to a more personal style. This is noticeable in a pale, mainly white, yellow and black study Malay Quarter,⁷⁴⁾ by Botha, in which thin lines separate one form from the other, but the tones on dark and light planes vary only slightly. Enslin in his Malay Scene,⁷⁵⁾ employs a far more interesting and powerful dark outline, yet his use of red, blue and yellow lacks subtlety especially in the treatment of the architecture.

Comparing Boonzaier's Mosque, Loop Street, Cape Town⁷⁶⁾ with the Malay Quarter paintings of Botha and Enslin, one is aware of his skilled use of line and colour. His outlines change from mere suggestions to strong forms playing a part in the creation of the mood of his work. The colours are warm and harmonious and there is always a subtle blending of tone.

In the works being discussed, Boonzaier, Botha and Enslin have not contrasted strong light with dark effects to create a compact composition and dramatic mood as one encounters in Wenning's Malay Quarter, Cape Town.⁷⁷⁾

A subsequent Malay Quarter⁷⁸⁾ painting by Enslin done in 1962, is a freer work than Malay Scene of 1958. The architecture is arranged in an interesting rhythmic unity in the background. Vegetation is suggested in a simplified but realistic way. But the branches of bare trees do not conform to the natural growth of trees as in his previous canvas where he reveals the actual structure of the trees, stressing their essential character.

The foreground in the Malay Quarter canvas of 1962, does not correspond with the background. Here meaningless

74) Rep. LIV, p.67a : Malay Quarter.

75) Rep. LV, p.67a : Malay Scene.

76) Chapter II, p.47, footnote 26 : Mosque, Loop Street, Cape Town.

77) Chapter II, p.58, footnote 56 : Malay Quarter, Cape Town.

78) Rep. LVI, p.68a : Malay Quarter.

67a



LIV



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semi-abstract forms are placed horizontally across the painting, causing a confusion which is not present in the rest of the canvas.

Yet this work is an improvement on the first because of its subtle handling of tones. The light-coloured house at the focal point is painted in delicate tones of white, yellow and blue, in contrast to the block of houses depicted in red with accents of white and yellow. These colours are repeated in the entire canvas.

Enslin's Chiappini Street, Malay Quarter⁷⁹⁾ is a more consistent work than the one of 1962. It is painted in a less realistic and more spontaneous way which makes his forms more meaningful. The artist depicts a steep street in the Malay Quarter where a colourful cart leads the eye up the street and towards the focal point, the mosque. In line with the mosque but beyond it, Lion's Head can be seen, with Signal Hill on the opposite side of the horizon. From the distant hills the eye is guided by the house painted in yellow and orange just below Signal Hill, to the light section of the foreground. Here figures are placed to form lines which lead to the mosque. The technique of underpainting⁸⁰⁾ which is already present in his work of 1962, is employed more effectively, so that it is partially seen, enhancing superimposed planes of colour. The light section of the foreground is rendered luminous in this way, since a pale yellow and light green are applied with the palette knife over an underpainting of yellow ochre. The effect of this method of applying his paint is present in the treatment of all forms. Blending with the yellow background or forming a slight contrast to it, the figures are outlined in dark brown. The architecture is treated in the same way and merges with the hills beyond it.

79) Rep. LVII, p.68a : Chiappini Street, Malay Quarter.

80) The artist does not allow the first application of paint to be entirely obscured by successive ones.

68a



LVI



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Red is used with discretion, reaching its greatest intensity near the focal point on the roof of the mosque. Lesser accents of red radiate from here, but become fainter farther away from the centre. A constant balance between the cool and warm colours is evident in every part of this work.

Vermeulen Street, Malay Quarter⁸¹⁾ by Enslin, depicts a steep narrow street. The houses on both sides of the street are typical of the Malay Quarter, since they are flat-roofed and near one another. All forms are clearly stated and the eye is guided to the focal point at the end of the street by the cart, figures and the two neat rows of homes. The artist has limited his palette to white, red, blue and yellow. Contrasting the warm yellow with cool colour, he has effected a harmonious colour scheme. This painting is too well-planned, its centrally placed focal point results in a less exciting work than Chiappini Street, Malay Quarter.

The works of Wenning and Boonzaier have significance to our art for different reasons. Wenning creates the atmosphere of the Malay Quarter through his study of the atmospheric changes on objects. His statement is more general than that of Boonzaier who is interested in expressing the unique character of each form in a calm, unvarying light.

It appears as though Wenning was not influenced by any other art movement than Impressionism whereas Keigwan Arms⁸²⁾ and Malay Quarter, Cape Town⁸³⁾ by Boonzaier, show a tendency towards Cubism.⁸⁴⁾

When Wenning painted in South Africa following the principles of Impressionism, Cubism, its successor, was already widely practised in Europe. It appears therefore,

81) Rep. LVIII, p.69a : Vermeulen Street, Malay Quarter.

82) Chapter II, p.45, footnote 18 : Keigwan Arms.

83) Chapter II, p.48, footnote 28 : Malay Quarter, Cape Town.

84) Scott, *ibid.*, p.21.

69a



LVIII

70.

that leading South African artists at the beginning of the Twentieth Century were still practising the principles introduced by European painters thirty to forty years before. Seeing that our country is rather isolated from the Chief origin of art development, Europe, it is natural that styles of the past periods will exist longer here.⁸⁵⁾

But that does not mean that our artists produced work lacking in artistic value. And Wenning's creations are a tribute to European Impressionistic principles which he executed while working under different circumstances from those experienced in Europe. But problems concerning light and the unusual character of our country were adequately overcome by him.

85) Alexander, *ibid.*, p. 12.

CHAPTER III

Expressionism¹⁾ may have come into being as a reaction against Impressionism. And although van Gogh²⁾ considered himself an Impressionist his work was instrumental in bringing about Expressionism. The impressionistic artist being a realist, feels that if he manages to depict the outer aspects of his subject as honestly as possible, its inner life will naturally reveal itself.

IRMA STERN

In South African art impressionistic paintings are mainly executed with the object of providing pleasure by means of portraying for instance, the beauty of a bright³⁾ summer day at the Cape. The expressionist on the other hand might choose to stress the feeling of power and loneliness of the Karoo, since these are characteristics of its spirit generally and do not apply to one beautiful sunset in particular.

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- 1) F.L. Alexander: Art in South Africa since 1900, p.21.
 - 2) Vincent van Gogh 1853-1890. A contemporary of Georges Seurat (1859-1891), he was slightly older and died a year before Seurat. In both cases their work has its origins in Impressionism. Yet they differ greatly. Seuvrat's style is calculated and deliberate in contrast to van Gogh's passionate form of expression. John Canaday: Mainstreams of Modern Art, p.361. Compare: Seurat's La Grande Jatte. Ibid., p. 328. Van Gogh's The Starry Night. Ibid., p. 362.
 - 3) Chapter I, p. 40, footnote 82.

Irma Stern's⁴⁾ portrait of Aurora in which the dark lace of her shawl adorns a pleasing pink may be regarded as an expressionistic work, since it represents noble self esteem rather than a portrait of a particular person.⁵⁾ Thus a typical character representative of a certain social group is chosen, through which the artist expresses her emotions concerning the group as a whole.

Irma Stern⁶⁾ is regarded as one of South Africa's most outstanding and dynamic painters. Her work is influenced by German Expressionism as practised by

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- 4) Irma Stern. Born in 1894 at Schweizer-Reneke, Transvaal. Studied at the Bauhaus, Weimar and in Berlin. She brought German Expressionism to South Africa as seen in her many and varied still-lives, landscapes and paintings of human forms. She has also made etchings, monotypes, sculpture and decorated ceramics. She exhibited widely and has written two books which are illustrated by her, namely Zanzibar and Congo. Alexander, *ibid.*, p.168. Jeppe adds: Irma Stern studied at the Studio Levin-Funke in Berlin at the age of 16 and at the Weimar Academy. She exhibited in all the main centres of Europe during her extensive travels there. She painted in East Africa, the Congo and South Africa. She exhibited in the chief South African centres since 1920. Her work always aroused interest and is to be found in all the prominent art galleries. Harold Jeppe: *South African Artists*, p.93. Irma Stern died in 1966. Nasionale Galery, Suid-Afrikaanse Panorama, September 1969, p.28. Irma Stern. Represented South Africa at five Venice Biennales and at Sao Paolo in 1957 and won the Guggenheim National Prize for South African painting in 1960. Memorial exhibition at Grosvenor Gallery, London, April 1967. Neville Dubow: *An expressionist in Africa*, *Studio International*, April 1967, p.198.
- 5) Alexander, *ibid.*, p.22.
- 6) Jeppe, *ibid.*, p.93.

Max Pechstein⁷⁾ who taught her, but her exotic means of expression reached its maturity in South Africa. She paints whatever appears of interest to her and her themes are the fulness of life and its regeneration. She chooses such subjects as reapers, harvesters and labourers in the fields as well as the products of their efforts. Marriagable girls and mothers nursing their babies are also among her themes.

Her subject matter and striking way of painting are instantly acceptable and her technique in heavy impasto is impressive, being used "with a verve and assurance unequalled by any of her contemporaries."

Irma Stern is more outstanding as a painter than a draughtsman. Her style has not changed basically although through the years it has become more mature. Her work might have changed only slightly but has retained its forcefulness.

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- 7) Max Pechstein 1881-1955. German Expressionist. Herbert Read: *A Concise History of Modern Painting*, p.52.
Max Pechstein (1881) was an important member of Die Brücke.
Canaday, *ibid.*, p.429.
Die Brücke established in 1905 in Dresden, consisted of a group of German Expressionists. They revolted against academicism. Their work is in some ways related to Fauvism because of their vigorous brushwork, bright colours and the effects of primitive art. But while many Fauve artists concentrated on rhythm and harmony, (decorative qualities originating from Gauguin's art), Expressionists in general and the Brücke painters in particular wished to communicate their emotions. While Fauvism may be regarded as having its origins in French painting, Expressionism is a survival of Nordic pessimism and suffering intensified by the unrest which existed in Germany at the time. It is associated with the Northerners, Munch and Ensor and certain aspects of early German Romanticism and German art dating from the Reformation before classicism had imposed its superficial overlay of dignity.
Norbert Lynton: *The Modern World*, p.98.
Paul Gauguin. *Post-Impressionist 1848-1903*.
Sheldon Cheney: *A New World History of Art*, pp.611-613.

It is important to note that Irma Stern's achievements as a draughtsman⁸⁾ deserve special mention although she might be better known as a painter. It was in her many sketches in which she aimed at simplification that her forceful use of line first appeared. Regarding line, one should remember that her favourite medium, charcoal, can be employed with great sensitivity so that a wide range of dark and light tones may be revealed without the drawing acquiring a muddled appearance.

Irma Stern, in a frenzy to paint sometimes forgets to plan her work, therefore the liveliness which is an important part of her art turns to chaos.⁹⁾ A passionate¹⁰⁾ painter such as Irma Stern can occasionally be carried away by the tide of her emotions, to the detriment of the stabilizing effects of reason e.g. The Harbour, Algeciras,¹¹⁾ Spain which in spite of its strong rhythm, appears restless.

During 1918 Irma Stern¹²⁾ began to exhibit in most of the important capitals in Europe. But in spite of being successful there she wanted to get back to Africa which she still considered her homeland. She longed to absorb all the vast untamed beauty of Africa and its brown people in the absence of civilized Europe.

It is significant that Irma Stern did not allow her joyous conception of life to be suppressed by the tragic element which is a characteristic of German Expressionism in its purest form although she was influenced by it.¹³⁾

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- 8) A.C. Bouman: Kuns in Suid-Afrika, p.100.
9) Joseph Sachs: Irma Stern and the Spirit of Africa, p.36.
10) A.C. Bouman: Painters of South Africa, p.71.
11) Irma Stern: The Harbour, Algeciras, Spain.
Magda Sauer: Irma Stern, Our Art I, p.107, Rep.VII,
12) Sachs: *ibid.*, pp.34-35.
13) Sauer, *ibid.*, p.103.

Irma Stern brings the Malay Quarter to us in a completely original and vital¹⁴⁾ manner. She does not so much try to capture the spirit of the Malay Quarter itself, but rather expresses her own emotions and personal experience of it.

Her love of exotic¹⁵⁾ and decoratively¹⁶⁾ imaginative creation is revealed in Malay Quarter¹⁷⁾ of which the aim is not to show the character of the Malay Quarter, but to reveal its relationship to the surrounding landscape. Although the mountain is painted in a leaden blue-grey, its peak ends with a daring nod towards the right and gaily flows down to continue the movement of the light yellow houses at its base, which in their varying heights form a strong rhythm. As the mountain bows in one direction these buildings like a string of beads round a heavy blue-grey neck, lean towards the opposite side.

Irma Stern uses the subject of the Malays and their architecture to express the joy¹⁸⁾ she feels in the pulsating rhythm of life. This she achieves by means of sweeping architectural movements whose exuberance is reflected in the mountain and figure.

Even though the colour contrast¹⁹⁾ between architecture and mountain is strong, there is unity. Blending with the sky the mountain also combines with the warm greenish-grey of the street and no surfaces²⁰⁾ suffer disturbing changes. The figure at the corner of the two streets sways with the rhythm²¹⁾ of the walls and does not seem

14) Jill Adams: Irma Stern, Personality, February 13,, 1969, p.91.

15) Bouman, *ibid.*, pp.71-72.

16) Sauer, *ibid.*, p.103.

17) Rep. LIX, p.75a : Malay Quarter.

18) Sauer, *ibid.*, p.103.

19) Sachs, *ibid.*, p.36.

20) *Ibid.*, p.41.

21) *Ibid.*, p.36.

M5a



LIX

to be sitting on hard solid concrete, but in a little bobbing boat. The tops of the buildings ripple along up each street from the corner and the pavement re-echoes the movement of the house tops and is almost as dark as the mountain.

In Irma's canvas, the figure²²⁾ placed at the angle of the movement of buildings, could easily attract too much attention allowing important elements to be neglected. Yet it blends with the architecture, re-echoing its movement in spite of being the only form having touches of bright red.

She depicts the architecture in soft yellow, pink, greys and dark blue, in an interesting technique²³⁾ in which she replaces modelling with strong contrast in colour. Having applied a simple flat tone to forms, the artist models high lights and dark accents over the still wet first layer of paint. The result is a merging of colour which reveals simple solid forms contrasting one another by the intensity of their colour. Only a small section of the building on the left is visible showing a pearly pink and grey texture with touches of black. This small section falls into rhythm with the strong vertical lines of the telegraph poles.

The painting as a whole gives the effect of an Eastern fairy tale illustration. Irma Stern having painted architecture in Zanzibar,²⁴⁾ was still subconsciously under its absolutely Eastern and to us unusual atmosphere. The skill and spontaneity with which this canvas is executed, express the artist's lively imagination and enjoyment in her work.

22) Bouman, *ibid.*, p.73.

23) Alexander, *ibid.*, p.36.

24) Irma Stern: The Sultan's Palace.
Irma Stern: Zanzibar, p.54.

Kottler's²⁵⁾ fame as a sculptor is wide-spread but he also made a living by painting for a long time.²⁶⁾ Judging by his small canvas of the Malay Quarter, he is an able painter in spite of his greater devotion to sculpture.

During the years that Kottler spent in South Africa he has always attracted favourable attention. His art has not altered since it was not necessary for him to broaden its already wide field and meaning. His work, pervaded by emotional depth and excellent craftsmanship, is executed in stone, bronze and wood. Kottler's sculpture expresses rhythmic freedom and a sensitivity to physical form.

Because of his confidence and sympathetic approach in representing important personages or natives in small studies, he has retained his secure position as sculptor and is still one of South Africa's masters, who are few in number.²⁷⁾

In some ways Kottler's Cape Malays²⁸⁾ is similar to Irma Stern's depiction of the Malay Quarter. Both artists express their individual emotions concerning the subject. Distance is suggested in an even colour key. The flat, yellow ochre at the end of the greenish wall in Cape Malays is nearly as intense as that in the foreground, and in both instances dark green contrasts the ochre. Thus colour plays the most important part in expressing form, as is the case in Irma Stern's Malay Quarter.

In spite of the fact that both artists show their interest in people by including them in their compositions,

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- 25) Moses Kottler. Born in 1896.
Jeppe, *ibid.*, p.128.
Alexander adds that Kottler worked in Cape Town for many years before going to Johannesburg. He worked for a while in Paris as well.
Alexander, *ibid.*, p.164.
- 26) Prof. G. Dekker: Moses Kottler, *Our Art I*, p.109.
- 27) Jeppe, *ibid.*, p.128.
- 28) Rep. LX, p.77a : Cape Malays.

77a



Lx

they have a different aim. Kottler shows the restful and yet productive life of the Malay by means of his two figures. The warm colours of the solidly constructed architecture harmonise with the contented atmosphere created by the human forms.

Irma Stern is not trying to depict the life of the Malays, but as an Expressionist, uses figures and setting mainly to express her own exuberant feeling for life.

Door and window recesses are shown in both works but whereas Kottler renders them in considerable detail, Irma Stern describes them with quick strokes of her brush. Sensitive meandering lines mark the work of both, although Kottler's approach is bolder, less hasty and decorative. He exaggerates the lowness of the houses and in this way stresses the poverty of the Malays showing the figure on the left as thin and bent, the other hard at work. Irma Stern's figure is distorted²⁹⁾ representing the joy of life through its rhythm.

Although Kottler applies his paint in a drier and more deliberate way, his brush strokes, particularly those on the wall nearest the observer, help to create atmosphere. In Irma Stern's wet method of painting her flowing incised brush strokes express the excitement aroused by the swaying movement of her composition.

The paintings also differ in that the spectator is carried away by Irma Stern's strong, vibrant colour³⁰⁾ carving its way into the dark luminous³¹⁾ background. Kottler juxtaposes colours, but their contrast is not very convincing, leaving a movement not as strongly marked. The viewer's appreciation is only aroused gradually, as the harmony of colour and form of Kottler's work becomes more evident.

29) Sachs, *ibid.*, p.39.

30) Sauer, *ibid.*, p.104.

31) Dr. J.W. von Moltke: Irma Stern, *Die Huisgenoot*, January 26, 1962, p.27.

A comparison between the Malay Quarter paintings of David Botha³²⁾ and Irma Stern will prove immediately that Botha's Lion's Head from the Malay Quarter³³⁾ lacks the joyous mood expressed in Irma Stern's canvas. Botha has the same scene before him, but whereas Irma Stern turns it into a joyous experience, he seems to have no other aim than to paint what he sees. It is clear that he wishes to depict the Malay Quarter after a drenching rain, but he has only succeeded in painting a wet street. The happiness that we feel after the health-restoring rain when everything is washed free of dust, is lacking because Botha is unable to convey his feelings. Starting just below the peak of Lion's Head a row of houses moves into the painting towards the left, but there is no easy flowing movement as in Stern's work. This is due to the fact that the recessions of doors and windows and upright figures in front of the houses, break the continuity of the adjoined buildings unnecessarily. And well-planned rigidity shows a lack of spontaneity.

In the foreground only a section of the architecture necessary for a balance and for a continuation of the rhythm, is depicted, but has no other function in the composition. The mountain which is dark and does not blend either with the sky or the architecture has no character of its own. In spite of its height and weight it appears neither threatening nor benign.

Two Malay Boys³⁴⁾ shows Irma Stern's ability to feel and express the spirit of a different subject. These two figures are treated with great simplicity³⁵⁾ and boldness, revealing her knowledge of human nature.³⁶⁾

32) Chapter II, p.66, footnote 72.

33) Rep. LXI, p.79a : Lion's Head from the Malay Quarter.

34) Rep. LXII, p.79a : Two Malay Boys.

35) A.C. Bouman: Kuns in Suid-Afrika, p.101.

36) Sachs, *ibid.*, pp.50-52.

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The dark blue fezs and trousers, together with the warm brown arms and musical instruments form a strong rhythm which is accentuated by the tilted heads of the boys. The diagonal lines of the fezs draw the observer's attention to their expressive faces. The figures are relaxed but their serious eyes betray a sense of wistfulness which contradicts the pleasure transmitted by the whistling mouths.

Again Irma Stern executes her work in colour placing dark³⁷⁾ against light to reveal space. And there is little change of tone within each colour. The blue-black fezs and trousers are set against the light greenish-blue and white background which in turn is darker than the shirts. The entire painting shows this strict simplification which eliminates unnecessary detail and helps the artist to express her emotions.

"It should not pass unnoticed that Irma Stern's work is frequently tinged with a hint of bitterness. If I am not mistaken, this acrid quality is due to the awareness of a less lovely aspect of South Africa, namely the cruelty of its sun, which not only engenders but also kills life - not merely the flora and fauna, but what is worse: the spirit of the people."³⁸⁾

The tragic element in the work of Irma Stern can perhaps be explained by comparing Two Malay Boys with her Manghbetu Chief's Bride³⁹⁾ which depicts a young native woman. Sitting stiffly with bent head, her hands rest on the knees of thin legs held rigidly together. Her cramped attitude is emphasized by the confined space she occupies. The expressionless face is one of dumb resignation to a life of suffering. Depression and loneliness⁴⁰⁾ are reflected in the crude dry manner in

37) Ibid., p.37.

38) A.C. Bouman: Painters of South Africa, p.76.

39) Irma Stern: Manghbetu Chief's Bride.

40) Bouman, ibid., pp.74-75.

which the paint is applied.

Living close to nature this primitive bride is unfortunate since she is more deeply affected by its cruelty than its joyous abandonment to life.

This painting shows the artist as an extremely sensitive being who is equally aware of the joys and miseries of life. Her sympathies are particularly directed towards the under-privileged brown people of our country.

The work of the Expressionist, Irma Stern has greatly advanced from the realistic depictions of for instance Oerder⁴¹⁾ and Volschenk.⁴²⁾

Nature is no longer copied to reveal its beauty only, but its forms and colours are arranged in such a way that artists can express their sensations regarding life.

The most striking characteristic of Irma Stern's approach is her awareness of the fulness of life. And in expressing this idea she uses brilliant colours and a powerful unifying rhythm.

Irma Stern, anxious to reveal her feelings concerning man and his environment, wants to do so before her impressions lose their vitality. Details must not be allowed to prevent a direct and spontaneous statement which is essential in the attainment of a convincing canvas. Thus her ability to paint has to keep abreast of her rapidly conceived images. The artist is compelled to paint quickly, therefore it is at times difficult for her to state her ideas in a logical and orderly way.⁴³⁾ Still, Malay Quarter⁴⁴⁾ which is apparently created at the height of Irma Stern's emotional drive is spontaneous, simplified and controlled by a strong rhythm, stressing the artist's gay outlook.

41) Chapter I, p.12, footnote 19.

42) Chapter I, p.12, footnote 21.

43) Sachs, *ibid.*, p.40.

44) Chapter III, p.75, footnote 17 : Malay Quarter.

But one must not be deluded into thinking that Irma Stern was not aware of the tragic side of life. And indeed it seems as if she does at times enter into the spirit of her subject with too much intensity to the detriment of her own spontaneous means of expression e.g. Mangbetu Chief's Bride.⁴⁵⁾ Her understanding of the problems of the Malay community on the other hand, is expressed with more subtlety since here the portrayal is on the whole a happy one, with only a suggestion of the sadness which is associated with the life of the Malay e.g. Two Malay Boys and Malay Priest.⁴⁶⁾ "Irma Stern's studies of the Malay are very touching. The young people have a sense of tragedy in their eyes, while the elder folk wear a look of tolerance and wise resignation."⁴⁷⁾

She reached the height of her powers as a painter in the mid-Forties.⁴⁸⁾ The Golden Shawl⁴⁹⁾ as well as Malay Quarter amply prove this statement. A strong contrast in colour is used in Malay Quarter to suggest the relation of the pale yellow architecture to the deep-toned mountain and foreground which reveal only slight variations of tone within themselves and their relationship to the sky.

A different approach is witnessed in The Golden Shawl where bright yellow light figures in the background, yet the figure with its stronger reds, browns and light greyish tones is unmistakably in the foreground. And the telling brush strokes applied hastily over the still wet paint either stress dark outlines or the highlights of the form, but they glow with colour.

45) Bouman, *ibid.*, pp.74-75.

46) Irma Stern: Malay Priest at the Pretoria Art Museum.

47) Sachs, *ibid.*, p.53.

48) Dubow, *ibid.*, p.199.

49) Alexander, *ibid.*, p.36 and opposite page for rep. of The Golden Shawl.

ALFRED KRENZ

Krenz⁵⁰⁾ has in his own way told us what he considers interesting and beautiful in South Africa.

An artist has the intuition and power of expression to reveal many characteristics⁵¹⁾ of our country which we have perhaps not been aware of. There is a great deal of cultural wealth to be found in our country with its many and varying climatic conditions as well as its mixture of many racial groups. Added to this the great variation in scenery, vegetation and animal life is a source of boundless inspiration to the artist. Krenz is able to make use of these benefits.

Krenz is more interested in painting the confined or intimate landscape in preference to the spacious or panoramic one. The reason for this choice may be attributed to the fact that he grew up in a city and that the most important part of his training was received under similar circumstances, at the Vienna Academy and in Paris. He believes that from the outset the integration of forms must be of primary importance in order to achieve a well balanced composition. And this is probably his main reason for painting the intimate scene. It is likely that the high viewpoint, a general characteristic of Krenz's landscapes is the outcome of his training in

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- 50) Alfred Frederic Krenz. Born in 1899 in Vienna. Studied at the Kunstgewerbeschule from 1916 to 1918. From 1929 to 1931 he studied under Ozenfant in Paris. In 1949 he came to South Africa, settling in Cape Town. He held exhibitions in Cape Town, Pretoria and Johannesburg. He is represented in the National Gallery, Cape Town, the Johannesburg and Kimberley Art Galleries and in the Albertina Gallery, Vienna, the National Gallery, Budapest, and the Salzburg Art Gallery. In his still-lives and portraits his work is decorative, following the principles of his Austrian training. Jeppe, *ibid.*, p.49. Alexander adds that Krenz lived in Holland before settling in South Africa. Alexander, *ibid.*, pp.164-165.
- 51) Prof. F.E.J. Malberbe: Alfred Krenz, *Our Art II*, p.49.

13a



X



XI

still-life painting.⁵²⁾

Krenz does not only supply knowledge to the art lovers of Cape Town but also to those farther afield. In order to enlighten the public with regard to European art movements, he lectured on Austrian painting in the Eighteenth, Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. The lectures were illustrated by excellent colour slides and were delivered in Pretoria in 1964.⁵³⁾

Alfred Krenz depicts the Malay Quarter in a style completely different from those of the artists whose works have already been discussed. The influence of the Purists⁵⁴⁾ is clearly evident in his work entitled Malay Quarter Buildings⁵⁵⁾ although it is freer and more decorative than the work of the Purists in general.

The linear approach and bold colour planes are the most striking qualities in his painting. Forms are defined by means of lines of varying thicknesses which unite the horizontals of the roofs with the vertical planes of the walls where there are subtle changes of tone.

The lines are mostly straight but not rigid; they are either horizontal⁵⁶⁾ or vertical, excepting for the curved one of the street, a line which commences from a dark jagged form and sweeps⁵⁷⁾ up to the focal point, the mosque and the scalloped walls in the vicinity.

The tree on the left with its bent branches opposed by lush foliage, takes part in the movement of the street.

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- 52) P.K. Minnaar: Alfred Friedrich Franz Krenz (1899), Sy Lewe en Werk in Suid-Afrika, pp.44-45.
- 53) Letter from Krenz to writer regarding this matter, November 27, 1967.
- 54) Revolt against Cubism because of its ornamental tendency. Forms had to symbolise the machine age of the Twentieth Century following the principles of clarity, precision and order. Art is pale and austere. Canaday, *ibid.*, p.494.
- 55) Rep. LXIII, p.84a : Malay Quarter Buildings.
- 56) Dr. F.E.J. Malherbe: Alfred Krenz, *Lantern*, September 1960, p.69.
- 57) *Ibid.* p.69.

84a



LXIII

A white wall behind the mosque includes the lightest area in the canvas and draws the eye to the subtle harmony of pale mauves, greens and blues. All the colours used in the painting are repeated here where each bears light touches of the other but still retains its local colour. For example the white wall as well as the soft pink-mauve plane behind it show traces of blue-green. Other surfaces mainly in blue-green are brought into harmony with the white and pink-mauve planes behind them and with the delicate yellow of the distance. The artist places the soft pink wall behind the white one to achieve a gradual transition. The eye moves with ease from the lightest section of the painting to more distant planes as well as to those nearer the observer. These cool colours are used throughout the painting although traces of warm reds and light browns relieve them here and there.

By means of a linear⁵⁸⁾ construction in subtle light and colour the artist stresses the focal point near the mosque, yet keeps its values closely related to the rest of the canvas.

Krenz clearly reveals the effect of Expressionism in the distortion⁵⁹⁾ of form. The exaggerated height of the houses and tree create a feeling of calmness⁶⁰⁾ and monumentality which the artist is careful not to destroy by means of overcrowding.⁶¹⁾ Each form is defined and plays an essential part in the balance and rhythm of the simple, geometric⁶²⁾ design of the entire composition.

58) Prof. F.E.J. Malherbe : Alfred Krenz, *Our Art II*, p.49.

59) Chapter III, pp.71-72.

60) Malherbe, *ibid.*, p.50.

61) *Ibid.*

62) Dr. J.W. von Moltke: Alfred Krenz, *Die Huisgenoot*, February, 9, 1962, p.23.
also Malherbe *ibid.*, p.50.

Krenz's Cape Town Harbour from the Malay Quarter⁶³⁾ depicts a street with a row of houses of varying heights on the one side and a tall building and a section of a steep on the other.

The architectural features of the Malay Quarter are stated truthfully and yet the structure of the house nearest the viewer on the right is disappointing, because the facade gives the impression of being a continuous thick piece of cardboard on which doors and windows have been mounted in a slightly darker tone, revealing hardly any depth. The austere⁶⁴⁾ angularity of the buildings is relieved only at the focal point, in the distant hills and the rounded shape crowning the parapet of the first building on the right side. The colour scheme consists of cold blue, red and mauve, contrasted by small sections of yellow ochre. The pale blue of the building on the left side of the street is contrasted by yellow ochre which emphasizes its cold quality instead of counteracting it. Only at the focal point yellow ochre appears warm because it blends with the red on the one hand and contrasts the blue and purple on the other.

The rhythm of the dark blue and purple tones draws attention to a satisfying colour pattern which is predominantly pale blue.

Krenz's Malay Quarter Buildings differs from Cape Town Harbour from the Malay Quarter in that its focal point attracts attention, whereas in the latter painting the focal point is not stressed, but one is aware of the unobtrusive union of planes and colours bounded by the form of the arch.

The distortion employed in Malay Quarter Buildings resulting in tall vertical planes, is absent in Cape Town Harbour from the Malay Quarter. Here planes are

63) Rep. LXIV, p.86a : Cape Town Harbour from the Malay Quarter.

64) Influence of Purism.
Chapter III, p.84, footnote 54.

86a



LXIV

set at varying angles to converge at the focal point.

Krenz's sketches differ from his paintings since they are warmer in colour and although greatly simplified, are more realistic.

His sketch Lion's Head from the Malay Quarter⁶⁵⁾ depicts a street with Lion's Head in the background and a figure in the immediate foreground. The rows of houses appear as simplified cubes firmly related to the earth on which they stand. The colour scheme is unusual for Krenz, since only the initial houses on each side of the street are painted a pale blue like the mountain in the distance. The rest of the architecture is depicted in the warm tones of burnt sienna and yellow ochre. The colour of the mountain is reflected in the two light blue houses on each side of the street and the foreground, as well as in the white-blue of the sky. In this way unity is achieved by colour balance.

Almost as tall as Lion's Head and similar in form, the highest building on the left reflects the shape of the figure bringing it into harmony with its surroundings.

The second sketch Dorp Street, Malay Quarter⁶⁶⁾ represents only one building painted in yellow ochre, burnt sienna and pale green. Houses depicted on the opposite side of the street are painted in pale tones of blue, pink and yellow ochre. The light greenish-grey architecture in the distance combines warm and cold colours. This work differs from the previous one in that the warm colour is not placed in the middle-distance and surrounded by cold colour, but cold and warm colours contrast one another in the foreground. A neutral greenish-grey acts as a transition from cold to warm colour.

Krenz seems to be more free in his sketches and ventures to use new combinations of colour to reach the essential character of his depicted scene.

65) Rep. LXV, p.87a : Lion's Head from the Malay Quarter.

66) Rep. LXVI, p.87a : Dorp Street, Malay Quarter.

87a



LXV



LXVI

His powerful imagination is able to capture and express the scene before him. He believes that abstraction in art must needs have its origins in nature but success can only be attained if the artist has a close affinity to nature. His is a bold representation of the basic qualities of his subject and is controlled so that it does not become too concerned with unnecessary details.

The closely packed architecture of Malay Quarter Buildings expresses the way of life of an Eastern community. The exaggerated height of the houses and their mainly cold colour scheme may be regarded as an expression of pride and contentment, while the mosque at the focal point symbolises religious fervour.

Emotions different from those revealed in the two previous works are present here but even though Krenz is inspired by the spirit of these people and their environment, he does not allow his emotions to override the demands of a well constructed design. And here forms are arranged so that they constitute an integral part of the composition.

In a comparison between Irma Stern and Krenz these two painters may be regarded as creators in decorative form and colour, although the former artist is by far the greater.

Irma Stern has found delight in contrasting the dark brown skin of the native with the cool colours green and purple "grouping the natives with an effortless skill while her broad light brush conveys their characteristic gesture and expression."⁶⁷⁾ Watusi Queen⁶⁸⁾ illustrates Irma Stern's bold way of painting in flowing lines and strong colour. Krenz also uses the brown skin, colourful clothing and environment to express the native's

67) Sachs, *ibid.*, p.51.

68) Irma Stern: Watusi Queen.
Adams, *ibid.*, p.91.

nature but presents him in a geometrically planned composition e.g. Basutos.⁶⁹⁾ In each of the above-mentioned paintings the results are impressive but since Krenz's emotional drive is less subjective⁷⁰⁾ than that of Irma Stern, he is able to exercise more control. The structural element in his art which is the basis of his forceful compositions can sometimes obscure his emotions so that the canvas appears too angular and austere e.g. Cape Town Harbour from the Malay Quarter.

Irma Stern on the other hand, whose strength springs from her impetuous spirit, may at times surrender too much to her emotions and produce restless canvases e.g. The Harbour, Algeciras, Spain.⁷¹⁾ While Irma Stern is on the whole interested in revealing the inner nature of the African aborigines,⁷²⁾ she has chosen the Malay Quarter and its proximity to nature to express her own joyous outlook. She does not seem to concern herself with the spiritual qualities of the Malay but with her own feelings about life through the relation of form and colour e.g. Malay Quarter.⁷³⁾

Whereas Irma Stern expresses her enjoyment of life in her painting entitled Malay Quarter, Krenz reveals the contented and pious outlook of the Malay in his Malay Quarter Buildings through the closely packed character of the buildings and an exaggeration of their height. Here not only the mainly cool colour scheme but also the strict planning of the composition contribute to the expression of the Malay's way of life. Thus emotion plays an important part in this work but does not lead to disorder.

69) Alfred Krenz: Basutos.
von Moltke, *ibid.*, opposite p.23.

70) Sachs, *ibid.*, p.42.

71) Chapter III, p.74, footnote 11 : The Harbour, Algeciras, Spain.

72) Sachs, *ibid.*, p.45.

73) Chapter III, p.75, footnote 17 : Malay Quarter.

While Irma Stern applies her paint in hasty brush strokes, Krenz's method though also spontaneous is not as impetuous.

HARRY TREVOR

Harry Trevor's influence as an artist is not widespread in South Africa, but his work carries immense force and cannot be overlooked as it is an expression of human suffering. In his paintings of the Malay Quarter he is deeply stirred by the decline of a cultured race.

"Trevor has a world of tragedy and bewilderment about him and within him, which he is to express through his personality and circumstance."⁷⁴⁾ His passionate sympathy with man is expressed in violent⁷⁵⁾ colour, but his work is controlled by the strict geometric⁷⁶⁾ framework of his composition.

Trevor's Malay Quarter⁷⁷⁾ depicts a narrow street to the right of which a Malay wearing a red fez and blue robes, is seen. His legs from the knees down to his feet are cut off by the picture frame. On the opposite side two figures are placed very near to the wall of the building and appear only as shadows. Their decadence is revealed through the choice of sombre colours and their dejected attitudes. The body of the main figure seems distorted, coinciding with his thin face and long nose. The other figures have lost their identity. Only the luminosity of the dark purple contrasted by light green, blue and pale yellow indicate some inherent vitality. All figures and their cast shadows draw the attention to the main expressive human form in the foreground.

74) David Lewis: The Naked Eye, p.30.

75) Ibid.

76) Ibid.

77) Rep. LXVII, p.90a : Malay Quarter.

90a



LXVII



LXVIII

Dark contours define forms and the paint is applied in thick wavy strokes to create surfaces which are luminous and show the irregularity seen in stained glass windows. The powerful, angular rhythm of the dark forms unites the work making one aware of a sense of despair.

Harry Trevor's Malay Quarter Musicians⁷⁸⁾ depicts a severely inclined street which leads the eye of the viewer to the focal point which is above and to the left of the painting's centre. On the right side two musicians echo the strong geometric construction of the architecture immediately behind them and in the distance. The paint is again applied with wavy brush strokes and luminous colour areas are separated by black contours. In spite of its severely angular quality and its powerful rhythm, this work is not as sombre and foreboding as Malay Quarter where blue, red and yellow dominate. In Malay Quarter Musicians the artist employs a wider range of colour in which red and green have become more vital. Instead of stressing the confined space the Malays live in, the wider street suggests distance. Even though the figures are distorted, the very fact that they are beguiling their time with musical instruments lends a light touch. Even so, in Malay Quarter Musicians the artist also condemns poverty and injustice as he does in Malay Quarter.

Trevor expresses his sympathy with humanity through distortion of form, sombre colours and dark outlines. The severe angularity which contributes towards a fuller expression of the artist's feelings, is emphasized by paint which seems to be dragged across the surface of the canvas to indicate the irregular and luminous texture of medieval glass.

In a comparison of Krenz and Trevor, it becomes evident that there are points of similarity. Both artists express their feelings, but whereas Krenz's emotions are

78) Rep. LXVIII, p.90a : Malay Quarter Musicians.

mainly connected with an enjoyment of life, Trevor expresses a feeling of despair. Krenz's happier outlook is seen in his comparatively cool colour scheme and a less violent application of paint e.g. Malay Quarter Buildings,⁷⁹⁾ whereas the sadness witnessed in Trevor's work on the same subject, is present not only in his technique consisting of wavy brush strokes in sombre colour, but also in the dejected and distorted figures.

Although Krenz's work is an orderly geometric construction, he does not resort to extremes and the distortion of the architecture to stress the moral outlook of the Malay, is not an expression of dismay but rather of optimism. On the other hand Trevor employs strict geometric planning in order to drive home his feeling of gloom even more forcefully. The above-mentioned paintings by Krenz and Trevor bear witness to these statements.

The three main artists in this chapter have chosen the Malay Quarter to express their emotions. Colour, distortion and rhythm have been used to reach different goals through Expressionism.

Irma Stern's work is an expression of the joy and suffering of life. Krenz tends towards the strictly intellectual and aesthetic, whereas Harry Trevor's painting is a passionate outcry against the suffering of humanity.

79) Chapter III, p. 84, footnote 55 : Malay Quarter Buildings.

CONCLUSION

The attraction of the Malay Quarter for South African painters has not decreased, because its basic characteristics have remained unchanged since it was built, excepting that sections of the architecture are in disrepair.

The Quarter is still situated on Signal Hill where it was built approximately two hundred years ago. Vital and fascinating, it is a world of white-robed priests and tall mosques with silver domes, adding variation to the stepped cornices¹⁾ of the long rows of flat-roofed homes.

The emotional strain of the two wars experienced during the first half of the Twentieth Century, produced social conditions which gave rise to a more pronounced activity in art. Both artists and patrons not only in South Africa but also in France, England and America, were affected. War created an impetus which was beneficial to art, but in South Africa where war conditions restricted travelling facilities, it was prone to lead to insularity. Artists were to a large extent prevented from keeping abreast with competent painters overseas. The public, unaware of this lack, was impressed with whatever the artists produced. Patrons who did not take this view considered artistic creations good, simply because some of the European influences could be found in them.

However, our leading South African artists have not pandered to the taste of the public. They realised that our art could only grow if it expressed the true spirit of our country whilst keeping abreast with overseas art movements. In their depictions we are aware

1) Crowning or upper part of the entablature.
Sir Banister Fletcher: A History of Architecture,
p.968.

of characteristics which are uniquely personal and original.

Naudé is an open-air painter whose concept of the Malay Quarter breathes the freshness of our clear air. As an Impressionist he submits himself humbly to the moods of nature and for this reason we find his work sometimes more instinctive than intellectual.

The vibrating light and air in Caldecott's paintings of this area on the other hand, evince a more conscious striving towards the practice of French Impressionistic principles.

The work of Wenning, a follower of Dutch Impressionism, is recognised by dramatic effects due to strong light and dark contrasts and colours which lack the transparency one sees in those of Caldecott. Thus Wenning's forms seem more solid and compact.

Irma Stern's decorative and exotic tendencies as an Expressionist, lead to dramatic representations of this picturesque site in Cape Town, while Harry Trevor's powerful, geometric compositions are unusual and striking expressions of his emotions.

It is significant to attempt an aesthetic approach to a typically South African history of art, by recording the sensations and experiences inspired by this area in various artists through approximately the last hundred years.

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LIST OF WORKS REPRODUCED IN THE TEXT.

- I Plan of streets and residential blocks of the Malay Quarter.
- II Location and size of the Malay Quarter.
- III Sjeh Yussuf's Tomb, Faure.
- IV Church and Chiappini Streets Mosque.
- V 71 Wale Street.
- VI Martin Melck House.
- VII The House on the corner of Leeuwen and Bree Streets.
- VIII Owner : Mrs. Wengrove : Malays, Sign. l.h. bot. cr., Dte. 1951, Size $12\frac{3}{4}$ " x $9\frac{3}{4}$ ", Med. Wash, pen and Chinese White.
- IX Owner : Fehr Collection (Castle) : Long Street, Dte. 1850, Size 25" x $32\frac{3}{4}$ ", Med. Oils.
- X Owner : Naudé Collection, Worcester : A Busy Malay Quarter Street, Sign. r.h. bot. cr., Dte. none, Size $23\frac{3}{4}$ " x $17\frac{1}{4}$ ", Med. Oils on canvas.
- XI Owner : Mrs. C.A. Te Water Naudé : Malay Quarter, Cape Town, Sign. r.h. bot. cr., Dte. none, Size $13\frac{1}{2}$ " x $11\frac{1}{2}$ ", Med. Oils on canvas.
- XII Owner : Mrs. Paterson : Malay Courtyard Scene, Unsigned, Dte. none, size $10\frac{3}{4}$ " x 9", Med. Oils on canvas.
- XIII Owner : Dr. Silberberg : Chiappini Mosque, Sign. l.h. bot. cr., Dte. none, Size $6\frac{1}{2}$ " x 8", Med. Pen and wash.
- XIV Photograph of Chiappini Mosque from same angle as rep. XIII.
- XV Owner : Dr. Silberberg : Grey Mosque, Sign. r.h. bot. cr., Dte. none, Size $7\frac{3}{4}$ " x 7", Med. Wash and pen.
- XVI Owner : Mrs. Whiting Spilhaus : Old Chiappini Mosque, Sign. r.h. bot. cr., Dte. none, Size $7\frac{3}{4}$ " x $7\frac{1}{4}$ ", Med. Etching in sepia.
- XVII Owner : Mr. R. Gans : Chiappini Street Mosque, Sign. r.h. bot. cr., Dte. none, Size 16" x 19", Med. Oils on canvas.
- XVIII Owner : Mrs. R. Gans : Loop Street Mosque, Sign. l.h. bot. cr., Dte. none, Size $15\frac{1}{2}$ " x $11\frac{1}{4}$ ", Med. Oils on canvas.
- XIX Owner : W. Fehr Collection : Malay Quarter, Dte. none, Med. Oils on canvas. This painting is reproduced in "The Cape Malays" by I.D. du Plessis, whereabouts unknown.

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- XXIV Owner : Mr. R. : A Rear View of Malay Quarter Houses, Sign. r.h. bot. cr., Dte. 1949, Size 15" x 17", Med. Oils on Canvas.
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- XXVI Owner : Mr. J.D. de Villiers Truter : Rose Street, Malay Quarter, Sign. initials r.h. bot. cr., Dte. 1955, Size $15\frac{1}{2}$ " x $11\frac{1}{2}$ ", Med. Oils on canvas.
- XXVII Owner : Mrs. C.A. te Water Naudé, The Wash Line, Sign. r.h. bot. cr., Dte. 1924, Size $21\frac{3}{4}$ " x 18", Med. Oils on canvas.
- XXVIII Owner : National Gallery, Cape Town : The Cricket Match, Dte. 1926, Size $17\frac{1}{4}$ x $23\frac{1}{4}$ ", Med. Oils on canvas.
- XXIX Owner : Prof. du Plessis Scholtz : The Goat, Malay Quarter, Dte. 1927, Size $16\frac{3}{4}$ " x $23\frac{1}{2}$ ", Med. Oils on canvas.
- XXX Owner : Prof. du Plessis Scholtz : Malay Quarter, Sign. l.h. bot. cr., Dte. none, Size $13\frac{1}{2}$ " x $17\frac{1}{2}$ ", Med. Oils on canvas.
- XXXI Owner : Mr. Kootie Malan : The White House, Malay Quarter, Sign. l.h. bot. cr., Dte. none, Size 22" x 28", Med. Oils on canvas.
- XXXII Coloured Reproduction : Owner not known : The Yellow Street, Malay Quarter, Cape Town, Sign. l.h. bot. cr., Dte. 1958, Size 12" x 16", Med. Oils on canvas.
- XXXIII Owner : Mr. Mendel Jacobs : Malay Quarter Street, Dte. 1938, Size 22" x 28", Med. Oils on canvas.
- XXXIV Owner : Mr. H. Snitcher : Keigwan Arms, Sign. l.h. bot. cr., Dte. 1936, Size 16" x 20", Med. Oils on canvas.
- XXXV Owner : Collection Mr. & Mrs. M. Levy : Table Mountain from the Malay Quarter, Sign. l.h. bot. cr., Dte. 1950, Size $21\frac{1}{2}$ " x $27\frac{1}{2}$ ", Med. Oils on canvas.

- XXXVI Owner : Collection Mr. & Mrs. F.M. Low : Mosque, Loop Street, Cape Town, Sign. l.h. bot. cr., Dte. 1952, Size 20" x 24", Med. Oils on canvas.
- XXXVII Owner : Mr. G. Boonzaier : The Harbour from the Malay Quarter, Sign. l.h. bot. cr., Dte. none, Size 16½" x 26¾", Med. Oils on canvas.
- XXXVIII Owner : Mr. G. Boonzaier : Malay Quarter, Cape Town, Dte. none, Size 26" x 34", Med. Oils on canvas.
- XXXIX Owner : Mr. G. Boonzaier : Malay Quarter Houses, Sign. r.h. bot. cr., Dte. 1956, Size 12" x 16", Med. Watercolour with pen and ink.
- XL Owner : Mr. G. Boonzaier : Malay Quarter Scene, Sign. l.h. bot. cr., Dte. 1960, Size 12" x 16", Med. Black ink on grey paper.
- XLI Owner : Mr. G. Boonzaier : Malay Craftsmen at Work, Sign. l.h. bot. cr., Dte. 1959, Size 12" x 16", Med. Black ink & watercolour washes on grey paper.
- XLII Owner : Mr. G. Boonzaier : Moslem Quarter, Sign. r.h. bot. cr., Dte. none, Size 4½" x 6½", Med. Lino-cut.
- XLIII Owner : Mr. G. Boonzaier : Malay Quarter Scene, Sign. l.h. bot. cr., Dte. none, Size 4" x 6½", Med. Lino-cut.
- XLIV Owner : Mr. G. Boonzaier : Malay Quarter, Cape Town, Sign. l.h. bot. cr., Dte. none, Size 6½" x 8¾", Med. Lino-cut.
- XLV Owner : Pretoria Art Museum : Cape Town, Moslem Quarter, Dte. none, Size 7" x 10", Med. Oils on canvas.
- XLVI Owner : Kimberley Art Gallery : Malay Quarter View, Sign. l.h. bot. cr., Dte. none, Size 16" x 20", Med. Oils on canvas.
- XLVII Owner : Dr. Lückhoff : Malay Quarter, Dte. none, Size 17½" x 12¼", Med. Oils on canvas.
- XLVIII Owner : Dr. Lückhoff : Malay Quarter, Cape Town, Sign. r.h. bot. cr., Dte. none, Size 14" x 9¾", Med. Oils on canvas.
- XLIX Owner : Mrs. Whiting Spilhaus : A Lane in the Malay Quarter, Sign. r.h. bot. cr., Dte. none, Size 11¼" x 9¼", Med. Oils on canvas.
- L Owner : Pretoria Art Museum : Above the Malay Quarter, Sign. r.h. bot. cr., Dte. none, Size 12" x 16".
- LI Owner : Pretoria Art Museum : Street Scene in the Malay Quarter, Sign. r.h. bot. cr., Dte. 1915, Size 11½" x 10", Med. Black conté and watercolour on white paper.

- LIII Owner : Dr. Silberberg : Long Street Mosque, Sign. r.h. bot. cr., Dte. 1917, Size $9\frac{1}{2}''$ x $6\frac{1}{2}''$, Med. Indian ink on light grey paper with touches of Chinese White and pale blue.
- LIIII Owner : Pretoria Art Museum : Lane, Malay Quarter, Sign. l.h. bot. cr., Dte. none, Size $6''$ x $5\frac{3}{4}''$, Med. Pen and black ink.
- LIV Owner : Mr. S. Newton : Malay Quarter, Sign. r.h. bot. cr., Dte. 1962, Size $30''$ x $36''$, Med. Oils on canvas.
- LV Owner : Mr. D. Pretorius : Malay Scene, Sign. l.h. bot. cr., Dte. 1958, Size $12''$ x $15''$, Med. Oils on canvas.
- LVI Owner : Prof. F.A. van Jaarsveld : Malay Quarter, Sign. r.h. bot. cr., Dte. 1962, Size $17\frac{1}{2}''$ x $25\frac{1}{2}''$, Med. Oils on canvas.
- LVII Owner : Prof. F.A. van Jaarsveld : Chiappini Street, Malay Quarter, Sign. l.h. bot. cr., Dte. 1966, Size $24''$ x $36''$, Med. Oils on canvas.
- LVIII Owner : Prof. F.A. van Jaarsveld : Vermeulen Street, Malay Quarter, Sign. l.h. bot. cr., Dte. 1966, Size $24''$ x $36''$, Med. Oils on canvas.
- LIX Owner : Dr. Silberberg : Malay Quarter, Sign. r.h. bot. cr., Dte. 1948, Size $15\frac{1}{8}''$ x $19\frac{3}{4}''$, Med. Oils on canvas.
- LX Owner : Mrs. Wilcocks : Cape Malays, Sign. r.h. bot. cr., Dte. none, Size $8\frac{3}{4}''$ x $12\frac{3}{4}''$, Med. Oils on canvas.
- LXI Owner : Mrs. Kitay : Lion's Head from the Malay Quarter, Sign. l.h. bot. cr., Dte. 1957, Size $15\frac{1}{2}''$ x $19\frac{1}{4}''$, Med. Oils on canvas.
- LXII Owner : Pretoria Art Museum : Two Malay Boys, Sign. l.h. top cr., Dte. 1930, Size $40''$ x $37''$, Med. Oils on canvas.
- LXIII Owner : Mrs. Elphinstone : Malay Quarter Buildings, Sign. r.h. bot. cr., Dte. 1957, Size $28\frac{3}{4}''$ x $21\frac{1}{4}''$, Med. Oils on canvas.
- LXIV Owner : Dr. Silberberg : Cape Town Harbour from the Malay Quarter, Sign. l.h. bot. cr., Dte. 1958, Size $22''$ x $31''$, Med. Oils on canvas.
- LXV Owner : Dr. Silberberg : Lion's Head from the Malay Quarter, Dte. none, Size $6''$ x $9\frac{1}{2}''$, Med. Oils on board.
- LXVI Owner : Dr. Silberberg : Dorp Street, Malay Quarter, Dte. none, Size $6''$ x $9\frac{1}{2}''$, Med. Oils on board.

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- LXVII Owner : Dr. Silberberg : Malay Quarter, Dte. none,
Size 24" x 20", Med. Oils on canvas.
- LXVIII Owner : Mr. A. Silberberg : Malay Quarter Musicians,
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IV	Owner : Mr. A. Bloomberg : <u>Cottage and Two Oaks, Newlands, Dte. 1932, Size 10" x 12"</u> , Med. Oils on canvas.	43.
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VI	Owner : Mr. Gregoire Boonzaier : <u>Mount Ararat from the Donga, Dte. 1963, Size 16" x 20"</u> , Med. Oils on canvas.	45.
VII	Owner : Dr. A.H. Gool : <u>Narrow Street, Cornwall, England, Dte. 1936, Size 22" x 28"</u> Med. Oils on canvas.	46.
VIII	Owner : Mr. S. Mullne : <u>Cottages in the Rain, Sign. r.h. bot. cr., Dte. none, Size 8¹/₂" x 12"</u> , Med. Oils on canvas, Publ. in Our Art I, p.17.	55.
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X	<u>The Sultan's Palace, Sign. r.h. bot. cr., Dte. 1945, Publ. in Irma Stern : Zanzibar, p.54.</u>	76.
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S U M M A R YTHE CAPE MALAY QUARTER IN SOUTH AFRICAN PAINTING.

A. FROST.

Naudé as painter is influenced by the Dutch Impressionists of the Hague School. He stresses the essential characteristics of the Malay Quarter namely, poverty, colourfulness and intimacy. His style displays immediacy and vitality due to his swift, sure brush strokes and strong contrasting light and shade.

Whereas Naudé's chief aim in depicting the Malay Quarter is to study light effects, Nita Spilhaus as realist, in a quieter way, sees poverty in the confined space of the Quarter's houses, while the mosques are a symbol of religious faith.

Ruth Prowse's paintings of the Malay Quarter stress the dignity and harmonious co-existence of the Malays. She is also a realist but her technique is bolder in comparison with that of Nita Spilhaus.

Caldecott is influenced by French Impressionism. He depicts the Quarter as overcrowded and poverty-stricken. He uses mauves, blue and black in his shadows which have subdued reflections of sunlight from nearby objects. And there is no loss of form.

Boonzaier as realist, depicts forms clearly in a steady light suggesting that time passes slowly. Colour over a dark background creates black outlines round forms, resulting in a decorative linear design where warm, subdued colour and quiet brush strokes are present.

Wenning, affected by the Dutch Impressionists of the Hague School, expresses a fleeting moment of time in hasty brush movements. Like Boonzaier he chooses a darkened canvas and soft, warm colour. Wenning's power of suggestion makes his work more impressive than that of Boonzaier.

Irma Stern, influenced by the German Expressionists, also employs distortion to express her emotions, but is unlike them in her gay outlook. Her decorative canvases transmit an enjoyment of life. Her rich colours are applied in a bold, vigorous technique.

Krenz is an expressionist with Purist leanings. His geometrically planned compositions are more austere than those of Irma Stern but similar in that forms are distorted in a bold decorative style, transmitting a joyous outlook in life. But Krenz's colours are cooler on the whole, his brush strokes less impetuous.

Harry Trevor's forms are distorted and his compositions are geometrically controlled like those of Krenz, but instead of revealing optimism, the extreme angularity of his art discloses a deep sense of tragedy. Dark outlines define his forms and sombre colours, dragged across the canvas, create luminous effects resembling stained glass.

Depictions of the Malay Quarter by leading South African painters contribute to the development of painting in South Africa.

O P S O M M I N GDIE KAAPSE MALEIERBUURT IN DIE
SUID-AFRIKAANSE SKILDERKUNS.

A. FROST.

Naudé as skilder word beïnvloed deur die Nederlandse Impressioniste van die Haagskool. Hy beklemtoon die wesenlike kenmerke van die Maleierbuurt naamlik armoede, kleurrykheid en intimiteit. Sy styl is dringend en lewenskragtig as gevolg van sy vinnige en raak kwashale en sy sterk kontrasterende lig- en skadu effekte.

Waar Naudé se hoofdoel met die afbeeld van die Maleierbuurt die bestudering van ligeffekte is, neem Nita Spilhaus as stiller realis die armoede in die beknoptheid van die Kwartier se huise waar, terwyl die moskees vir haar 'n simbool van godsdienstige geloof is.

Ruth Prowse se skilderye van die Maleierbuurt beklemtoon die waardigheid en harmonieuse saamwoon van die Maleiers. Soos Nita Spilhaus is sy 'n realis maar haar tegniek is vrymoediger.

Caldecott word beïnvloed deur die Franse Impressionisme. Hy beeld die Kwartier af as oorbevolk en armoedig. Hy gebruik skakerings van ligpers, blou en swart in sy skadus wat gedempte sonligweerkaatsings van nabygeleë voorwerpe bevat. Vorms word ook getrou afgebeeld.

Boonzaier as realis beeld gestaltes duidelik en in 'n bestendige lig uit waardeur hy die indruk skep dat die tyd stadig omgaan. As gevolg van kleur oor 'n donker agtergrond, ontstaan swart omlynings wat 'n dekoratiewe lynontwerp vorm waarin gedempte lig en bedaarde kwashale opgemerk word.

Wenning, beïnvloed deur die Nederlandse Impressioniste van die Haagskool druk 'n verbygaande oomblik uit deur middel van haastige kwashale. Soos Boonzaier kies hy 'n donker doek en sag-warm kleure. Wenning se werk is meer indrukwekkend as dié van Boonzaier vanweë sy vermoë tot suggestie.

Irma Stern, onder die invloed van die Duitse Ekspressioniste, gebruik verwringing om haar emosies uit te druk maar in teenstelling tot hulle het sy 'n vrolike uitkyk op die lewe. Uit haar dekoratiewe doeke straal 'n lewensgenot. Sy wend haar ryke kleure aan met 'n sterk en lewenskragtige tegniek.

Krenz is 'n ekspressionis met Puristiese neigings. Sy geometriesbeplande komposisies is nugterder as dié van Irma Stern maar kom met hulle ooreen deurdat die vorms verwring word in 'n sterk dekoratiewe styl wat 'n vrolike uitkyk op die lewe oordra. Sy kleure is egter oor die algemeen koeler en sy kwashale minder onstuimig.

Harry Trevor se vorms is verwronge en sy komposisies geometriesbeheersd soos dié van Krenz, maar in teenstelling tot Krenz se werk openbaar die uiterse hoekvormigheid van sy kuns 'n sin van diepe tragedie. 'n Donker omlyning definiëer sy vorms, en somber kleure oor die doek gesleep, gee glimmende effekte soortgelyk aan dié van kleurglas.

Afbeeldings van die Maleierbuurt deur vooraanstaande Suid-Afrikaanse skilders dra by tot die ontwikkeling van die skilderkuns in Suid-Afrika.