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THE J. H. PIERNEEF COLLECTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF PRETORIA  
HOUSED IN THE PRETORIA ART MUSEUM

by

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Dissertation submitted in fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree  
MAGISTER ARTIUM

Faculty of Art History  
University of Pretoria  
Pretoria

1997



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## FOREWORD

### a) Problem set and theme defined

The Pretoria artist Jacob Hendrik Pierneef (1886 - 1957) is generally acknowledged as an important figure in South African art. His landscapes, especially those of the Transvaal bushveld are held to capture the essence of an essentially strong and elemental landscape, the monumentality of its forms and the clarity of its light. Esmé Berman (1970 :223) described his position as that of "a prophet with honour in his own country". This position has recently (N.J.Coetzee 1992) come under attack and an attempt has been made to make controversial what has always seemed an unassailable position.

The Pretoria Art Museum houses one of the major collections of this artist's work: paintings, drawings and graphic work such as woodcuts, linocuts and etchings. This municipal collection dates from the early 1900's. The earliest work by Pierneef in the collection, was acquired in 1927 according to documents in the Pretoria Art Museum records. It has not been possible to determine which work this was. The letter written by Pierneef on paper bearing the letterhead of the Schweickerdt firm mentions the fact that the Council could make their selection from two landscape paintings (See Appendix).

The City Council of Pretoria was fortunate in having artists of the calibre of Frans Oerder (1867 - 1944), Anton van Wouw (1862 - 1945), Pieter Wenning (1873 - 1921), Eduard Frankfort (1864 - 1920) and Pierneef all working in Pretoria and acquired paintings, and in the case of Wenning, numerous exquisite

etchings of Pretoria and its environs from them. This is attested by the acquisitions register of the Pretoria Art Museum. There are important paintings of early Pretoria, dating from this period and earlier in the municipal collection. The study by Amanda du Preez (1993 :45 - 47) who researched the art scene in Pretoria for her investigation of the Pretoria Art Association provides evidence of an amazingly rich artistic activity in the city in the years immediately before and after the Anglo-Boer War of 1889 - 1902.

When the city celebrated its first fifty years in 1905, Oerder was commissioned to paint two views of the city. The painting of the city as it was in 1905 is a careful but rather stiff and soberly coloured factual rendering surrounded by a wide black frame which does nothing to brighten the scene. The other, which depicts an imaginary uninhabited landscape into which the wagons of the first trekkers are moving and where camp has been made in a light-filled setting, is full of delicate colour, a dazzling sky and idyllic vistas. In the foreground one may discern the Apies river and some of the game which made the place a kind of earthly paradise for these first white settlers.

Both paintings are signed and dated 1906 and are at present housed in the Pretoria Art Museum. At a much later stage, in 1948, Pierneef then the best-known Pretoria artist, was commissioned by the City Council to paint fifteen scenes of old Pretoria. As a voluntary gift he painted an extra three and presented these, together with the drawings on which they were based, to the City Council. These drawings were mainly dated between 1910 and 1913 and thus provide the most unique and

valuable visual record of the domestic architecture of Pretoria in those early days. Together with other works such as the earliest watercolour by Marianne Churchill (1832 - 1912) from 1857, the view of Pretoria in 1872 by Thomas Baines (1820 - 1875), the watercolours of Frederick Whitehead (1859 - 1928) of 1888, as well as early paintings by Frans Oerder and others which are housed in the Pretoria Art Museum, the City Council accumulated an extraordinary pictorial collection recording the growth of the city.

Pierneef also produced a series of photographs which record the places where the buildings depicted in the paintings had stood. These again provided a record of 1948 and were intended to be exhibited together with the paintings. They are, sadly, not to be found among the Art Museum collections, but were fortunately featured in the Pretoria News at the time (See Appendix) and there is a record of these newspaper pictures in the University of Pretoria Art Archive. Photocopies of these as well as an unidentified cutting of 5 August 1949, presumably from "Die Transvaler" are included in the Appendix to this study. The works themselves are discussed more fully under the heading "Pierneef and vernacular architecture".

This Pretoria component together with a wider representative range of works from all periods of the artist's working life makes the collection particularly significant. It should be systematically recorded and analysed. In this way it may also be linked to other important collections such as that of the Transvaal Central Archive Deposit (henceforth T.C.A.D.), the Pierneef Museum, the Johannesburg Art Gallery and the Museum

Africa.

b) Formulation of Hypothesis

In the dictionary sense this may be a suggested explanation for a group of facts or phenomena which may either be accepted as the basis for further verification or regarded as likely to be true.

A great deal has been written on the artist and there have been four books published (1945, 1974, 1990, 1992). Most of the known facts need to be brought together in a new interpretation. Recent research into the complex turn-of-the-century art world in Europe and America also seems to be relevant to the art scene in South Africa in the early years of the twentieth century. These were the formative years in the life of the artist J.H.Pierneef. These trends and influences, it will be contended, may be deduced from the works in the Pretoria Art Museum collection. The many influences that led to experimentation and the forging of an individual style should emerge more clearly in the course of the arguments set forth. Many details of the artist's life will, of necessity, enter the discussion. Biography has been described by Thwaite (1995 :5) as a "disreputable art;...biographers are not biographers or chroniclers if they merely offer us the facts. What we look for in them is an understanding of what it felt like to be this person living through these events at this time." It is further suggested that biography needs imaginative empathy. This study is not a biography but is aimed at achieving an idea of the artist Jacob Hendrik Pierneef through an analysis of his work as represented in this fairly small yet representative collection.

### c) Motivation

The ordering and documentation of the Pretoria Art Museum collection brought home the idea that "any fragment persists in suggesting or presupposing the totality" (Cornwell, 1990). The literary model referred to is here called upon to build a construct of the artist, his oeuvre and his period. As stated by James (1995 :5):

"the genre of the contemporary art monograph...contains a fairly undifferentiated mixture of art history, biography, aesthetic theory and critical attention to the painter's works themselves."

A full catalogue of the Pretoria Art Museum collection with relevant comment on the history of the collection, its art value as well as its cultural historical value, should prove to be of importance, not only to the museum itself but also to general South African art history.

It is hoped that the information gathered together with new and updated perspectives, will enable the museum to bring the information to a wider audience, the visitors to the museum and the interested art lovers and students who ask for it.

### d) Methodology

The catalogue of the museum is divided into the following categories:

1. Painting
2. Works in pastel

3. Watercolour and casein works
4. Drawings: pencil, charcoal and ink
5. Etching
6. Woodcuts and linocuts

Following the catalogue chronologically and relating the works in the different techniques to each other and occasionally to works in other major collections should allow a picture of artistic development to emerge. It should also be possible to apprehend social change, national concerns, worldwide trends and influences.

Where illustrations accompany the text they are captioned with the catalogue number and title of the work as they appear in the catalogue compiled as part of this study. When they refer to works not contained in this catalogue they are designated as Fig. or Photograph and the relevant information is supplied.

The Foreword takes the form of a general preamble together with a few apologia and acknowledgments.

Chapter 1 is a brief historical overview of the development of museums in South Africa, particularly art museums. Pretoria was the last major centre in which an art museum was established, an ideal finally achieved in 1964.

Chapter 2 briefly sketches the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century background of Pretoria. An attempt is made to determine whether Pierneef was aware of the romantic nationalism which was a worldwide phenomenon at the turn-of-the-century. The

evidence is sought in works dating from 1910 onwards in the museum collection. The role played by indigenous influences and by friends and contacts is also examined.

Chapter 3 attempts to examine the years up to 1924 paying attention to the nationalist ideals of the period, the art of the black peoples and of the Bushman. Pierneef's paintings and drawings of the vernacular architecture of "Old Pretoria" forms a valuable section of the museum collection.

Pierneef was pre-eminently a landscapist. Alexander (1940 :44) stated very simply that:

"The most important landscape artists of South Africa were J. H. Pierneef and Stratford Caldecott."

Significant works in the Pretoria Art Museum collection are fully discussed in Chapter 4.

In Chapter 5 certain conclusions and assessments are made as to the value and quality of the collection and the insight provided by close analysis of the works themselves. The value judgments of art historians underline the enduring quality of an important South African artist.

#### e) Acknowledgements

I thank all those who helped and supported me in the course of this study. Without their encouragement I could not have completed the task I had set myself.

Prof. A. Duffey has been a most supportive and sympathetic

promoter, displaying endless patience, pointing me in the right direction and making available to me his wide knowledge of the rich art archive held by the University of Pretoria.

The staff of the Pretoria Art Museum, particularly the Curator, Mrs. Dirkie Offringa, who gave me access to the records and documents of the museum and allowed me to work with the Pierneef material in the museum storerooms.

Mrs. Petra van Zyl of the National Cultural History Museum and guardian of the Pierneef Museum, who shared with me the fascinating experience of going through the Pierneef material held by the Transvaal Central Archive Deposit. The staff of the T. C. A. D. made it possible for us to spend considerable time going through the eight drawers with their treasure of Pierneef drawings and sketches.

The Archaeology Department at the South African Museum in Cape Town who received me most kindly and gave me access to the original copies of rock art made by G. W. Stow from 1867 onwards. The photocopy of an eland and bird which was used by Pierneef for his painting of the same subject and which is now in the Pretoria Art Museum collection, is included in the Appendix to this study.

Eric Bolsmann of Be My Guest Publishers who tackled the time-consuming task of scanning the image of each artwork into the catalogue which is the basis for the entire study.

My daughter, Marie Eales for her careful reading of the



manuscript and Ben Orban who was always ready to come to my help when the computer became too much for me.



## ABSTRACT

This study is based on the catalogue/checklist of Pierneef works in the Pretoria Art Museum collection. The artist's life, social, political and artistic influences of the period, both local and international, may be deduced from works analysed and discussed.

The Arts and Crafts movement was a powerful influence affecting ideas on national identity, folk art and the vernacular from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards. A world-wide romantic nationalism stimulated a search for identity and exploitation of the indigenous.

It is argued that these trends may be identified in the artistic development of Pierneef who, through friends, wide reading and intensive study was alive to European developments but focussed on the indigenous arts of Southern Africa. He was the first South African artist to recognise Bushman art and that of the black peoples. They had a profound influence on his own development and the motifs of his art.



## ABSTRAK

Hierdie studie is op die katalogus/kontrolelyns van die Pretoriase Kunsmuseum-versameling van Pierneefwerke baseer. Die kunstenaar se lewe, sosiale, politieke en kunsinvloede van die tydperk, plaaslik en internasionaal, kan uit die analise en bespreking van die werke afgelei word.

Die Arts en Crafts-beweging het vanaf die middel van die negentiende eeu en daarna, sterk invloed uitgeoefen op idees betreffende nasionale identiteit, volkskuns en die inheemse. 'n Wêreldwye romantiese nasionalisme het 'n soeke na identiteit en ontginning van die eie aangemoedig.

Hier word beweer dat soortgelyke neigings in die kunsontwikkeling van Pierneef onderskei kan word. Deur vriende, wye belesenheid en intensiewe studie was hy gevoelig vir Europese ontwikkelings maar het hom veral toegespits op die inheemse kunste van Suider-Afrika. Hy was die eerste Suid-Afrikaanse kunstenaar wat erkenning gegee het aan die Boesmankuns en dié van die swart volkere. Hulle invloed op sy ontwikkeling en op die motiewe van sy kuns was diepgaande.

## CHAPTER 1

The museum idea came to South Africa via Europe and the South African Museum was established in Cape Town in 1895. The Transvaal Museum was established in Pretoria in 1893 (Fransen 1978 :163). These 19th century institutions were general museums, their main purpose was educational and they housed natural and cultural, as well as ethnological and art collections. Because of their wide range in the collecting range they have been described as omnibus museums.

The Transvaal Museum which is one of South Africa's National museums was, at its founding in 1893, the state museum of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (Fransen 1978 :163 - 164). After being housed, first in the Raadsaal on Church Square and then, as the collections grew, in the Market Hall, the museum finally moved to a new building in Boom Street which was officially opened in 1904 (Fransen 1978 :164). The collections gradually became separated and the natural history section of the museum eventually moved into its own building in Church street in 1914, keeping the name Transvaal Museum. The cultural history section was, in 1964, granted full autonomy and remained in the building in Boom Street as the National Cultural History and Open Air Museum. It has today moved into a new building under a new name, the African Window Museum. There was no real art tradition in a pioneer region such as the Transvaal and even in Cape Town the South African National Gallery may have been in existence as early as 1871 but only achieved its separate identity in its own

building in 1930, thus becoming the first national art gallery in South Africa (Fransen 1978 :20 - 21).

Other centres felt the need for housing art collections and these were usually civic foundations. In Johannesburg Lady Phillips was the moving spirit behind the establishment of an art gallery in that city. The Joubert Park building, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens was opened in 1915 (Fransen 1878 :138).

Pretoria was the last important centre in the country to get an art museum in its own separate building. When M. Schoonraad (1961 :29) compiled a list of museums in Southern Africa it appeared as an addendum to the Digest of South African Affairs. The Pretoria Municipal Art Collection was, at that time, housed in the City Hall. By the time H. Fransen compiled his Guide for the Museums of Southern Africa in 1969 the Pretoria Art Museum had been established.

A report in the Pretoria News of 6 March 1954 discussed the three art collections in the city:

"that of the City Council, which is, of course, by far the biggest; that of the University; and the collection of the Old Transvaal Museum."

The collection with which this study is concerned, is that of the City Council of Pretoria and, although other artists must, of necessity, also come into the story, the artist Jacob Hendrik Pierneef and the growth in the collection of his work, remains

the main subject of this study.

The documentation that exists in the files held at the Pretoria Art Museum is very fragmentary and it is difficult to form a full and comprehensive picture of the growth of the municipal collection. A list of the information used will be included at the end of this chapter in an attempt to indicate how such information has been traced.

An old handwritten catalogue (Pretoria Art Museum Records) contains intriguing and somewhat enigmatic snippets of information. This document is, unfortunately not dated but is presumed to have been written by Mr. Drabbe who was in charge of the collection until somewhere around the mid-forties. An example is a list of mayors from 1879\80 onwards (Pretoria Art Museum Records, undated :34). Some are represented by portraits, others by photographs that are part of a municipal collection. The mayor for 1902\3 was S. K. Loveday and he is recorded as having had a crayon portrait done by A. van Wouw (1862 - 1945). The following twelve mayors listed, each had a photograph and a portrait in oils by F. Oerder (1865 - 1944). From 1903 to 1926 the favoured artist was obviously Oerder. Oerder had returned to Holland in 1908 and it has to be assumed that he executed his oil portraits of these mayors of Pretoria from photographs after his return to South Africa in 1938. Ena de Swardt (1973 :201) cites instances where Oerder was known to have made use of photographs when he was painting portraits. C.M. de Vries who was mayor in 1926\28, is listed as having a photograph and a portrait in oils by Edward

Roworth (1880 - 1964). It is a typical civic record which indicates that the Council was commissioning artists working in South Africa at the time.

Another list in the old register is headed "Africana: Municipal property". The first item is a "view of Capetown (sic) coloured copper engraving 1854" by J.W. Bowler (1812 - 1869). It was presented to the Council by J. J. Kirkness Esq. This item is still in the collection today and is on display fairly often. Unfortunately, the date of the gift is not recorded. J. J. Kirkness ( 1857 - 1939 ) was a member of the first City Council of Pretoria and was elected Pretoria's fourth mayor in 1906.

The section headed "South African Painters" bears the names of J. H. Pierneef (1886 - 1957), Hugo Naude (1869 - 1941), D. Koenig (1900 - 1972), Theodor Goedvriend (1879 - 1969), and G. Smithard (1873 - 1919) (Pretoria Art Museum Records, undated :104). The Pierneef list reads as follows:

"Daspoort (This is probably not a Pierneef painting - it might be the 1896 painting of Daspoort by Oerder.)

Cape country home panel (This could be the painting now holding pride of place in the Mayor's suite - Cat.20).

Northern Transvaal (oil on cardboard)

In the Mountains

Blue horizon

veld afternoon pastel

street scene in Cape ??? "

Some pages are reproduced and may be referred to in the Appendix



of this study. An attempt will be made to identify them in the collection as it stands at the time of writing.

It is thus possible to put together a reasonably complete record of the accumulation of a picture collection by the City Council of Pretoria over the years, although there is a distinct lack of comprehensive documentation. The scrappy lists, letters and decisions taken by museum management committees, housed in files at the Pretoria Art Museum, provide tantalising glimpses of the way in which the collection was put together. These documents were transferred to the museum when it was eventually established in the new building in Arcadia Park in 1964. The dream of an art museum in Pretoria had often cropped up over the years, especially after 58 paintings, donated by Lady Michaelis in 1932, had arrived in the city in 1934. An "Amptelike Gids" for Pretoria, issued in January 1952 discusses the Art Collection which was, at the time, housed in the City Hall (Pretoria Art Museum Records). The hope that Pretoria would, in the near future, have a small, but modern, art museum building was voiced at the end of the entry.

In an opening address delivered by the artist J.H. Pierneef at an exhibition of South African art in the Macfadyen Hall on 29 June 1935 he stressed the value of an art museum as guardian and keeper of the spiritual values of a people (geestesgoedere) (T. C. A. D). He expressed the hope that:

"die dag naby is dat ons hier in Pretoria ook 'n Kunsgallery sal besit waar alleen die beste geestesgoedere mag pronk."



(See Appendix 8). The idea was not new, Amanda du Preez (1993 :48) also listed it as one of the ideals of the Pretoria Art Association who had a brief existence in Pretoria in the years 1904 to 1905.

In 1965, or earlier, A. J. Werth, who had been appointed as curator of the Pretoria Art Museum in 1962, wrote a report on the "Dokumentasie en Katalogisering in die Pretoriase Kunsmuseum" (Pretoria Art Museum Records) which was probably intended for the information of the City Council. The opening statement refers to the beginning of the collection as somewhere around 32 years before the time of writing. At a rough estimate that would place it around 1932, the time of the Lady Michaelis gift. As has been indicated in the Foreword to this study, however, Frans Oerder had been given the commission for two paintings of Pretoria in 1905. There has also been reference in this chapter to two portraits by him of mayors of Pretoria. In 1954 the Pretoria News reported on the City Council collection and what the public could expect to see in an exhibition (Pretoria Art Museum Records). Mrs. Gerda Oerder (1887 - 1961), who had, since 1949 been the acting curator of the collection, estimated that there would be about 140 good paintings available for exhibition. Among these were 25 oil paintings by Pieter Wenning, 16 by Frans Oerder, including a full-length portrait of General Smuts and a number of works by such artists as J. H. Amschwitz (1882 - 1942), Gwelo Goodman (1871 - 1939), Erich Mayer (1876 - 1960), Gregoire Boonzaier (1909 \_ ), Jean Welz (1900 - 1975), Irma Stern (1894 \_ 1966), Maggie Laubser (1886 \_ 1972) and Alexis Preller (1911 -



1976). A few paintings by Pierneef must have been in the collection from fairly early on. "Berge naby Derdepoort", "Vergelegen en Somersetwes" have no date of acquisition on the museum catalogue cards. The painting "Kraal (Naturellekraal) by Derdepoort" has "in besit voor 1936" typed on the card.

The number of Pierneef works had, at that time, therefore in 1954, been considerably augmented by the execution of 18 paintings of Early Pretoria in 1949, together with the donation by the artist of the drawings, mostly pastel works, on which they were based. This documentation of "Old Pretoria" is an important unit in the Pierneef collection.

These paintings, and the drawings on which they were based, are a unique record of vernacular architecture in Pretoria and the Transvaal in the first two decades of the twentieth century and will be discussed more fully in the following chapters.

According to a newspaper report (Sondagnuus 7/6/1964) a series of paintings was originally planned for a luxury hotel that was to be built in Vermeulen street at the behest of Minister Sturrock, minister of Tourism. The plan fell through and H. P. H. Behrens, the Public Relations Officer of the City Council, managed to persuade Prof. Avril Malan, at that time chairman of the financial committee, that such a project was one well worthy of the support of the City Council of Pretoria. By December 1948 Le Roux Smith le Roux had obviously taken over as curator of the City Council collection because there is a letter in the museum

files (7/12/48) which he has signed as curator. It would seem that Mr. Drabbe had retired some time in 1948. Mr. Le Roux was, in this letter, recommending that the City Council should commission Pierneef to paint a selection of his sketches of "Old Pretoria":

"amongst which are interesting views of buildings and places now no longer in existence or vastly changed...Mr. Pierneef recently indicated his intention to paint a selection of these on a larger scale with a view to their forming a uniform collection of views of earlier Pretoria..."

Apparently the idea was approved at a council meeting on 31 January 1949 and a resolution to this effect was passed on 30 July 1949. It was resolved that Mr. Pierneef be commissioned to carry out a series of 15 paintings of "Old Pretoria".

A very important record of early Pretoria came into the municipal collection by this commission of the City Council. In a letter dated the 4th of August, 1949 the artist was officially thanked for the praiseworthy gesture whereby three extra paintings and thirty sketches of "Old Pretoria" had been donated by him to the city, thus generously exceeding the commission. These letters are in the Appendix together with copies of the Pretoria News documentation on the subject.

The growing collection of the City Council was at first housed in the municipal offices. The Town Hall was originally a gracious building in Pretorius street that replaced the humble offices on Church Square. In 1905 the mayor of Pretoria was Andrew Johnston.



His wife laid the foundation stone of the Town Hall in Pretorius street on the 12th April of that year. The building contained municipal offices and a fine hall. This building was destroyed in 1973 (Dunston 1975 :228).

The new City Hall in Pretoria was built between 1931 and 1935. The inauguration took place on the 6th December 1935 (Picton - Seymour 1989 :170). After his return to South Africa in 1938 Frans Oerder was allowed to use the accommodation in the tower as his studio. In her reminiscences to Ena de Swardt during 1960 - 1961, Gerda Oerder told of the friendship between Frans Oerder and Mr. Drabbe, who was, at that time (1939), Curator of the municipal collection. She stated that Drabbe helped Oerder to re-establish himself as artist and that Drabbe provided him with a studio in the tower of the City Hall. This is corroborated in a letter (Oerder file, Pretoria Art Museum :5/4/1986) written to Dr. Werth by the retired Town Clerk, Henry Preiss, he tells the full story of how the well-known Oerder painting "Reflections" came into existence. He took the copper and brass objects from his home to the artist who had expressed his admiration for them and helped him set up the composition on the floor of his studio in the tower of the City Hall (Copy of letter in Appendix).

The new City Hall generated a new interest in art activities in Pretoria. Two benefactors, a previous mayor and town councillor, J. J. Kirkness and another well-known Pretorian, Charles Maggs, bequeathed 2 000 pounds that was to be used for the embellishment of the City Hall. Murals for the Council Chamber were



commissioned from Jan Juta (1897 - living in America in 1972). Anton Hendriks (1899 - 1975) painted six murals for the Pretorius Hall for the amount that was left after payment of these. The panels by Hendriks depicted the six muses of the arts. (Letter from the Town Clerk to the General Purposes and Estates Committee: 25th October, 1943).

The period around 1938 was emotional. The centenary of the Great Trek was celebrated and the Voortrekker Monument was built. A Mr. M. Haskell of Johannesburg made a gift to the City Council of Pretoria to celebrate the event and the well-known artist Amshewitz was commissioned to paint a work with an appropriate theme for the new City Hall. The painting "Onwards" was unveiled by Mr. J. H. Hofmeyr on the 20th January 1938. The occasion was fully reported in the Pretoria News on the following day (Pretoria News 21/1/1938).

According to Mr. Hofmeyr the arts were playing an increasingly important part in the capital. He was pleased to see that the Pretoria Children's Art Centre was in project. In his speech replying to the Minister, the Mayor, Councillor J. J. Cooke, expressed the hope:

" that through the medium of the paintings that were slowly being collected, influences of art would begin to radiate from the City Hall."

He also intimated that the Council had decided to support the Children's Art Centre financially. Concluding his address the Mayor appealed to those citizens of Pretoria who were in a

position to do so to follow the example of Mr. Haskell by presenting the City with companions to the painting that had just been unveiled.

This did not happen in any important way until 1955 when the City Council commissioned the large painting of the city from Pierneef which was to be the third panel of a trilogy. This centenary piece was to continue the story of the city which had begun with the two paintings by Oerder depicting Pretoria as it was in 1855 and 1905. To celebrate the centenary of the city, a past mayor and, at that time city councillor, Ivan Solomon, donated a mural painted by Walter Battiss (1906 - 1982) to the City. It took its place near the Amschwitz in a niche in the foyer of the City Hall.

By this time the acting curator of the municipal art collection was Gerda Oerder, widow of Frans Oerder. In 1946 the curator, Mr. Jacques Drabbe had been interviewed by Eric Rosenthal (The Outspan? 3/5/46 : 39). He must have retired soon after and his position filled by an ambitious younger man, le Roux Smith le Roux (1914 - 1963). When John Rothenstein, director of the Tate Gallery, visited South Africa in April 1948 his designated host was le Roux, who impressed him with his charm and capabilities. He refers to him as the Director of the Pretoria Art Centre and in 1949 he brought him to the Tate Gallery as temporary Deputy Keeper, a move which he was later bitterly to regret, and which led to what was known as the 'Tate Gallery Affair' (Rothenstein 1966:232).

According to a document in the Pretoria Art Museum files, le Roux was Curator of the Art Gallery on the 30th November 1948. He wrote to the City Council on 10 September 1949 and signed his letter as curator (See List at end of chapter). The Pierneef paintings had gone on display while he was on a visit overseas and Mrs. Pierneef was under the impression that they would remain on display until the end of the year. Le Roux wrote that he understood that Mrs. Gerda Oerder was arranging a memorial exhibition of her husband's work. He wanted the matter clarified. It must have been very shortly after this that le Roux took up the post arranged for him by Rothenstein and Gerda Oerder remained in the position of acting curator of the municipal collection.

There was a certain amount of dissatisfaction in art circles in Pretoria at the time as is recorded in correspondence preserved in the Pretoria Art Museum files. The curator is not referred to by name but must, at this stage have been Gerda Oerder. A letter from B. J. Versfeld, (Secretary \ Treasurer of the South African Association of Arts) is dated the 24th November 1949. It was pointed out that since the renovated gallery in the City Hall was opened with an exhibition of Pieter Wenning on the 21st of April 1949, only one other public exhibition had been held.

By March 1954 Gerda Oerder had already been acting curator of the Art Gallery (City Hall) for four and a half years, (Pretoria News 6/03/54). An exhibition of paintings by the late Frans Oerder was, as a result, planned for the following year.

As has already been indicated, 1955 was a significant year in the City's history, as Pretoria's first hundred years of existence as the capital city of the Transvaal was celebrated. The art community in the City was also more strongly convinced than ever that there was a pressing need for a worthy art museum in a city of the stature of Pretoria.

Pierneef died in 1957 and by 10 December of the same year many of his artworks, books and other effects went on auction in Johannesburg. His old friend, Anton Hendriks, then the Director of the Johannesburg Art Gallery, selected "Banklane after a Hailstorm", painted in 1913, for the Pretoria art collection. The purchase was approved by the Council on 6 February 1958. Mrs. Oerder had recommended "Street Scene, Heidelberg" for purchase on 30th January 1958 and it too was acquired. When in November of the same year "At McGregor, Cape" became available, another Pierneef was added to the collection. At a later stage the watercolour of this last painting was also acquired.

Plans for the long-desired art gallery went ahead and in 1962 a curator, A. J. Werth was appointed. He took up his new duties on 1st April 1962. Albert Johannes Werth was now in charge of a nucleus of artworks acquired by the City Council since the early years of the century. The new museum would house a background collection of European and American art, but its main attention would be focussed on a collection representative of the growth and development of South African art. In 1961 a Fact Paper on South African museums was published and the Pretoria Municipal

Art Collection also featured (Schoonraad 1961 :29). The aims are stated unequivocally as the building up of a collection "representative of the works of leading and young South African artists."

On the 26th of January 1962 the first sod for the new museum was turned and building could start. The museum took two years to build and could open its doors to the public in May 1964.

The new museum now rapidly expanded its collections. This is also apparent in the Pierneef collection. In May 1964 Mrs. Pierneef wrote to Mr. Werth and the painting "Port Sudan", twenty sketches, as well as the watercolours, " Boats on the Thames " and " Cheyne Walk, Chelsea" were acquired for the museum.

Another drawing of a tree executed on brown drawing paper was bought in October together with a small early landscape, recommended by prof. Bokhorst and a linocut of a Cape Dutch house, " Krommerivier". The important painting " Pienaarsrivier" was acquired in March 1965. With its square format, unrealistic colour, ordered composition, dark outlines and thinly applied paint it was an excellent example of Pierneef's decorative style and closely related to the Station Panel of the same subject.

On the 31st July 1965 Mrs. Pierneef offered two further works by her late husband: the watercolour, " Fort Klapperkop" and the pencil drawing, "Aloes and Trees". The purchase, of course, went through.

The City Council seems to have acquired its first Pierneef painting in 1927. It was bought through the art dealer Schweickerdt and there are two letters recording the transaction in the Pretoria Art Museum files. These are dated August 2 1927 and July 4 1927 respectively and unfortunately supply no details by which the painting may be identified. It has been ascertained that these early records of the Schweickerdt firm were destroyed when the firm's premises were moved from Church street to Queen street (See Documents in Appendix).

Important works such as "Rooiplaat" (4 April 1967 ), "Amajuba" ( 1 October 1968 ) and three graphic works ( Agenda:Management Committee :12 August 1968 ) which were a gift from Mrs. C. J. Grosskopf, therefore entered the collection in the late sixties. The two etchings "Boomstamme" 1920 and "Wilgerbome, Heidelberg, Transvaal" also known as "Aandstemming" must have been particularly welcome as the collection was short on examples of Pierneef's early work in this medium.

The Council having passed up the opportunity of acquiring a full set of black and white linocut or woodcut prints offered by Mr Bourke, now had a wonderful windfall: Mr J. L. van Schaik, who himself, had been no mean contributor to the cultural life of Pretoria, presented a full set of the artist's prints to the Museum - 122 in all in September 1965 (Hoofstadnuus 03/09/65). These are authentic prints from the artist's own hand. Mr. van Schaik had commissioned these when he noticed that the artist had created a significant number of such works and he had a shrewd

suspicion that a full set would be of value. They were all printed between 1950 and 1952, signed by the artist and supplied by him with titles and other details. It may be noted that the titles supplied by the artist at this later stage, sometimes around thirty years after the cutting of the original block, differ from the early titles. This has been controlled in the catalogue by using the standard work of Nilant (1975) as reference. In a discussion by the Board of Trustees on 7 December 1964 negotiations with Mrs. Pierneef and Mr. Myles Bourke were reviewed and it becomes clear that hesitation on the part of the Board was due to a desire to have the most authentic works from the artist's own hand for the museum collection: "Daar bestaan blykbaar nog een of twee omvattende versamelings van Pierneef se grafiese werke wat, soos die Myles Bourke-versameling, deur Pierneef self afgedruk is." At a meeting of the Board of Trustees on 7 June 1965 it is noted that the Van Schaik gift had been mediated by Dr. F. C. L. Bosman and he is thanked for his kind and valued offices.

This gift was made in 1965 and further additions to the Pierneef collection became few and far between. The purchase of "Rooiplaat" has already been mentioned, as also that of "Amajuba" and in 1969, by the kind offices of Dr. W. H. Punt, a watercolour of Prinsloo Street and a pastel and pencil drawing of the Old Pretoria Club as seen from the back were acquired. These, together with the watercolour of the Silverton House (Cat. no. 94) which was spotted at an antique dealer's by Prof. Walter Battiss in 1968 and bought by him for R250, later being sold to



the Council by him for the same sum, (See Appendix), were hung on the walls of Melrose House. They were brought back to the museum at the time of the Pierneef Centenary and displayed in the exhibition "J. H. Pierneef Pretorian, Transvaler, South African". They have remained in the museum since.

A major painting, " Kloof tussen Twee Rante " , was acquired in 1970. In 1977 two large charcoal drawings, " Landskap met Berge" and " Louis Trichardt ? ", a working drawing on which a grid has been squared up, were bought.

Among the recommendations made by the Museum Management Committee in 1970 an intriguing item is recorded. A gift was accepted from Mr. E. G. Schweickerdt. This was the filter used by Pierneef for filtering the water on his field expeditions. I could not find any trace of this object on inquiry.

The report on documentation and catalogueing by the curator referred to earlier, stated in paragraph 2 that a register of the art collection as it was at the time was made in 1958 \ 1959. A list of works in the collection was unfortunately not dated but was also probably compiled in the early sixties. A count of the items in the list excluded those marked as lent and came to 584.

From this list it seems that there were, at the time, 51 works by Pierneef in the collection. The donation of linocut prints by Mr. van Schaik was, therefore, one of tremendous importance which brought the Pretoria Art Museum collection into line with other

major Pierneef holdings in museum and archival collections.

Payment was sanctioned by Council for two significant items in 1970, "Lanzerac" on 1 September and "Kloof tussen Twee Rante" on 26 March.

According to the catalogue which has been compiled for the purposes of this study and on which the discussion of the works in the Pretoria Art Museum collection is based, there should be 269 Pierneef items in the Pretoria Art Museum collection but two which were listed by F. G. E. Nilant in his book "Die Hout-en Linosnee van J. H. Pierneef" (1975) could not be inspected or tracked down when the items were personally checked. These have been indicated in the catalogue and identified as Cat. nos. 238 and 240. Two paintings, Cat. no. 44 and Cat. no. 45 were included in the old catalogue lists, but could not be identified as being in the collection at the time of compiling the catalogue/checklist. They have, therefore, to be presumed missing. This then brings the works checked by me to 265.

The acquisition of two further graphic works, an etching and a linocut in 1992, is only a relatively minor addition to the Pierneef collection. The small gouache "Eland and Bird" (Cat. no. 85), bought from Mrs. Y. Flather in 1992 is, however, a valuable pointer to the artist's study of Bushman art. It has to be assumed that the present museum collection will remain fairly static as far as the older artists are concerned. The prices attained at auction for significant works by artists such as



Pierneef are so high that they are quite out of the reach of a straitened museum budget which, at present writing, comprises nil for the acquisition of artworks.

The small funds that are available must be carefully husbanded and used for the acquisition of works by younger artists and, especially black artists, so that the story of a contemporary and continually growing South African art may continue to be told and keep the Pretoria Art Museum relevant for a new and also younger museum public.

## CHAPTER 2

### Early Days in Pretoria - Growing-up

The Pretoria in which the young Jacob Hendrik Pierneef was growing up, was still in the main a simple dusty village. There are, fortunately, many written sources from which a picture of the place may be realised. The bibliography for this chapter will provide ample evidence in this respect and also be quoted from. Photography came into its own somewhere around the middle of the nineteenth century and provides a valuable visual record. The municipal collection of photographs is housed in the Pretoriana section of the main library on Sammy Marks Square. As well as these valuable sources there are also art works which, often amateurish and naive, are nevertheless, important visual documents.

There was no artistic tradition in the unstable Transvaal of the early pioneering days, life was hard and there was little money. By 1886, when the artist was born, the First War of Independence had been won after the annexation of the Transvaal by Great Britain and the rising star in the Republic was Paul Kruger. He was a friend and patron of Henk Pierneef's father, Gerrit, who had come out from the Netherlands, as so many of his compatriots, to seek his fortune in the Transvaal.

The small Henk was a toddler of about two years old when Paul Kruger entered his second term of office as president. A young

man by the name of Henry Croxall Whitehead (1859-1923) was a resident of Pretoria in 1888 and two small watercolour drawings by him are graphic illustrations of the occasion. Next to the second Post Office to be built on Church Square a triumphal arch proclaimed the inauguration of the President. The Government building, a simple thatched structure, with a veranda along the long side, was similarly embellished. A note on the back of the second picture reads as follows:

" The Volksraad"

The second inauguration ceremony of the President, Paul Kruger in front of the Government building."

The thatched roof structure was erected in 1864 and replaced by the present Raadsaal in 1889 (Whitehead Collection - Pretoria Art Museum) There is also a photograph of the same scene in the Pretoriana Collection (Main Library).

Other pictures of Pretoria may be found in books such as "A Visit to South Africa" by Stanley Leighton, who visited Pretoria for a few days at the beginning of April in 1889 (Leighton 1889 : 64 - 68). The drawings of "President Kruger's House", "House of His Honour Judge Esselen", "The Pretoria Club" and the 'Dopper Church - where President Kruger sometimes preaches.' are worth comparing to the drawings of Pierneef, made at a later stage, from about 1910 onwards (Collection Pretoria Art Museum). The same may be said of the drawings made by Ida Mae Stone (1867 - 1932) in 1887. These are now in the Museum Africa (Africana Museum), Johannesburg and were published in 1976 on the occasion of Johannesburg's ninetieth birthday (Smith(Ed) 1976 :68-83).

The early word pictures by writers such as Eugène Marais and Gustav Preller, good friends of the artist, are undoubtedly nostalgic and romantic. They may be compared to a painting of Pretoria painted by Pierneef, at the behest of the City Council in 1949. 'Apies River Pretoria, Meintjieskop behind' was based on a drawing of 1912 and, at that time, the Union Buildings were under construction on Meintjieskop. Pierneef's painting shows an idyllic scene where man and his activities have not yet intervened.

A valuable collection of works by Pierneef recording the building of the Union Buildings dating to 1912 - 1914 is in the collection of the University of Pretoria.

When Eugene Marais wrote 'Van Oudae en Oumense in Pretoria' which was first published in 'Ons Vaderland' on 15 January 1930, he tells of the isolation of a small scattered community who had very little real contact with the outside world. Grass grew everywhere in the settlement with patches of thorn trees in between. Church Square provided convenient grazing for the horses of householders living in that vicinity. Pierneef must have remembered these bucolic circumstances very well because there is a drawing by him, now in the collection of the Standard Bank, where goats are grazing in the foreground and the Raadsaal looms behind them. The drawing is dated 1912 but, as in a few other instances, an earlier date is also indicated (De Villiers 1989 :13). This allows one to speculate that he may have made use of old photographs. Eugène Marais also remembers the clarity of the



water which was in such good supply and comments on the fact that all the residents in the small community knew each other:

"Dikwels is gesê dat ons een groot familie uitgemaak het." Writing of those days on another occasion, he (*Die Vaderland*, 08/06/33) entitled his description " 'n Paradys van Weleer". Young Henk Pierneef could not have encountered many artists in those days although he and his friends had drawing lessons from Meester Hondius (*Grosskopf* 1945 :5). J.Schoenberg, whose drawing of the 'Staats Model School', now in the Museum Africa, Johannesburg must have been produced after 1897, after the completion of the building, was from Austria, but working with the Boers (*Oberholster* 1972 :303). William Howard Schroeder (1851 - 1902) was South African and had come to Pretoria in 1892. Gustav Preller wrote as follows of this born South African, William Howard Schroeder:

"Where the Standard Bank now stands on Church Square was known as Burmeisters Corner in the early nineties - in one of the upper stories there lived, worked and died that eminent South African artist and cartoonist, William Howard Schroeder whose weekly "Press" cartoon displayed in the corner window, never failed to attract a small crowd of admirers" (*Preller* 1938 :59).

One can only wonder whether the schoolboy Pierneef was sometimes one of these.

Two well-trained Dutch artists, however, came to settle in Pretoria in 1890. They were both to have a profound influence on the young Henk Pierneef. Anton van Wouw (1862 - 1945) became the

young man's beloved mentor and friend to whom he always referred as Oom Anton. Frans Oerder (1865 - 1944) who, for a while, shared a studio with van Wouw, was to become his painting instructor after the Anglo-Boer war. Both men had been trained in the rather old-fashioned Rotterdam Academy and brought their ideas of what good art should be to bear on their pupil. Draughtsmanship was considered to be of supreme importance and Pierneef was to become a devoted and accomplished draughtsman. The style of their work at this stage is usually described as romantic realism. At a later stage in his career Oerder practised a more impressionistic style of painting. In her study of Frans Oerder, Ena de Swardt (1973 :213) comments on his influence on the younger artist as follows:

"Baie belangrik was die onderrig wat Pierneef van hom ontvang het. Dit was waarskynlik dat Oerder die liefde vir die Transvaalse landskap oorgedra het aan Pierneef wat later die mees gesogte uitbeelder van die Transvaalse landskap met sy bekende doringboom en stapelwolke geword het."

She also mentions his other contemporaries, the South African born Hugo Naudé (1869-1941) and Pieter Wenning (1874-1921), these two being the bearers of Impressionism in South Africa. These will be discussed more fully later in this study as there was another, earlier influence that would be a profound and persistent element in all the artist's later work.

Architecture and building activities were an intimate part of the young Henk Pierneef's life from early on. When the Pierneef family removed to Holland as a result of the occupation of



Pretoria by the British forces in 1901 and registered as citizens of Hilversum, Henk had drawing lessons from an old architect. The geometric and involved exercises he produced in the course of this instruction, remained in his possession until the end of his life. Order, balance, harmony and discipline were the desirable elements of his early training. The drawing exercises were a confirmation of all these and also set line, plane and decorative pattern as the ideal.

The young man, he was only seventeen at the time, who returned to Pretoria with the rest of the Pierneef family towards the end of 1903, had had some experience of fairly conservative but thorough teaching while in Hilversum and Rotterdam. The artists who befriended him in Pretoria and were his guides in artistic thought and execution, were still firmly entrenched in a romantic-realist tradition. There was, however, a climate and an acquaintance with European trends and movements which were influential in Pierneef's formative years.

It was only natural that he should have some knowledge of developments in the Netherlands in the nineteenth century. In their investigation of the Hague School (Ronald de Leeuw, John Sillevis, Charles Dumas 1983 :53) the authors made certain relevant observations on general trends and influences in the Netherlands during the period. They stated that there had been

" a revival of landscape art in Holland in the nineteenth century" and that "In contrast to France the focus in the Netherlands was on the depiction not of man, but of

landscape" (1983 :33).

There were particularly two painters who may have, in their perception of the urban landscape, confirmed certain ideas in the young artist's approach to this subject. Willem Witsen (1860 - 1923) and George Breitner (1857 - 1923) both painted, (Breitner after 1901) the static townscape from which the human figure was excluded.

Two paintings, both dated to 1913, in the museum collection may illustrate this interest in both landscape and townscape at an early stage in Pierneef's career. "Landscape with Hill" (Cat No 9) in its brown tonality and sweeping brushstrokes invokes the influence of Oeder as may also the more silvery and muted tones of "Bank Lane after a Hailstorm" (Cat No 3) which was purchased for the museum collection by Anton Hendriks at the auction sale held after Pierneef's death in 1957. It had been painted in 1913.

This was an interest that did not fade, for the static view of "Volendam" (Cat No 12) where the sombre tonality is still very Dutch in feeling, was painted during the extended visit to Europe in 1925. Street scenes of London with rows of terrace houses still provided favourite subject matter when the artist was stationed in London and working on the decorative commission for South Africa House in 1933 (Cat. no. 96).

The Dutch artists of the turn-of-the-century, especially those of the Amsterdam school, were very aware of developments

elsewhere in Europe at the time and Art Nouveau, Symbolism and Neo-Impressionism had their impact on Dutch artists as well. They were also aware of the tortured expressionism of Vincent van Gogh (1853 - 1890). Pierneef was later, in 1928, to excite the ire of H.A. Chilvers (Rand Daily Mail August 25 1928) by his discussion of modern artists such as, not only van Gogh, but also Manet, Sisley, Renoir, Monet and Cézanne. He described Cézanne as a classic master. In his letter Hedley A. Chilvers fulminates against "Frightfulness in Modern Art" and makes fun of Pierneef's devotion to Bushman art. He is also appalled that "Mr. Pierneef avowes himself an admirer of Matisse!" It may be of interest to note here that Pierneef's friend, Reenen J. van Reenen used an illustration of Matisse's "Dancers" as Plate C in his publication on Bushman culture (1920 :70-80) when he wanted to prove a correspondence of Bushman art with great art worldwide.

One may find a correspondence of interests and stylistic approaches between Pierneef and artists working at about the same time in Europe and America. Charles Sheeler (1883 - 1965) was fascinated by traditional artefacts, furniture, art and crafts and particularly architecture between 1910 and 1926 (Arts Magazine 1985 :135 - 139).

Joan Miro (1893 - 1983) may seem an unlikely artist to compare to Pierneef but there are unexpected points of agreement between the two artists. There was Miro's strong nationalistic involvement with Catalan folklore, his decorative manipulation of mural art and also his interest in the prehistoric art of

Spain. (Apollo 1993 : 290 - 297). He is quoted (291) :

"I feel sure the more local anything, the more universal. Hence the importance of popular art...Mural painting tempts me because it imposes anonymity, because it reaches the masses directly and because it plays a part in architecture."

The union of art and architecture was a key arts and crafts idea. In the late nineteenth century decorative art was not interior decoration but enshrined the highest ideals of the Arts and Crafts movement.

In their study of the Arts and Crafts Movement Elizabeth Cumming and Wendy Kaplan (1991 :179) found two fundamental aspects of Arts and Crafts philosophy prevailing on the Continent : the first was the use of design to express a country's identity while the second was what is now known as romantic nationalism or the National Romantic Movement.

#### The Arts and Crafts Movement

The Arts and Crafts Movement was a social and aesthetic movement of the latter half of the 19th century. It emerged in England where William Morris (1834-1896), C. R. Ashbee (1863-1942) and W.R.Lethaby (1857-1931) had trained as architects and worked towards unity in the arts, believing that all creative endeavour was of equal value. These ideals permeated to America and continental Europe. Architecture looked to the vernacular tradition where building had made use of local materials and

designed structures which fitted into the landscape. This examination of the vernacular focused attention on national heritage. The idea of every country having an architecture that reflected its own particular history, geography and climate was central to the Arts and Crafts Movement (Cumming and Kaplan 1991 :107).

Other programmes of recent years also reflect :

"a revisionist understanding of the turn of the century which is less Paris-centered and more international in focus, one which embraces Symbolism and Jugendstil as central rather than tangential to the genesis of modernism" (Kosinski 1993 :59).

Kosinski also referred to the Nietzschean and Narcissistic inclinations of the period whereby :

"The artist strives to be one with the forces of the cosmos, to claim the rhythms of nature as his own."

In her introduction to "Art and the National Dream" (1993 :9) Nicola Gordon Bowe states that the close ties between vernacular expression and the Arts and Crafts Movement are currently being revised. The essays in the book were written by Japanese, American, Russian, Polish, Hungarian, Norwegian, Irish and Finnish researchers who explored the aspects of Romanticism in art, architecture and design of the late 19th and early 20th century. The Norwegian contributor states that (Berman 1993 :159) :

"The desire to define art as a stimulus for national regeneration and consolidation was asserted throughout the



nineteenth century."

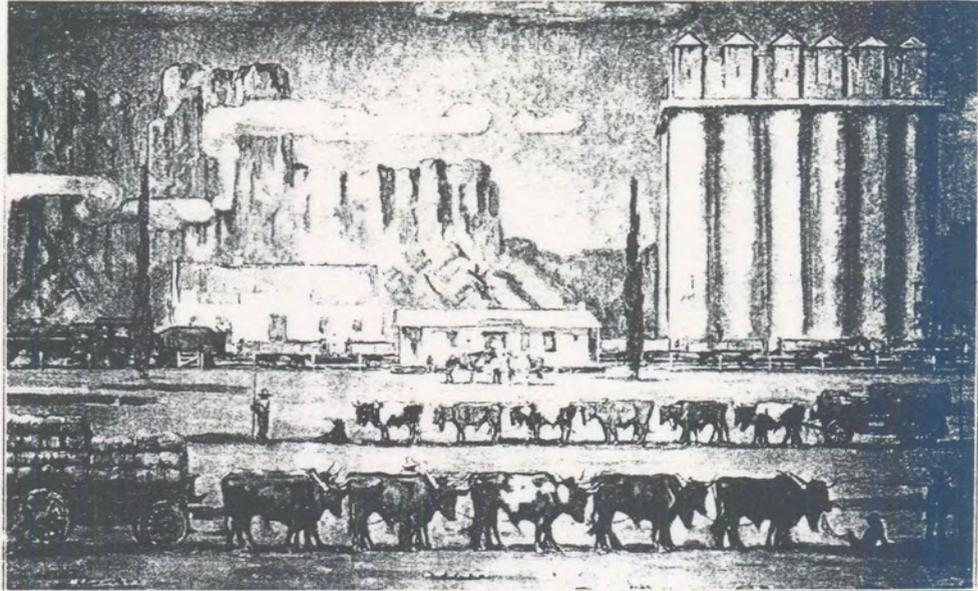
Earlier she had remarked that :

"rediscoveries of native decorative traditions, no matter how humble, could promote national renewal" (Berman 1993 :56).

These ideas would have fitted perfectly with those of Pierneef and his mentor, Erich Mayer. In his letters to Mayer, interned as a foreign national in 1916, Pierneef constantly referred to missing him for their discussions. In a letter to Mayer dated October 30th 1916 he mentions on the second page that he would like to discuss with his friend what he refers to as " 'n suivere Afrikaanse kuns".

It may be argued that in their desire for a truly national art as well as in their interest in vernacular architecture the two men fit very well into both the categories identified by Cumming and Kaplan. Their interest in the crafts furthermore included designs for weaving, embroidery and other handicrafts. Mrs. Mae Pierneef's spinning wheel and loom may be seen in the Pierneef Museum. She made a study of weaving and took lessons when the Pierneef family were in England in 1933 to 1934 and brought the loom back with them when the family returned to South-Africa (Pretorius (Nel ed.) 1990 :83).

Mural art was one of the universally practised art forms of the twenties and thirties and dictated its own decorative and planar demands. A. C. Bouman understood this well in his discussion of the Dutch artist A. M. Luyt (1879 - 1951) who was only in South-



*Fig.1 A.M.Luyt - Grain Silo*

Africa for five years before returning to Holland in 1925. According to Berman his decorative-realist style and interest in local subject matter gained him a substantial following in the Cape (1970 :295). Bouman (1938 : 55 - 56) mentions his love of tapestry and applied art and spells out the axiomatic demands of decorative art: the decisive role of the flat surface, the flattening of forms, the thin paint application, the colour that avoids strong tonal contrast and the composition in which balance and linear tension predominate. The illustration of the "Grain Silo", Fig.1, with its long horizontal lines and shorter verticals is an excellent exemplar. Oxen and wagons in the foreground form parallel horizontal elements which are repeated in the line of buildings and train trucks that lie on a horizontal halfway up the composition. These parallel elements in the foreground are balanced by the verticals which dominate the upper half of the picture plane. These consist of two cypresses, the silo's and the perpendicular cliffs of the mountain. They are visually linked by a broken horizontal, the line of smoke that floats across to almost join the line above the silo's. A line of cloud at the upper edge of the painting further reinforces the horizontals.

One should also remember the influence of Japanese art and design in these years. The early issues of "the Studio", the influential art magazine, first published in 1893, always featured articles on Japanese art as well as competitions and features on woodblock printing.

### Further formative years

In this chapter and those following an attempt will be made to collate all the available information on the artist J. H. Pierneef according to the method known as contextualisation (Hagg 1987 :6). The relationship between the artist, the artwork and the society in which the work was produced and received will be discussed and taken into account.

Writers who gave biographical details and wrote on Pierneef and his early life include Bouman (1938), Grosskopf (1947), Hendriks (1959), Fransen (1982), Nilant (1974) and Schoonraad (1969). When Esmé Berman wrote her "Art and Artists of South Africa" in 1980 she realised that much of this writing could be described as adulatory, therefore an example of what Hagg (1987 :1) described as belonging to the art historical category of canonisation. She could summarise this information and conclude that :

" J.H.Pierneef is one of those rare examples of a prophet with honour in his own country" (Berman 1970 :328).

At the time of the artist's 100th anniversary, Coetzee (1986 :1) wrote that the useful literature on the artist was scanty, but that Harmsen (1968), Kempff (1974), Bierman (1968) and Schoonraad (1969) had supplied usable and, in some instances, essential articles on the artist. There had been a few indications of a more questioning and critical attitude from Verster (1980), Ozinski (1980), and Miles (1986). It was at this point that Coetzee began to voice his view of Pierneef as a participant in a deliberate programme aimed at Afrikaner assertion and

domination. This will be investigated later in this and the following chapter under the idea of Nationalism in the early years of the twentieth century.

The subsequent cultural and historical study by the department of cultural history at the University of Pretoria (Nel 1990) was very thorough, correcting certain data which earlier authors had unquestioningly perpetuated. These basic details are summarised and included at the end of this study in the Appendix under the heading CONDENSED BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS. The background before 1900 is implied and the early schooling at the Staats Model School in Pretoria indicated. These were the golden years of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek. The influences were certainly mainly Dutch and the scene in Pretoria and Kruger's government were dominated by Hollanders who were to a great measure resented by a local and, in many ways, backward burgher population. At the time of the First War of Independence (1880) there was a large, even predominantly English-speaking component in the population of Pretoria.

Some of this varied background to the artist's early years will be briefly surveyed and an attempt made to determine some of the many influences that he encountered in his formative years.

#### The Importance of Drawing

His father, trained as a naval draughtsman, was a model builder in a shipbuilding yard in Rotterdam before he came to settle in

Pretoria in 1884 and was, therefore, well acquainted with the use of drawings and sketch plans. In the Transvaal this practical man became a master builder and contractor. His family became used to moving from one house to another when he had completed its restoration and sold it. This background of building and domestic architecture was very much part of Pierneef's childhood experience. His godfather, the sculptor Anton van Wouw (1862 - 1945), besides being a well-trained artist, was also a decorator and stucco-worker. In his memories of "Oom Anton" written at the time of Van Wouw's death, Pierneef remembered receiving drawing lessons from him :

"Later het ik by Oom Anton leer teken en sy manier van onderwys sal ik nooit vergeet nie" (T.C.A.D. Pretoria :A 941, 19 : undated personal notes).

Van Wouw always insisted on drawing as the basic requirement for art making. When the family were living in Hilversum from June 1900 young Henk Pierneef had drawing lessons from a retired architect. These drawings, dated and signed, remained in Pierneef's possession until he died, and are today preserved in the Transvaal Central Archives Depot (Pierneef Files) in Pretoria. It may be maintained that the geometrical basis of Pierneef's mature style evolved naturally from the involved geometrical drawings that he made at this time and the architectural bias of drawings made at a later stage of study in Rotterdam. He attended the Rotterdam Academy as an extra-mural student when the family moved to Rotterdam. Both his tutors, Van Wouw and Oerder had also trained there and Van Wouw had always advised Pierneef to study there if the opportunity arose (Nel ed.

1990 :96). Drawing was one of the main disciplines at this rather conservative art school.

In an essay on Pierneef, Marais (1987 :13) points out that Pierneef was well-read and well-informed on all matters pertaining to art. She refers to his own writings and letters preserved in the National Archive, Pretoria and also to two drawing books which he used in this early period: the first of these was "Teekenschool voor Eerstbeginnenden" by F Deelstra (1902) while the second bore the title "Perspectief" (details not indicated). She used two illustrations to demonstrate that these perspectival exercises laid the foundation of his simplification of form and devotion to linear perspective.

This early training stayed with him for the rest of his life. Some of the drawings, signed and dated 1902, must have been used for display, as one is still in its cardboard mount. One of these drawings bears the inscription "Gelijkvormige Figuren Hilversum 6 Jan 1902" as well as the signature "H.Pierneef" (T.C.A.D. Pierneef Files no. 1992).

These geometric preoccupations that led to a decorative treatment of the picture plane were also investigated by Duffey (1986 :8) who pointed to the importance of this early training.

#### The Bent for Architecture

Pierneef drew on the urban environment in his drawing activities

while employed at the State library. He was always drawing houses and buildings of one kind or another. There are dated drawings from 1908, but the majority were executed between 1910 and 1913.

While investigating the geometric preoccupations that led to the decorative treatment of the picture plane in Pierneef, Duffey (1986b :8) also defined the definitive early influences on the artist, such as his contact with the artists George Smithard (1873 - 1919) and Erich Mayer (1876 - 1960) and also referred to the artist's study of indigenous and Bushman art. These will be discussed in greater detail at a later stage.

The drawings Pierneef made when he was employed by the State Library in Pretoria in the years from about 1910 onwards were often also a record of houses and buildings in and around Pretoria. His painting tutor in 1906 was Frans Oerder (1867 - 1944) with the result that he also tackled landscape in a distinctive Oerder style. This is well-illustrated in Pierneef's "Landscape with Hill" (Cat.no.9), which is dated 1913.

The value of Pierneef's abiding interest in architecture fortunately resulted in the City Council commission of 1948 for a series of fifteen paintings of scenes of early Pretoria (Cat. no's 25 - 39, 41 and 42). The drawings on which the paintings were based, as well as the valuable studies of architectural detail such as Cat. No's 47 and 49, provide unique documentation of the vernacular buildings of Pretoria in the early years of the twentieth century. One of the drawings (Cat. No.63) provides

fascinating evidence of the artist drawing on some earlier record, whether a drawing or photograph, of buildings. This drawing is dated 1912, but is inscribed "Proes St. by Mark St. - 1883". This makes the drawing an historical reference as the artist was himself only born in 1886. There is another drawing in the collection of the Standard Bank in Pretoria which shows the artist making use of some earlier record. In this case it is a view of the Old Raadsaal with goats grazing on the grass in the foreground. This visual documentation of the architecture of early Pretoria was considered to be of great importance by the cultural historian-researcher, Dr Willem Punt. When the 1948 City Council commission for buildings of Old Pretoria had been completed, small cards were affixed to the backs of the paintings with a street plan drawn to show exactly where the building had been situated. Where these street plans remain they have been included in the catalogue. That it was Dr Punt who was the source of this information was revealed when the small watercolour of the Prinsloo House, ex Melrose House, (Cat. no. 93) was opened for remounting. It was inscribed as follows on the back :

"Van Henk Pierneef gekry. Hy het my hierdie plek gaan wys waar Prinsloo se huis op die N.W hoek van Prinsloo & Boomstrate gestaan het."

It was signed "W. Punt. Pta". The note is accompanied by a small sketch plan at bottom right.

Dr Punt shared with Pierneef a love for the simple, early buildings of Pretoria. They knew that these :

"Regional houses were originally built by pioneers for

survival, constructed by anonymous builders forced to use the materials at hand. These early architectural examples are what architects call 'vernacular' because they do not fit the progression of mainstream styles....their most important traits, indeed their essence \_ is a sense of belonging to a particular time and a specific place" (Kemp 1987 :10). Pierneef's early drawings are a unique record and, together with the commissioned paintings from 1948 - 1949 an important body of work within the collection of the Pretoria Art Museum.

Vernacular architecture was very important to the Arts and Crafts architects, the past was both inspiration and practical guidance to them and the examination of the vernacular focused attention on national heritage (Cummings and Kaplan 1991 :37).

#### Friendships and Contacts

Pierneef was also acquainted with another important Dutch artist at this time, Pieter Wenning (1873- 1921). There is a drawing in the collection of the Johannesburg Art Gallery which indicates that he and Pieter Wenning went sketching together (Erasmus 1968 :29). It is signed Pierneef at bottom right and towards the bottom left inscribed Pieter Wenning with the date 1910. It might be mentioned in passing that Pieter Wenning was also a fine graphic artist and produced exquisite etchings. There is a good,

representative collection in the Pretoria Art Museum collection.

A young unknown artist from Worcester had an exhibition in Schweickerdts Gallery in June 1910. This was Hugo Naudé (1869 - 1941) who was to inspire Pierneef with his light and colourful approach to landscape. He had already exhibited in Pretoria in the two exhibitions of the Pretoria Arts Association (du Preez 1989 :21). A knowledge of French Impressionism as well as the Dutch Impressionism of the Hague School and of developments in Europe must have been circulating in local art circles in these years as will become clear in later discussion.

The art dealer Emil Schweickerdt (1899 - 1978) became an intimate friend of Pierneef and played a strong supportive role in the artist's career. Towards the end of 1908 or early in 1909 he became the sole owner of the art shop and picture-framing business previously set up by Sam Margolius (Bolsmann 1996 :16). Margolius & Company was situated on the corner of Andries and Church streets and probably occupied this position from somewhere in 1904. The business was known as "The American Picture Frame Manufacturers" when Emil Schweickerdt became a partner. They played a significant role in the introduction of art and artists to the Pretoria public (Du Preez 1989 :37). In 1927 the City Council of Pretoria bought a landscape painting by Pierneef through the good offices of the Schweickerdt firm. The painting remains unidentified in the museum catalogue, but a letter in regard to the sale, written on the firm's paper by the artist, is preserved in the museum files (See Appendix).

Pretoria was not a total artistic desert in the early years after the ending of the Anglo - Boer War in 1902. A study by Amanda du Preez (1993 :44 - 58) revealed information on the "Pretoria Art Association". Pretoria's longstanding newspaper, The Pretoria News, under its editor Vere Stent, was very pro-British but the attitude towards Pretoria's Dutch artists was benevolent. Van Wouw and Oerder were praised in the art pages. The newspaper provided the only information on the existence of this early art society in Pretoria. John Percy Hess (1862 - 1918) was the moving spirit behind the attempt to further the cause of the arts in Pretoria. Vere Stent, the editor of the Pretoria News also seems to have been closely involved and they were able to draw Pretoria's business community into their artistic enterprise. E.F.Bourke, mayor of Pretoria in 1903-1904, was the Pretoria Art Association's first president. The well-known auctioneer A.G. Lezard was also involved in the Association's first exhibition on 31 October to 5 November 1904. The Cape artist, Hugo Naudé, was awarded first prize for a watercolour painting. Adela Seton Tait (18?? - 19??), Marcelle Piltan (18?? - 1938), Oerder and Van Wouw were among those exhibiting work.

The bronze sculpture of a Bushman by van Wouw was exhibited and this leads one to an early contact Pierneef could very easily have had with real Bushmen. Gordon Leith and Pierneef were old school friends who shared the joy of camping in the bushveld.<sup>1</sup> George Leith, Gordon's father, had been instrumental in introducing van Wouw to a small group of Bushmen living on a farm

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<sup>1</sup> Correspondence T.C.A.D. Aug. 14 1921 and Dec. 1921).



in the Marico district under the protection of a Mrs. Pretorius. One of the men by the name of Korhaan was brought to Pretoria in order that the sculptor could make body casts of him for the Boom Street Museum in which George Leith had an interest. Van Wouw was fascinated by the man and used him as a model for sculptural studies. It is unthinkable that Pierneef should not have been one of the 400 visitors to the first exhibition of the Pretoria Art Association or familiar with the circumstances that had given rise to van Wouw's sculpture of the Bushman. The Bushman would, therefore, have been real to him and not only encountered in the books he was later to study in the State Library.<sup>2</sup> As a close friend of Gordon Leith it is also likely that he would have been aware of the collecting activities of George Leith and of his interest in Bushman culture. Leith's daughter writes of her father's lectures and quotes him as follows :

"It has been stated that the drawings of the Bushman are childish and inartistic. It is not presumption on my part to contradict this statement with drawings like these to support my assertions."

He was referring to the copies made by himself which he had found unsatisfactory. He had, therefore, made tracings which had turned out much better (Leith 1964 :23).

There was a second exhibition of the Pretoria Art Association from 2 May 1905 to 6 May 1905. Again the mayor of Pretoria took

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<sup>2</sup> The Lake Chrissie Bushmen in the Transvaal were still a distinct group living in the area into the 1970s. Job and Kwaaiman were photographed in 1975 for a publication on the Bushmen (Clarke 1975 :unpaginated).

an active interest and the exhibition was opened by Andrew Johnston. Oerder dominated the exhibition with 44 works and Hugo Naude showed an oil painting of sea and sand. The amateur critic who reviewed the exhibition remarked on the fact that there was a distinct appreciation of colour and of contrast in what was termed "the Cape Town school" (Du Preez 1989).

Other well-known artists such as Crosland Robinson (1858 - 1930), Constance Penstone (1865 - 1928), J. A. E. (should this have been J.E.A.?) Volschenk (1853 - 1936) and Edward Roworth (1880 -1964) are mentioned as taking part in this second exhibition, as well as once more Marcelle Piltan, whose work seems to have been very popular at the time. It is of interest to note that Crosland Robinson had studied at the Dresden Academy and settled permanently in Cape Town after visiting South Africa in 1895. Edward Roworth had undergone an English art education and studied at the Slade School under Henry Tonks. Constance Penstone had studied at the Derbyshire School of Art and travelled in Australia and America before coming to South Africa before the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War. Marcelle Piltan had studied under M. Leon Caille and M. Ed. Cuyer before attending the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris before finally settling in Pretoria. All these artists were, therefore, well-trained in a variety of European traditions, while Hugo Naude, born in the Worcester district of the Cape, had studied both at the Slade School in London and at the Kunst-Akademie in Munich.

The young Pierneef was not involved in the activities of the

Pretoria Art Association, but is recorded as taking part in an exhibition arranged by the Pretoria Savage Club and the Pretoria Art Society which was held in the Tudor Building on 14 and 15 August 1908 (Pretorius (Nel ed.) 1990 :37).

Pierneef was invited to join a new art group which seems to have been founded some time towards the middle of 1911. According to Duffey (1986a :1) he was invited to join the activities of "The Individualists" in a letter from Miss S. C. Harding written on 10 September 1911. Pierneef exhibited 45 works at their first exhibition which took place in November 1911. The Pretoria News of 23 November 1911 described Pierneef's work as impressionistic. There were nine etchings on display and seven pastels. Most of the works seemed to centre on Pretoria and its environs. The group comprised of eight initial members and the notes on Madge Cook (1889 - 19--), Johann Leo Gartner (1864 - 1927), Selina C. Harding (dates unknown), Grace Anderson (1896 - 1975), Margaret Nina Murray (1861 - 1952), G. Schild (1858 - 1921) and Sydney Margaret Stent (dates unknown) indicated that they had all had a background of European art training. Pieter Wenning has already been mentioned. His son Harco Wenning (1976:49) remembered the family gathered around the table where they would be doing their homework and their father drawing, sketching or etching.

George Salisbury Smithard (1873 - 1919) was not a member of the Individualists but became friendly with both Wenning and Pierneef and is credited with teaching them the technique of etching. On 25 November 1911 Pierneef sent two etchings to Johannesburg for



the first exhibition of the Guild of South African Artists (Duffey 1986 :1). In the same article he also states that:

"The group had very little influence on South African art in general, but its influence on Pierneef should not be underestimated. It was in the stimulating atmosphere of this group and as a result of the praise and encouragement which he received during the exhibitions of the group that Pierneef acquired the necessary confidence to hold his first one-man exhibition" (Biographical details, Appendix).

In the famous photograph of The Individualists taken at their second annual exhibition held in the Old Pretoria Town Hall on 29 July 1912 the participation of Pierneef's old friend, Fanie (S. J. P.) Eloff (1885 - 1947) is indicated by two portrait busts. The bust of Pres. Steyn is in the glass case, while the sensitive romantic portrait of his friend Henk Pierneef, is placed on the corner of the draped table. That it was a good likeness is confirmed by its subject standing right of centre in the photograph. It may also be compared with the artist's linocut self-portrait (Cat. no. 244). According to Nilant (1974 :159) the linocut could date to an early period and Pierneef might even have used Eloff's portrait bust as his model.

Two Dutch artists who were also working in Pretoria for a short while were Eduard Frankfort (1864 - 1920) and G. Schild. Frankfort was an Amsterdam artist who exhibited in Pretoria in December 1906 (Du Preez 1989 :33). He had trained in Amsterdam under August Allebé (1838 - 1927), head of the Rijksakademie who

was an opponent of the formlessness and vagueness of some of the Hague School work and sought to uphold the tradition of structured, finished compositions (De Leeuw et al 1983 :104). The Amsterdam School was more modern in outlook than the more conservative Rotterdam Academy where both Van Wouw and Oerder had had their training and where Pierneef had attended evening classes in 1903. A third Dutch artist A. M. Luyt (1879 - 1951) was in Pretoria at a much later stage, arriving in April 1921. He was here for a mere five years, but also brought with him certain European influences which were influential as stated earlier in this study.

As pointed out by Harmsen, (1958 :18) the awakening of a literary endeavour and fostering of an Afrikaans language went hand in hand with arts and crafts and other cultural activities such as music and drama. As a contributor to "Die Brandwag", "Die Huisgenoot" and the magazine for women, "Die Boerevrou", which was launched in March 1919, Pierneef came in touch with other contributors, poets such as Jan F. E. Celliers (1865 - 1940) and A. G. Visser (1878 - 1929). The radio portrait of the artist Pierneef made in 1963 mentioned the historian, Gustav Preller (1875 - 1943) and Eugene N. Marais (1871 - 1936). Marais was one of the writers who recorded Bushman stories in "Dwaalstories", published in 1927. Nel investigated "Pierneef and the literary artists of his time " in great detail in the publication on Pierneef of which he was the editor (1990 :169 - 189).

More recent literary contributions have also stressed the

interest of Afrikaans writers in the indigenous peoples, their history as well as their stories and myths. Alfreda Meyer, writing for the National Afrikaans Literary Newsletter (NALN - Nuusbrief 1996 :1-2) listed the recent publications in Afrikaans in which the Bushmen figured. She calls these "Boesman- boeke" and states that they take up a tradition which goes back to a hundred years ago when the voice of the Bushman was heard for the first time - via the European, in Afrikaans poetry. The poem "Di Klaaglied fan di laaste Boesman" was published in "Ons Klijntji" in 1896 as was the reply "Antwoord fan di Dususman an di Boesman". She goes on to G. R. von Wielligh's "Boesman-Stories" which was published between 1919 and 1921 in four volumes.

Even more recently Hennie Aucamp (1997 :3) summarised this influence in succinct and telling fashion when he stated :

"Reeds in die vorige eeu, toe "Ons Klijntji" Von Wielligh se wonderlike optekenings van San verhale geplaas het, was etniese materiaal 'n belangrike komponent van die Afrikaanse tydskrif".

He also mentions publications such as "Die Huisgenoot", "Die Brandwag", "Die Boerevrou", "Die Jongspan" and "Die Naweek", to the first three of which Pierneef was a regular contributor. Aucamp also stressed the influence of the oral tradition and that the Afrikaans literature was, in powerful fashion, fed by the oral tradition. This tradition - in translation - was in significant measure, brown and black.

Pierneef at this time was always learning and researching. His

contacts were artists who had a sound European art training behind them and he had the books in the State library to hand as useful reference material. He also met a newcomer to Pretoria some time in the latter half of 1912 who was to prove a most stimulating and inspiring friend. This was Erich Mayer (1876-1960), who had studied architecture in Berlin and had only shortly before been studying drawing and painting in Stuttgart. Having returned to South Africa and visiting first Port Elizabeth and then Potchefstroom, he came to Pretoria in October 1912 (Duffey 1986 :9). Mayer collected the magazine "Jugendstil". Copies dating from 1911 to 1931 from his collection are today in the Art Archive of the University of Pretoria. Another book, which was personally owned by Erich Mayer and is housed in this archive is entitled "Hodler and the Swiss". It was written by Rudolf Klein and published in 1910. The cover bears Erich Mayer's signature at top right with the date 1911. This book as well as the magazines must have provided a fruitful ground for discussion between the two artists and Pierneef was much inspired by the ideas of Hodler as becomes clear from several references to him in his correspondence with Erich Mayer when the latter was confined in the concentration camp at Pietermaritzburg during the First World War. By this time Pierneef had already begun his serious study of the indigenous art of Southern Africa and saw the answer for a national South African art to lie in the example of Hodler combined with that of Bushman art. At this time he writes to Mayer :

"Hoe langer, hoe meer voel ik, dat Hodler sin dekorasie pragtig aanpas by die boesmans, en dit een idiale grondslag

kan wees vir Zuid- Afrikaanse kuns" (Erich Mayer Documents Univ. of Pret. Art Arch.).

Ferdinand Hodler (1853 - 1918) was a Swiss artist who was seen as the epitome of the modern spirit and who was closely associated with "the artistic character and the destiny of Switzerland" (Klein 1910 :10, 23). Klein discussed the stages through which Hodler had progressed to the "new monumentality" and the influence of the realism of Gustave Courbet (1877 - 1919). He was critical of the claims made for Hodler's ideas on Parallelism and saw his theories as "nothing but the elements of every method of composition, of every metrique" (Klein 1910 :34). The symbolism of Hodler's work with its mystical overtones, as well as his nationalism, exerted a powerful appeal on the idealistic young artist, Pierneef. Also illustrated in Klein's book was the work of Giovanni Segantini (1858 - 1899) and that of Cuno Amiet (1868 - 1961), where Pierneef could have seen examples of that neo-impressionistic approach to the painted surface which he described as "die stippelmetode" when writing to Erich Mayer (Erich Mayer Documents Univ. of Pret. Art Arch.).

Pierneef and Erich Mayer shared the ideal of a nationalist art. They had both been profoundly affected by the Anglo-Boer War. Pierneef had experienced being sent back to the Netherlands by the British conquerors and had experienced the financial losses and severely reduced circumstances of his parents as a result of the war. Erich Mayer had sided with the Boer forces in the war and been exiled to St. Helena. He was only allowed to return to South Africa after the declaration of the Union of South Africa



in 1910. They must have experienced Unification on a deeply emotional level. A people could once more be autonomous and establish an own identity. This sense of nationalism has only recently been recognised as part of the ideals and influence of the Arts and Crafts movement and of the pervasive intellectual and emotional climate of the period. It was especially to be seen in countries which had been dominated by another power such as Hungary by Austria and Finland and Norway by Sweden (Cumming and Kaplan 1991 :180).

A few examples may serve to illustrate that Pierneef and Mayer were sensitively attuned to a climate of artistic thought which manifested itself worldwide.

The important 19th century American artist Winslow Homer (1836 - 1910) was recently described as " very much involved in issues of modernism and nationalism and in the creation of a national art" (Cikovsky 1995:93).

One of the most influential authors of the 19th century was Owen Jones, (1809 - 1874). His " Grammar of Ornament" had a tremendous impact on artists such as Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868 - 1928), whose watercolours of Scottish towns set against a stylised mountain background sometimes show a remarkable similarity to Pierneef landscapes or townscapes. The form of Art Nouveau developed by Mackintosh was characterised by a spare vertical linearity and exerted a strong fascination in Europe and especially Belgium.

Another artist, the American, Charles Sheeler, earlier mentioned in this chapter :

"succeeded in preserving a fragment of pre-industrial America by recording its image" (Davies 1985 :135 - 139).

This interest in the rural vernacular was linked to current avant-garde design idioms. In the work of both Sheeler (Figure 2 and 3) and Mackintosh (Figure 4 and 5) a formal simplification which often corresponds with that of Pierneef, may be discerned.<sup>3</sup> A few illustrations included here may serve as confirmation of similar preoccupations.

One of the points raised against Pierneef in recent writings has been the significance of there being no figures (or very few) in his landscapes. This has been a further part of the political indictment. This is, however, also a characteristic of the scenes painted by Sheeler and Mackintosh and, for that matter also of the cityscapes of Willem Witsen (1860 - 1923) and George Hendrik Breitner (1857 - 1923).

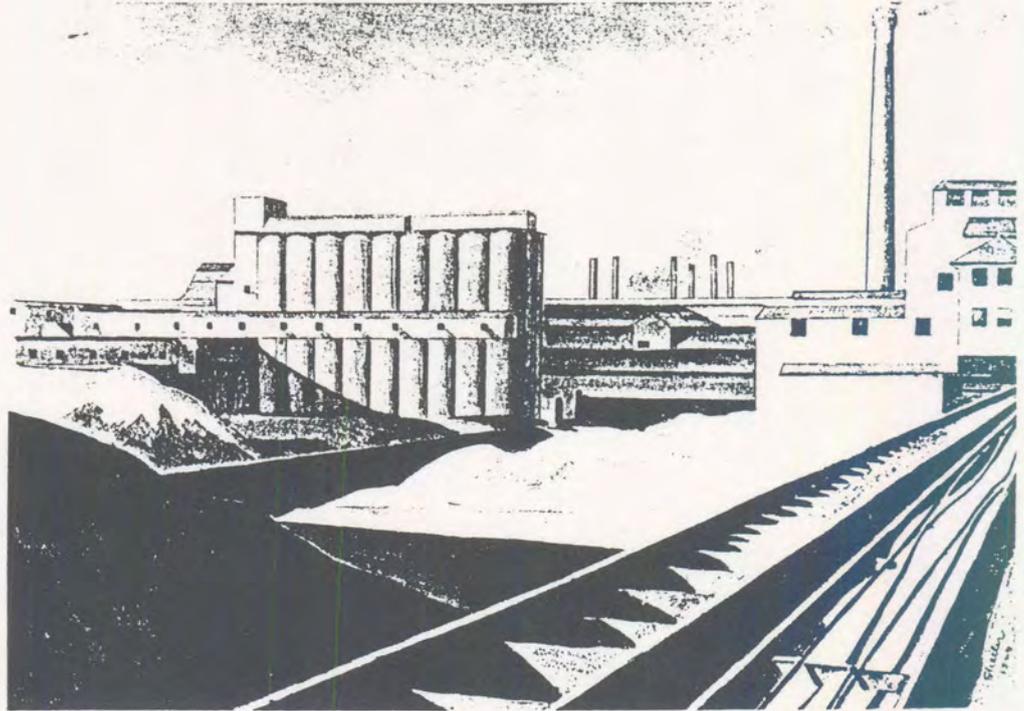
Correspondences have also already been suggested with the ideas of one of the most unlikely of modern artists, the Spaniard, Joan Miro (1893 - 1983). The title of an article, "Miro and the Arts and Crafts Tradition" (Macmillan 1985:290 - 297) linked the

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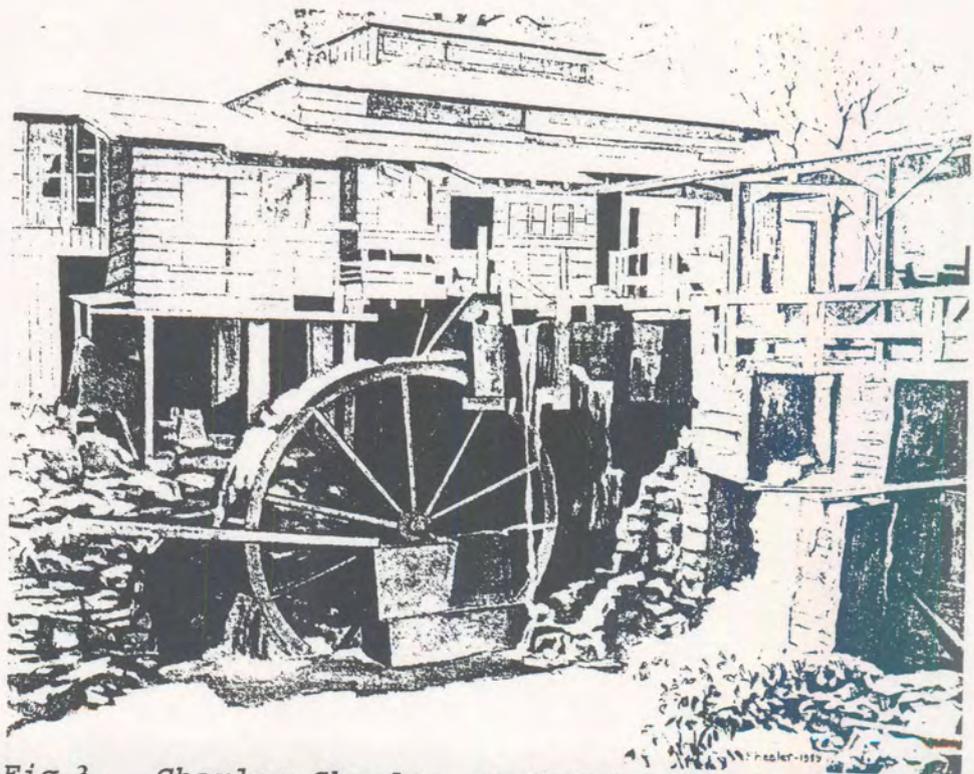
<sup>3</sup> It is not felt to be far-fetched to compare Pierneef to American artists. Pierneef was well aware of artistic trends world-wide. There are volumes of "The Studio" in the booklist of Currie's 1957 auction of Pierneef's books as well as a book on Grant Wood, also one entitled "An Outline of Modern Painting in Europe and America" and "The Artist in America".



*Not the same but similar in formal approach:*



*Fig.2. Charles Sheeler, Classic Landscape, 1928.*



*Fig.3. Charles Sheeler, Primitive Power, 1939.*

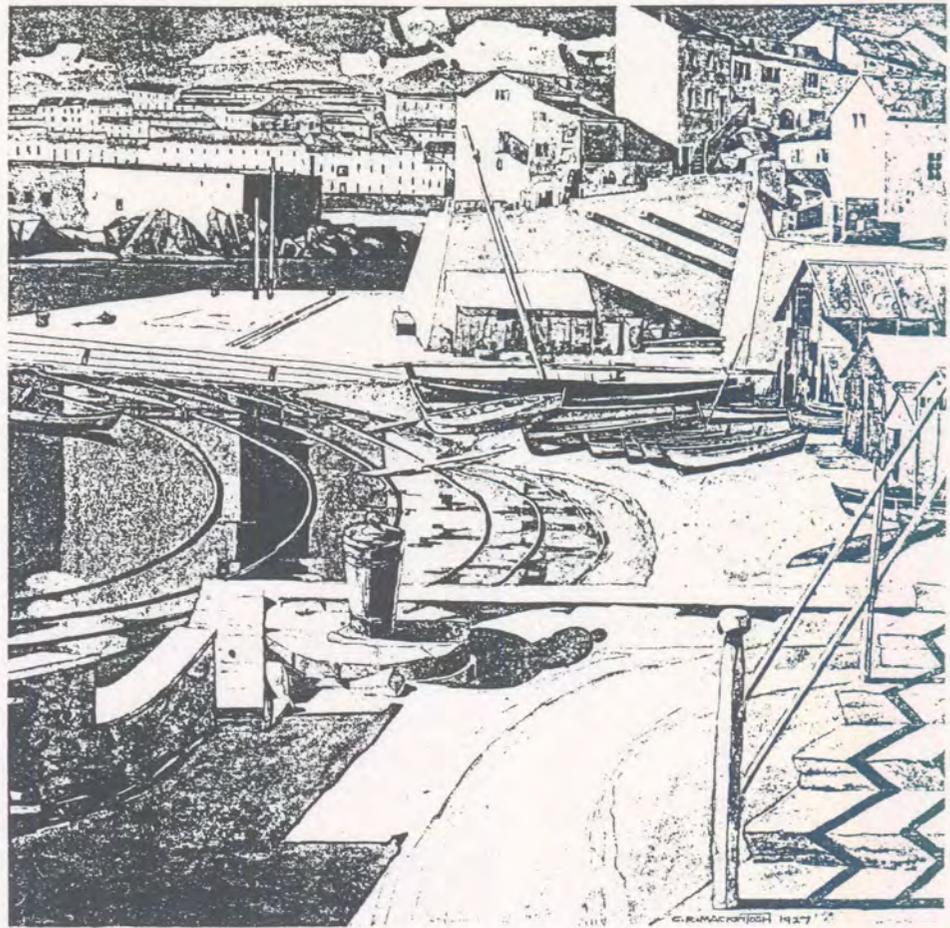


Fig. 4. Charles Rennie Mackintosh, *The Little Bay, Port Vendres, 1927.*

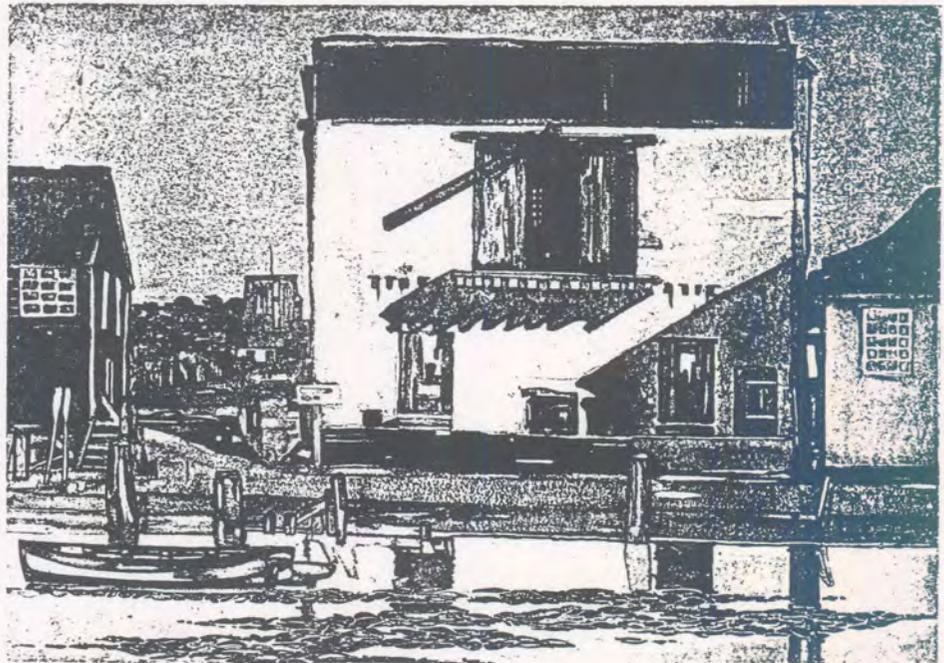


Fig. 5. Charles Rennie Mackintosh, *Venetian Palace, the Blyth, 1914.*

artist to the Arts and Crafts Movement. Miro took specific inspiration from Iberian cave art and believed in the absolute superiority of aboriginal perception. He was also a mural artist, who believed that the decoration of public buildings should be the highest form of popular art. The above-mentioned article also stressed the importance of Owen Jones and his "Grammar of Ornament". Jones, he pointed out, was a very early champion of the use of 'primitive' design.

A recent publication on Flemish art investigated "Arts and Crafts vandaag in Vlaanderen" (Sauwen 1996 :3 - 10) and found the influence far-reaching. It affected interior decoration and architecture, wall-hangings, ceramics, printing and graphic art as well as the arts of painting and sculpture. Its influence was ongoing and wide-ranging "De grondfilosofie van de Arts and Crafts-beweging heeft alles om idealistische jongeren aan te spreken." The writer, Sauwen also sketches how difficult it is to identify all the influences that work towards the general feeling of a period :

"Een kunststroming is het kind van vele vaders. Ingewikkelder wordt het wanneer moet worden vastgesteld hoe deze of gene beweging naar het buitenland wordt uitgevoerd. Wat blijft er dan van de oorspronkelijke opvattingen over; waar worden ze in al hun zuiverheid overgenomen of hoe werden ze in een min of meer uitgeholde vorm doorgegeven? Wij, die de gegevens post factum kunnen analyseren, hebben het hiermee in zekere zin gemakkelijker dan de tijdgenoten; we houden ons aan de feiten en de data. Wat we echter helemaal missen is het

aanvoelen van de Zeitgeist: de psychologische emotionele of andere context die een welbepaalde impuls determineerde."

#### Student and Bookman

Pretoria was very far away from all the great art centres but one of the ways in which an isolated artistic community could try to keep in touch was by means of books and magazines. Some of these have already been mentioned.

Pierneef was a lover and user of books. He was, for nine years, working in a well-stocked library where he had ready access to newly published Africana material such as "The Native Races of Southern Africa" by George William Stow published posthumously in 1906. We know from a sheet of drawings (T.C.A.D.:2079) that he had been making use of "The Eldorado of the Ancients" by Carl Peters (1902) and "Ruined Cities of Mashonaland" by J. T. Bent (1892). Another book of which he obviously made much use, was "Bushman Paintings" by Helen Tongue which had been published in 1909. In a very thorough analysis of the sources for the Bushman images painted by Pierneef in the school hall of the Ficksburg High School in 1922 Murray Schoonraad (Univ. of Pret. Art Arch.) listed a good many as having been derived from Tongue.

The friends who knew Pierneef well made special reference to his knowledge and love of books. His good friend and early biographer, Grosskopf put it in the following words :

"Praat met hom oor boeke en hij slaan jou dronk; want nege

jaar lang was hij assistent in die Staatsbiblioteek in Pretoria. Oor Frans Hals of Frank Brangwyn, oor Max Klinger of Auguste Rodin kan hij jou net soveel interresants vertel as oor Boesmantekeninge of Kaffersierkuns" (1919 :200).

Anton Hendriks (1959 :1) says of the fruitful period when Pierneef acted as State Librarian that he had a large number of books available for study. Some of these have already been referred to. Pierneef wrote to his friend Thom Steele when he was visiting Europe that he was spending all his money on books and old curios (Pretorius 1990 :66). Two of the books acquired on this spending spree will be more fully discussed further on.

After the artist's death Currie's Auction Sales advertised the sale of books from the library of the late J. H. Pierneef in December 1957. On the cover page of the list, the auctioneers offer an apology for the scant information contained in the catalogue :

"which does not do justice to the books to be sold, since the art books particularly represent a really magnificent collection".

There were, of these, written in English an itemised list of 119 items. Some of these, such as 119 and 119a, consisted of books bundled together, 8 in 119 and 3 in 119a. There are shorter lists of German, French and Dutch books, as well as portfolios containing a wide variety of prints. There is also a list of more general material, books on angling and Fishing, Sea, Travel and Adventure and a section labelled South Africa, but containing

more general works on archaeology, such as "Narrow Pass, Black Mountain" and "Gods, Graves and Scholars" by C. W. Ceram.

The analysis of this inadequate list provides an insight into the artist's reading habits and his fields of interest, the knowledge he was consciously accumulating over the years. The library was, sadly, dispersed, a good many of the books going to institutions such as the University of Potchefstroom and the Technical College, Pretoria. In a paper prepared for the South African Association of Art Historians Conference, Harmsen (1987 :6,7) lists the widespread documentation on the artist, Pierneef that exists. Unfortunately the books from his library are not included. Pierneef's daughter is cited as still having some of her father's books in her possession and Mrs. Pierneef donated 298 art and history books from Pierneef's library to the University of Pretoria in 1961 (van Heerden (Nel ed.) 1990 :213).

Marguerite Yourcenar, (1990 :325) the French writer and first woman to be admitted as member to the exclusive Académie Française, found that "one of the best ways to reconstruct a man's thinking is to rebuild his library" and, for that reason she tried to read all the authors from classical antiquity that had been read by the subject of her biography in "The Memoirs of Hadrian".

The booklist for Currie's auction, as well as some of the other information on Pierneef's books, allows one, in small measure,

to attempt some kind of approach to the artist's thinking. One finds that his reading ranged through art history of all periods and that the most modern of contemporaries were also there. The Italian artist Segantini has already been mentioned as his work was illustrated in the book on Swiss art in Erich Mayer's possession. Item 5 is a monograph on Segantini while Item 4 lists Anders Zorn (1860 - 1920), the Swedish painter and etcher whose etching technique consisted of more or less parallel lines across the plate. Item 6 is simply given as Willem van Konijnenburg. One does not know whether it is a book on him or by him. The disclaimer by the auctioneers was well-founded as authors and dates of publication are missing from most of their list. A book on Van Konijnenburg, who is credited with the most profound influence on Pierneef, was published in Holland in 1928, while Van Konijnenburg's books on aesthetics, "Het wesen der schoonheid" and "De aesthetische idee" were published in 1908 and 1916 respectively. A letter, written to Pierneef by Van Konijnenburg in 1929, mentions the publication of his latest book by van Es Wassenaar which leads one to conclude that this was the book which it pleased van Konijnenburg to learn had been added to Pierneef's library.

One's eye is caught on going through the booklist, by many books on etching, engraving and the woodcut: Item 12 "Acquatint Engraving", Item 18 "Modern Etchings, Mezzotints and Drypoints", Item 19 "Etchers from Rembrandt to Whistler" while Item 25 contains a set of three volumes on the etchings of Charles Meryon, Rembrandt and William Strang. There are a number of



books, six in all, on Vincent van Gogh. Item 36 is on "Peasant Art in Roumania", while Item 116 lists "4 books on Bushman drawings - Bushman life". This is under a list of German books, where Carl Einstein's "Negerplastik" catches the eye. This was one of the first books published on "primitive" art, the first edition appearing in 1915 and the second edition in 1920. Below this is "Bildenden Kunste in der USSR".

Among the general books on the fifth page are a number that imply an ethnological and archaeological interest. The two books by James Walton must have been late additions to the collection as "Homesteads and Villages of South Africa" was published in 1952 and "African Village" in 1956. The cover design for the last was by Alexis Preller. One may surmise that these subjects remained of enduring interest to the artist. He was certainly well-informed about "Modern Art - 1919 Series" (Item 62) and on "Mural Painting" (Item 63) as well as "The Art of Decorative Painting" (Item 80).

At least one of the books on the list must have been acquired during the delightful shopping spree of 1925-6 of which he wrote to Thom Steele. Item 16, "The Modern Woodcut" by Herbert Furst is one of the books which merits particular attention and bears the artist's bookplate on the inside cover. It was first published in 1924 and covers the history of the woodcut and the wood engraving from the 15th century onwards. The Japanese approach and mastery of the medium is also referred to in this book. The text is not the main attraction. It is in the numerous



illustrations that its great value lies. There are certain of the modern artists, Pierneef's contemporaries, such as Felix Vallotton (1865 - 1925), Robert Gibbings (1889 - 1958) and John Nash (1893 - 1977), who exploit the black and white decorative qualities of the medium in ways that must have inspired Pierneef. The book has obviously been well-handled and used.

Another book, which was obviously bought in 1925, was brought back to South Africa and presented to Emil Schweickerdt as a gift. It is the important "Geschichte des Japanischen Farbenhholzschnitts" by Waldemar von Seidlitz which was first published in 1921. This copy is the third imprint. Pierneef wrote his name in pencil on the flyleaf together with the notation "Amsterdam 1925". On the inside cover in ink he wrote "Aan Emil van J.Hendrik Pierneef" and the date "Julie 1928". Below is the excited message "Emil jy moet hierdie lees!!".

A significant art historical passage in which the same decorative qualities are traced in Eastern, Egyptian and Greek art up to the Renaissance discovery of perspective, appears on the fourth page and reads as follows :

"mit Hilfe eines sorgfältig durchgebildeten Umrisses, wohl abgewogener Massen von Hell und Dunkel und einer harmonischen Farbenverteilung hat sie aber dekorative und somit monumentale Wirkungen zu erzielen gewusst und gleichzeitig ihre Darstellungen mit einem je nach dem Gegenstande wechselnden Inhalt von Kraft, Anmut oder Erhabenheit erfüllt".  
This emphasis on the decorative and monumental effects achieved

with the help of a carefully considered outline, well-planned masses of light and dark and a harmonious division of colour which at the same time, according to circumstances, provides these images with powerful content, grace and a sense of the sublime, was exactly the kind of description that would strike an artist such as Pierneef who was searching and striving for these very same qualities as an ideal.

Just as important is the discussion on the fifth and sixth pages where the debt of Japanese art to calligraphy is spelt out as follows :

"das, was man auszudrücken hat, in möglichster Vollkommenheit, dabei aber mit dem geringsten Aufwand von Mitteln darstellt. Es handelt sich hierbei somit um ein Spiel, wie es allen rhythmischen Künsten, der Poesie, der Musik, der Baukunst, zu Grunde liegt. Der Japaner nimmt davon Abstand, alles zu sagen, was er zu sagen hat, die Gestalten vollkommen greifbar durchzubilden, die Fläche nach ihrer Breite und Tiefe aus zufüllen, die Massen durch Teilung und symmetrische Wiederholung zu gliedern...Sein gansches Streben geht dahin, sich auf das für seinen Zweck Wesentliche zu beschränken, die Naturformen in der vollen Freiheit und Mannigfaltigkeit ihres Wachstums zu verwenden, die Umriszlinien so einfach und ausdrucksvoll wie möglich zu bilden - ".

These ideas would again appeal profoundly to Pierneef - to express that which you wanted to say as completely and perfectly as possible and using to that end the modicum of the simplest

means possible. This matter was like a game, a game familiar and basic to all the rhythmic arts, such as poetry, music, and building (architecture). The Japanese could abstain from spelling out every syllable, from grasping or expressing an image in its entirety, filling every plane in its breadth and depth, organizing the masses through division and symmetrical repetition ... their entire endeavour to limit themselves to the essential purpose and to render the natural forms according to their complete freedom and in the multiplicity of their growth, led them to the simplest and most expressive pictorial outline.

To an artist who was constantly seeking and experimenting in an attempt to find his own clarity of expression, as well as a simplicity of decorative and formal style, these observations on the Japanese woodcut must have been illuminating and exciting.

This booklist indicates that most of Pierneef's books had to do with art. He made a thorough study of every art form that he had to tackle whether etching, the woodcut, painting in pastel, "Heraldry for Craftsmen and Designers", mural painting or the decorative arts. He could approach all these in four languages and the section on fishing presents Pierneef as the lover of nature, camping and the bushveld.

It may be argued that as much as one may reconstruct a man's thinking by rebuilding his library, one may reconstruct his thinking by studying his paintings, drawings and other artistic output if he should have been an artist. Pierneef's books reveal



a great deal of his thinking but in chapter four the pictures in the Pretoria Art Museum's collection will be looked at in greater detail in order to follow the ways in which he was thinking visually and applying what he had been reading and experiencing.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE YEARS UP TO 1924 AND IMMEDIATELY AFTER

In the 1963 broadcast on Pierneef entitled DIE WÊRELD VAN PIERNEEF (compiled by J F Marais) the period between 1908 and 1924 is referred to as silent, " 'n versweë tydperk in sy lewe". This probably refers to the personal circumstances of the artist which are fully covered in the book "J H Pierneef Sy Lewe en Werk" (Nel ed. 1990). On the level of artistic development much was, however, achieved during these years.

The various influences forming the emotional and aesthetic responses of the early part of the twentieth century in a young artist are by no means easy to unravel. At the end of the century there is a process of rethinking taking place and new perspectives opened up. Jack Flam (1995 :3) in his article "Rethinking Modernism" refers to :

"the subtle ways in which modernist painting related to the historical circumstances that produced it"

and maintains that there can be no monolithic concept but :

"that it actually meandered over rather diverse ground, sometimes even within the oeuvres of individual artists."

Attempting this process for Pierneef necessitates looking in more detail and under different headings at these meanderings, many of which have been identified as emanating from the Arts and Crafts Movement.

One should also keep in mind that the nineteenth century with the major shifts from Romanticism to Realism to Impressionism flowed into the twentieth century in a confused and rapid succession of art movements in which Symbolism was a powerful force around the turn of the century. All the art movements that were to have the formative influence on modernism made their appearance before 1914. Surrealism which marked the period between the two World Wars did not feature among the forces which helped to form Pierneef's mature style.

#### Nationalism and Modernism

It has already been stated that there was a climate of Romantic Nationalism worldwide from around the turn of the century to before the outbreak of the First World War. After the defeat of the Boer forces, South Africa was ruled by a foreign power and the act of unification in 1910 by which the four provinces of South Africa were granted autonomy and self-rule must have been an emotional experience for many South Africans, especially those from the Transvaal who, like the Pierneef family, had been politically and financially reduced in circumstances by the disastrous war with England.

N. J. Coetzee (1986 :11) quoted Harmsen's conclusion that both Pierneef and C. M. van den Heever had freed themselves of European influences. He averred that Bouman and Nilant were also of this opinion. The present study, however, hopes to indicate that Pierneef was very much influenced by the European trends of

his time. Not only did he have close contact among his friends with artists who had spent their formative years in European institutions but friends such as Fanie Eloff, Erich Mayer and George Smithard were well aware of European trends. They had access to magazines such as "The Studio", "Die Jugend", "Junge Kunst" and "Cahiers d'Art."<sup>4</sup> There is a certain paradox discernable. It was this European influence that inspired the search for an own identity and a turning away from Europe.

Writing of a later period, after 1930, Joubert (1989 :149) noted that "the very definitions of art were often set according to the parameter of these two notions", namely modernism and nationalism. She pointed out that a search for spirituality underlying appearances could be found in the influence of Symbolism. Realism, Impressionism, Symbolism and Art Nouveau were all present as background to the early twentieth century and as she further pointed out, everything that turned away from the familiar, traditional, representative and easily comprehended was modern and shocking. According to Joubert it could be postulated that modernism was international in origin while nationalism was concerned with safeguarding that which was regarded as uniquely one's own. She describes nationalism on a political level as having its inception in 1924 when the National/Labour Party alliance won the general election. In the following year, 1925 General Hertzog assured the survival of Afrikaans by making it

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<sup>4</sup> There are intriguing items listing magazines in "Curries Auction Sales Catalogue" of December 1957: No 31 Three volumes of the "Studio Yearbook", No 117 "Bundle Studio Year Books and various periodicals. (Old)", No 112 "Bundle of Junge Kunst" and No 120 "7 Cahiers D'Art".

an official language of the Union (Joubert 1989 :153). It would seem, therefore, that the nationalism advocated so fervently as a national South African art by Pierneef and Erich Mayer is less politically motivated than that which developed after 1925 and fits in with the Romantic Nationalism and the pervasive climate of Arts and Crafts influence discussed in the previous chapter.

Indeed, a contemporary, writing on "Nasionalisme in Kuns" for "Die Nuwe Brandwag" (Linde 1931 :15) could state the following in her opening paragraph :

" Nie slegs in Suid-Afrika nie, maar ook oor die hele wêreld word aangedring, miskien hedendaags soos nooit tevore nie, op 'n nasionale element in kuns."

She even remarked that the most urgent demand for this truly national element in our art came from interested strangers rather than from born Afrikaners (Linde 1931 :18).

The one example of this European Romantic Nationalism with which Pierneef was acquainted through Erich Mayer was that of Switzerland. Discussing the 1848 unification of Switzerland David Birmingham (1995 :37-43) described it as a long and complex process which in its fourth and final phase was largely cultural and led to "a patriotic mythology". It was here that Hodler played a most important part becoming an ideal example to the young idealistic artist, Pierneef.

It is true that these were the years during which the Afrikaner was developing a strong awareness of own identity and nationalism

establishing a literary as well as artistic culture, but the English speaking component of the South African population was equally aware of the need for an own identity. The study completed by E. P. Engel (1962) in which he discussed the development of art in Johannesburg before 1920 quotes ample evidence, very often from the pages of the prominent Johannesburg newspaper "The Star", for this kind of awareness among the English-speaking residents of the city. After the Anglo-Boer War there was an influx of English to Johannesburg which would continue to influence cultural activity in that city for many years. In the years around 1910 there was an interesting reaction to this domination by all things English which was to be seen in the desire to foster local culture (Engel 1962 :22-23).

Erich Mayer was reported fully on the subject in the quarterly magazine for the building industry (Building 1922 :117 - 122). The heading is dramatic: "Wanted: a Distinctly South African Art." Mayer refers more than once to Pierneef and makes specific reference to a recent exhibition in the Selborne Hall :

"where it was justly pointed out [that he was] the first to create a distinctly S.A. language, and that exhibition was hailed as the birthday of a truly S.A. school of painting" (Building 1922 :117). Mayer went on to discuss architecture and again emphasised that Pierneef had pointed the way, recognising that in the Transvaal a different type of farmhouse had developed which harmonises better with the wide-stretched plains and lonely koppies. Clay pots, calabashes, baskets, Bushman art, flora and fauna all came under review and he stated that his second

illustration had been designed after studies by Hendrik Pierneef, who had devoted some time to the study of indigenous art motifs. He also, in his remarks on architecture referred to the climatic conditions of South Africa which made feasible the use of thatched roofs, small windows, broad covered verandas and even the use of vaults in construction - "a favourite idea of Gordon Leith."

Gordon Leith had been Pierneef's friend since their schooldays, they shared the joy of camping in the bushveld (T.C.A.D.Pretoria Aug. 14 1921 and Dec. 17 1921). George Leith, Gordon's father, has already been mentioned as a possible early contact who could have inspired the young man who returned to Pretoria towards the end of 1903 with an interest in the Bushman and the archaeological as well as ethnological material of which he was such a keen collector. In his correspondence with Erich Mayer it is clear that Pierneef felt that the indigenous arts should be an indispensable ingredient, even more, the whole basis for a truly national art as has already been deduced from his quoted correspondence with Erich Mayer. Pierneef again wrote to Mayer (Letter dated October 30th 1916 Univ. of Pret. Art Archive) once more expressing the desire to discuss with him the basis for 'n "zuivere Afrikaanse kuns". Mayer and Pierneef do not seem to distinguish between Afrikaans art and South African art. Their concern seems to have been, as with the writers of the period, the education and cultural development of the Afrikaner, the group to which they belonged. When Pierneef wrote to Mayer (T.C.A.D. 28 November 1916) to express his delight at the article

in the Dutch papers "Neerlandia" and the "Noord Rotterdammer" he also had the following to say :

"Jammer laat hul nie sê dat mij moeder nog van die Voortrekker geslag is, sij is puur Afrikaans en ik glo dat ik mij meeste idee van haar het."

This did not, however, lead to a total exclusivity because Pierneef seems to have been on a friendly footing with a most supportive and encouraging group of English-speaking South Africans.

Pierneef's friendship with Gordon Leith and with Dora and Norman Price has already been mentioned, so also his lectures to the St. Andrew's Guild. He was invited to membership of the Individualists and in 1922 exhibited with Marcelle Piltan in Pretoria (Nel, ed. 1990 :59). He had at least one other ardent admirer in Jennie Leech (Turvey) from whom he received three letters between 1917 and 1921 (T.C.A.D. Pretoria) telling him of works she had acquired and congratulating her friend "Henry" on his Bloemfontein exhibition.

Erich Mayer and Pierneef continued to preach the cause of South African art. The idea of what was truly national with a typical South African identity was, for Pierneef, to be sought in the indigenous. When the "Huisgenoot" (April 1917 :308- 310) published an article on Erich Mayer they stressed this concern of his with nationalism and referred to his friendship with Pierneef :

"die natuurlike, grondegte Afrikanerskilder en Mayer, met sij

rijk theoretiese kennis en kritiese oordeel".

The article goes on to describe the different approach towards their ideal that could be discerned in the two artists :

"Hij (Mayer) wil dit nie soos sij vriend Pierneef bereik deur 'n hoër verder ontwikkeling van die rudimentaire kuns van die inboorlinge, Boesmans en die Kaffers (sic) nie".

It is obvious that Pierneef was more strongly inclined to the ethnological as the ideal indigenous art than his friend.

This is reflected in the subject matter and the titles of the lectures delivered by Pierneef in these early years. His first lecture delivered at the invitation of the Afrikaanse Debat en Kultuur Vereniging of the theological school of the Reformed Church in Potchefstroom in April 1916 had "Art in South Africa" as its title and in it he traced the similarities between Greek and Arabian art with that of the Hottentots and the Bushmen (Pretorius 1990 :45). When, four months later, he addressed a meeting of the Afrikanerkring in Pretoria, his subject was "The art of the indigenous people of South Africa". When he repeated his opinions on Bushman art in Bloemfontein in September 1917, he made an important convert. He stayed with Reenen J. van Reenen and the two men became firm friends. It would be Van Reenen who was instrumental in negotiating Pierneef's first commission for mural paintings, those for the new hall for the Ficksburg High School. The subject laid down was, naturally, Bushman art.

In Pretoria Pierneef gave two lectures to a womens' group, the Afrikaans-Hollandse readers' union, in the course of 1917. "All

the paintings on the studio walls had to give way for drawings of Bushmen, black people and traditional art" (Pretorius 1990 :47). In these years his search for a South African identity in art was firmly based on the indigenous arts of the Bushman and the black peoples. The drawings held in the T. C. A. D. are very likely to be those which were exhibited on the walls of his studio on these occasions (Pretorius 1992 :47).

One need not be reminded of the discovery of the arts of Africa and other exotic regions by European artists from Gauguin (1848-1903) onwards. "Primitivism" was an important element in Modernism.

#### Vernacular Architecture

Pierneef turned to his surroundings , the world with which he was familiar, for subject matter and inspiration. In the words of S. P. E. Boshoff (1951 :170) his art was "aanvanklik nasionaal in die beperkte sin van die stof, selfs provinsialisties". Although he and his friend Erich Mayer found inspiration in the building of a grand and ambitious project such as the Union Buildings in the Years around 1913, Pierneef's great love was for the vernacular which Kemp (1987 :10) defines as follows: "Regional houses were originally built by pioneers for survival, constructed by anonymous builders forced to use the materials at hand. These early architectural examples are what architects call 'vernacular' because they do not fit the progression of mainstream styles...their most important traits, and indeed their

essence ---- a sense of belonging to a particular time and a specific place."

With his early interest in building it seems to have come naturally to Pierneef to record the houses and buildings that made up the city scene and the surroundings of Pretoria. Nearly all the pastels in the catalogue of the Pretoria Art Museum have Pretoria houses as their theme. Cat. nos. 46 - 76 as well as Cat. nos. 51, 70 and 74 are landscapes of the environs of Pretoria. Twentyfour of these works were donated to the City Council by the artist after he had used them in the execution of the commission for paintings of Old Pretoria in 1949. He exceeded his commission for fifteen paintings by painting three more and donating these as well as the pastel works on which they were based to the Council. Nilant (1974 :18) also pointed out that the remarkable old houses of Pretoria, the farm dwellings of the northern Transvaal and the old house in Silverton were all for him the expression of his concept of a national architecture. Of the fortythree paintings in the Municipal collection that can be accounted for, seven others have to do with buildings. The painting of the Union Buildings which, until the recent fire in Munitoria, graced the Mayor's office, was painted for the Union Castle mailship "The Pretoria Castle" (Cat no.43) and presented to the ship by the mayor, Colonel B.J.Swart in 1939. When Safmarine took over the ship the City Council requested the return of their painting and it was finally returned in 1975.



The painting of Bank Lane (Cat. no. 3) recorded the dramatic hailstorm that struck the city in 1913 and was purchased at the sale held after the artist's death by Anton Hendricks. The Heidelberg street scene, (Cat. no. 7) acquired in 1958, dates from 1919 when Pierneef was teaching at the Heidelberg Teacher's Training College. Two paintings record Cape houses (Cat. Nos. 14, 20) while Zanzibar (Cat. No. 4) was the fruit of a journey up the East Coast. "Dutch Landscape, Volendam" (Cat. No. 12), dated 1925 is a typical Dutch townscape which serves to remind one that Pierneef was, during this second visit of his to Europe, absorbing many influences, in this case that of painters of the townscape such as George Hendrik Breitner (1857 - 1923) and Willem Witsen (1860 - 1923).

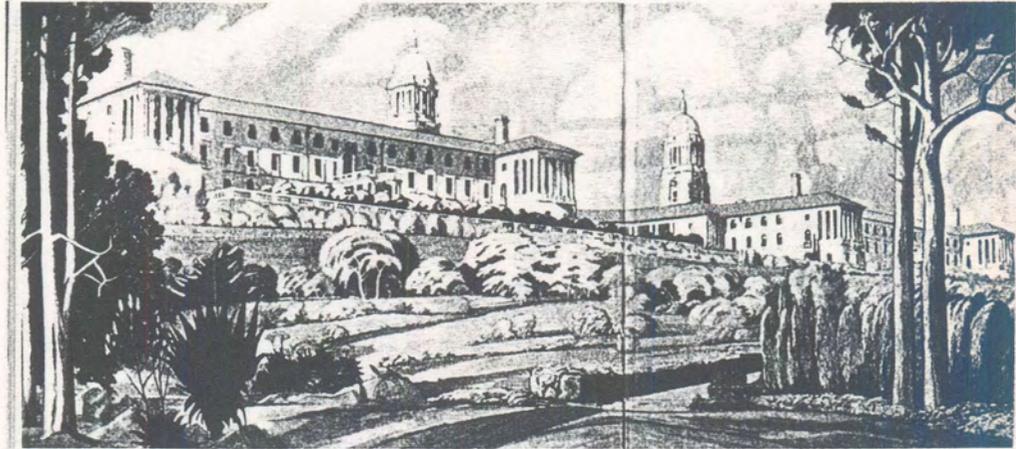
There had been a revival of landscape painting in the Netherlands in the nineteenth century, De Leeuw (1983 :33) comments on this with the words :

"in contrast to France the focus in the Netherlands was on the depiction not of man, but of landscape".

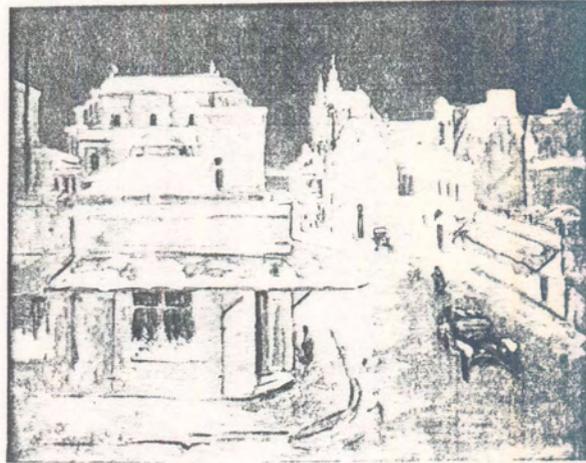
Particularly two artists were singled out, Willem Witsen and George Breitner who painted the city scene. Willem Witsen concentrated on the static Amsterdam townscape from which he completely excluded dynamic figures (De Leeuw 1983 :104) and Breitner, in whose work De Leeuw (1983 :106) notes a change after 1901 when he :

"discovered the beauty of the canal towns, saw the city more as a landscape, figures disappeared from his paintings".

Even in 1925 Pierneef seems to have been in some ways working in



*Cat.43 "Pretoria Castle" painting*



*Cat. 3 Banklane after a Hailstorm*



*Cat.9 Landscape with Hill*



*Cat.12 Dutch Landscape, Volendam*

a Dutch tradition. Anton Hendriks remembered (1925 :34) how he and Pierneef visited museums together and mentioned that Pierneef had been especially impressed by Breitner. An exhibition catalogue (Gemeentemuseum Arnhem 1954 :9) refers to Willem Witsen as an artist :

"die zich onder invloed van nieuwe stromingen aan het einde der eeuw...weer naar een zuivere vormgewing zoeken".

It seems, however, that Pierneef's 1910, 1911, 1913 drawings were more in the Arts and Crafts tradition and would only at a later stage, be subjected to formal and decorative considerations when they were used for paintings and black and white linocut prints. Pierneef's passion and love for these buildings was expressed in an article he wrote for "Die Boerevrou" in 1920, "Ons Boerehuise in Transvaal en hulle Karakter" (1950 :80 - 85). He began by quoting a poem by Jan Celliers in which the Cape Dutch farmhouse was praised and wished for a poet to sing of the attractions and special qualities of Transvaal architecture. He also suggests that this architecture should serve as a model for modern building and chooses for such a model the house in Silverton which may be seen in several works in the Art Museum collection: (Cat. nos. 94, 172 and 173). The house was T-shaped with a very prominent built-out fireplace and chimney section. It was a very rustic and roughly built structure and, before restoration, in a tumbledown state. The watercolour drawing (Cat. no. 94) of this subject in the museum collection was acquired by the good offices of Walter Battiss, who was, at that time, Head of the Department of Fine Arts at the University of South Africa (Pretoria News

1970).

Pierneef's contribution to the recording of early Pretoria architecture was recognised by the inclusion of five of his drawings in an official guidebook to the city jointly published in 1913 by the Municipality of Pretoria and the South African Railways.<sup>5</sup> Both these institutions would be his patrons at a later stage and he would execute some of his most important commissions for them. The commission from the Municipality in 1948 would bring into their collection an extraordinarily complete and valuable record of old Pretoria.

The home he built for himself and his first wife, Agatha Delen, still stands next to, or rather in, the zoo grounds, in De Waal street and shows the profile of a simple side gable and hipped roof. It followed the style of early Pretoria's vernacular architecture.

This was, however, not the only indigenous architectural investigation the artist embarked on in these years. He was also drawing the kraals and homes of the black people living in the areas around Pretoria and towards Rustenburg and when he built his last home to the east of Pretoria after 1939 it consisted of loosely connected separate units such as one sees in indigenous architecture. He called it his kraal and gave it the Zulu name,

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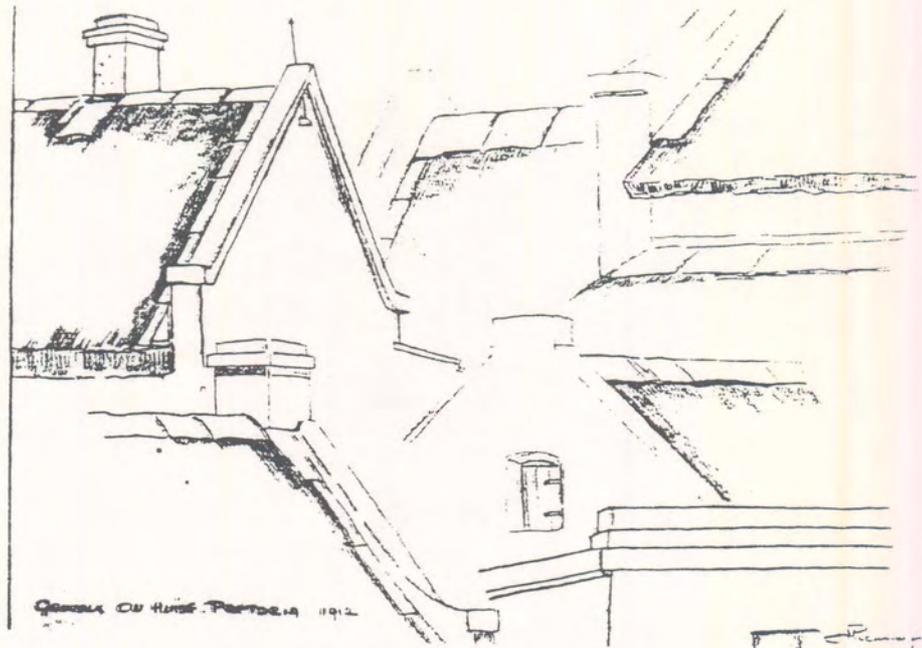
<sup>5</sup> "The City of Pretoria and Districts" Produced in 1913 as an "Official Guide Book" for the Municipality of Pretoria in collaboration with the South African Railways.

Elangeni. His drawing of the magnificent Bushman painting from Burley in the Eastern Cape, a resting eland, is in the Pierneef museum collection and was used for the emblem carved on the entrance gate by his friend, the sculptor Coert Steynberg (1905 - 1982).

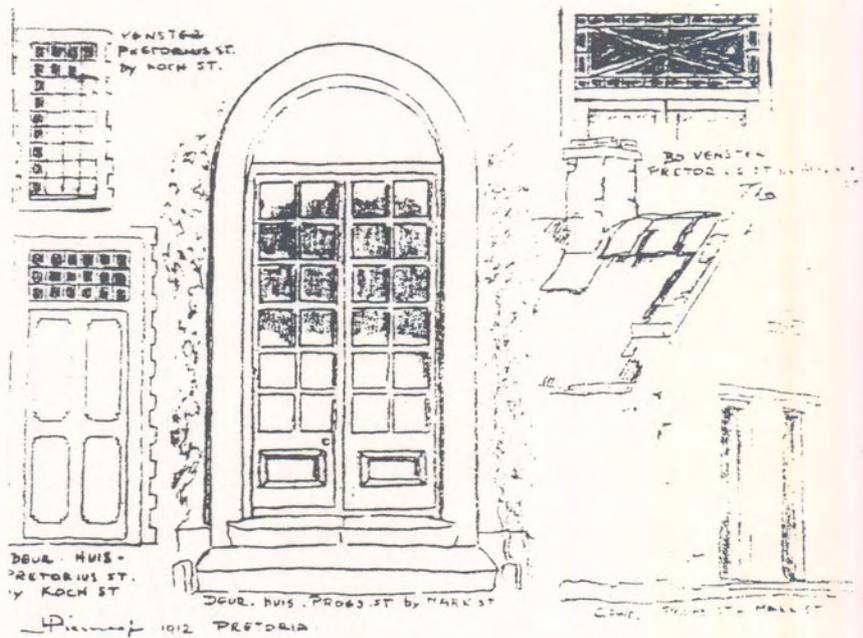
The Transvaal architecture that Pierneef loved was often very simple and not far removed from the "Hartbeeshuisie", the rudimentary shelter built by the pioneer, but he also noted how certain classical influences were remembered and were brought into play in the detailing of chimneys, windows, doorways and parapets in more permanent and rather more considered structures. The two pastel drawings (Cat. nos. 47 and 49) are of extraordinary interest in this regard.

The first drawing (Cat. no. 47) consists of gable, chimney and parapet details indicating the grace with which simple forms could be varied while the second (Cat. no. 49) looks closely at doorways, fanlights and windows. The window detailing in the fragment of gable at bottom right is exquisitely sensitive with two narrow vertical window openings united by the plasterwork surround.

"Buildings, corner of Church and Koch Streets" (Cat. no. 42) depicts four buildings on the corner of Church and Koch streets. They vary tremendously. At left is a flatroofed structure, plastered and whitewashed with two doors and two windows in symmetrical balance. The roofline and parapet are defined by a



Cat.47 Gables of Old Houses, Pretoria



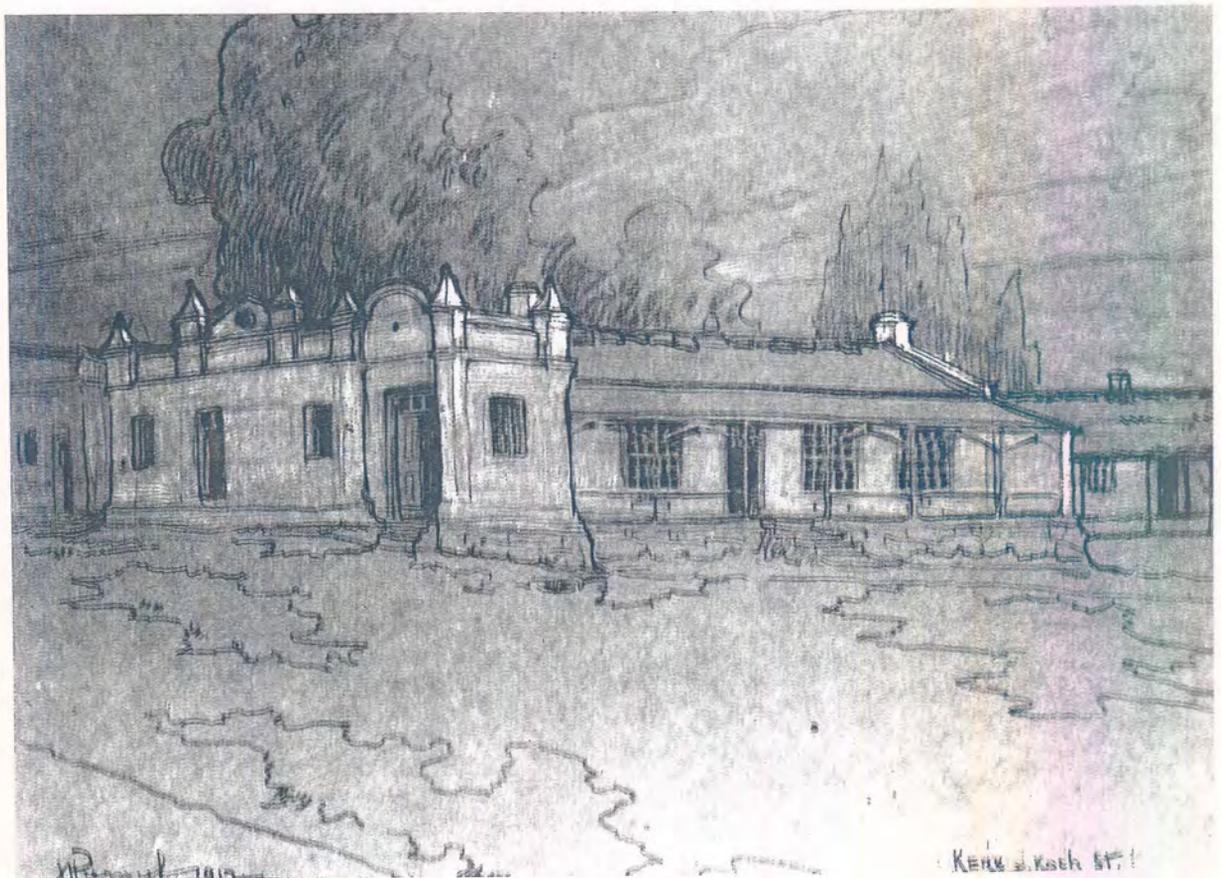
Cat.49 Doors and Windows of Houses, Pretoria

low triangular tympanum with a small round opening accentuating the centre. The slanting flat roof is only just visible behind the parapet. There are steps going up to each door. Next to this is a building planned to negotiate the corner by a section placed on a slant with its own door and rounded gable above. This section is narrow and vertical. Above the door in the long side wall to the left of this there is once more a triangular, low tympanum with a small round opening at the centre and below it a doorway with a window to each side. Pilasters define the corners and terminate in pointed pinnacles along the parapet that runs in line with that of the building next door. The roof is obviously flat and there is a stone foundation below the plastered whitewashed walls. The frontally seen window has four small square panes.

These two buildings are in sober classical style, while the following two are far more vernacular. The first has gable ends and a chimney. A veranda runs along the front of the hipped, thatched roof to form a stoep. The straight line here could indicate that this might be of corrugated iron. It is supported on wooden poles and has a crossbarred railing. The house is plastered and the sash windows and doorway have a toothed edging of large building blocks. The stoep, which is reached by steps off the street has a stone foundation. The next house is also thatched with an added veranda which is supported by simple poles, the gable ends are straight triangles and there is a small attic window, also a chimney.



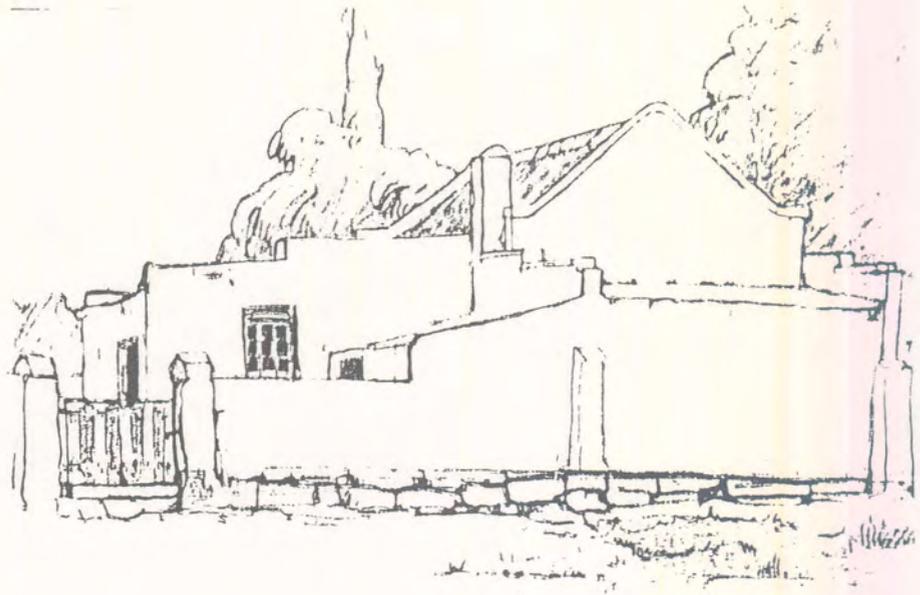
*Cat.42 Buildings - Corner Koch and Church Streets*



*Cat.46 Buildings, Church and Koch Streets*

The wealth of building detail recorded here is an architectural treasure trove for the researcher but the drawing itself is an aesthetic delight especially when it is compared to the 1949 commissioned painting for which it was the source. In the drawing the buildings lie above the central horizontal line and are balanced by a centrally felt vertical accentuated by the large tree in the background. There is a totally satisfying balance. In the painting the foreground is smaller, the diagonal movement less and all the forms more rigid.

A comparison of the drawing "House, du Toit and Church Streets" (Cat. no. 50) with the linocut of the same subject (Cat. no. 168) reveals something of the way the artist used and adapted his material. The house on the corner of Du Toit and Church streets reputedly belonged to Gustav Preller (1875 - 1943). One can trace the first simple gabled structure and all the later additions and walling. The drawing is dated 1912 and Nilant (1974 :64) dates the linocut to 1920. In the black and white medium of the linocut with its decorative contrasts the details of the original drawing have undergone a good many changes. The main elements of the house and large masses have been retained but the trees in the background, the sky and the pavement in the foreground have been reworked to greater detail and pattern. Both drawing and linocut are masterly renditions, the first having the immediacy of direct observation while the second shows Pierneef as the cerebral manipulator of his material. According to Nilant (1974 :17) Pierneef made linocuts of ten different houses that stood in the centre of Pretoria. According to the museum's catalogue list



100

100

*Cat.50 House - du Toit and Church Streets*



*Cat.168 Corner du Toit and Church Street*

there are only seven (Cat. nos. 162 to 168) in the Pretoria Art Museum Collection.

#### PIERNEEF AND THE INDIGENOUS

There are only three items in the Pretoria Art Museum's collection of Pierneef works which provide significant clues to indigenous influences in the artist's oeuvre. This understressed aspect of the influences which informed the artist's outlook and development in the early stages of his career and were acknowledged by him at all times will, therefore, be fully investigated in this section.

There are three works which lead into the discussion. The first is the oil painting, Cat. No. 21, "Still Life with Pumpkins", which was bought from Dr. A. W. O. Bock in 1970. The second is the small gouache painting Cat. No. 85, "Eland and Bird" which was acquired from Mrs. Y. Flather in 1990 and the third the linocut print Cat. No. 252. This is a cover design for "Wilgerboombogies, Verse van Totius" which was part of the Van Schaik Gift of 1965. Two other designs, Cat. Nos. 259 and 260 which were also part of the Van Schaik gift add to the evidence of "Wilgerboombogies".

The fact that Pierneef was indebted to Bushman art is mentioned by almost every writer on the artist, but it was seldom enlarged upon. The radio programme, "Die Wêreld van Pierneef" (Marais 1963) states in the accompanying text that he was the first artist to recognise the brilliant qualities of Bushman art but

never used this fact for self-publicity. Mrs. Pierneef spoke freely to professors Van der Westhuysen and Bokhorst in the interview they had with her in 1963. Discussing the influences on Pierneef she mentioned that he had made a study of Bushman art and also that he had felt slighted and hurt by the acknowledgment accorded to Battiss for his Bushman figures and knowledge of the art, whereas he himself had made a far greater study of the subject, before 1924.

In a discussion of the debate centering on eurocentrism and afrocentrism F.I.J. van Rensburg (1993 :101) mentions Pierneef's afrocentric investigations and his insistence of an own "Afrikaanse kunstyl". He refers to an interview with the Cape Town newspaper, "Die Burger" of 9 January 1947 and Pierneef's demand for young artists to remove their "Europese bril" and strive to develop a South African painting style. His own contribution to such a national style, he said, could be recognised in his own work as a simplification of vision and use of colour. These he had applied and adopted from Bushman art.

Van Rensburg cites a reply to this statement by the artist a few months later by the celebrated Afrikaans poet N.P. van Wyk Louw writing in "Standpunte," the prestigious Afrikaans literary journal. He asked him whether he should not rather have acknowledged his debt to Willem van Konijnenburg (1868 - 1944) in this respect. Van Wyk Louw hereby showed a total lack of understanding of the artist's claim.

A careful listing of different sources and the evidence of the files on rock art housed among the Pierneef material in the National Archives, Pretoria, provide ample evidence that the artist's own statement should be considered more carefully. His pioneer work deserves to be acknowledged. It also needs to be placed in the historical context of the period in which a romantic nationalism, a return to indigenous or peasant art, folk art and the vernacular was to be observed worldwide. In this regard Cerwinski's comment (1981 :22) is very relevant:

"In the 1920's an awakened awareness of American Indian culture and the social revolutions in Latin America brought forth the attention to Aztec, Maya and Inca cultures. These developments established precedents in American design for Indian rhythms, patterns and totems".

In an article on "A South African National Art" (The Star undated, after 1930) reference is made to a recent exhibition of Russian handicrafts in Johannesburg and attention turns to similar work of a South African nature. It is worth quoting in full what the writer goes on to say:

"For some reason South Africa is extraordinarily prolific in arts and crafts workers... Little or no attempt has been made in this country to exploit a characteristically South African type of design.

In Australia one of the foremost artists, Miss Margaret Preston has for long been advocating the use of Maori and Aborigine art. There is a ceramic factory in America that

has acquired fame by utilising the ancient Mayan art... South Africa, possessing a rich treasure in indigenous art has done nothing either to preserve or to exploit it. One or two artists have realised the possibilities of the Bushman art and made some small attempt to exploit that as decoration.

Pierneef has had some wonderful carpets made, embodying Bushman design. Reenen J. van Reenen has done some designs for interesting applique work. Erich Mayer, the Pretoria artist, is perhaps the only one who has made any serious systematic study of the matter." (Cutting Univ.of Pretoria Art Arch.)

It seems obvious that the above-mentioned writer did not have all the facts.

Pierneef had been making a serious study of the indigenous arts of the country since at least 1914. With the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 Erich Mayer was interned as a German national in the camp at Pietermaritzburg and some of Pierneef's letters written to him at the time are preserved in the Erich Mayer file (Univ. of Pretoria Art Archive). In a letter dated "30 Junie 1916" Pierneef writes of the serious study of the art of the Bushman and the black people that he has been embarked on. He states very clearly :

"Dit is al amper twee jaar laat ek daarmee besig was. Op die gebied het ek veel ontdek, en is nog besig om meer na te

vors. U mis ek veel om oor kuns te praat..."

He goes on to tell of the designs "samples", he calls them, that he is working on for Jan Celliers, the Afrikaans poet. One of these is for the narrative poem, "Martjie" and most of the decoration is based on Bushman and Bantu art of which he is constantly discovering new motifs.<sup>6</sup>

In the same letter he also stated his conviction that the decorative ideas of his hero, the Swiss artist, Hodler (1853 - 1918) to whose work he had been introduced by Mayer, fitted in with his studies and ideas for an ideal South African art.

All the early lectures delivered by the artist had South African art as the subject and very often included his views on indigenous art as the ideal inspiration in the South African context as has already been stated in this chapter.

When, in 1917, Pierneef was invited to lecture in Bloemfontein to members of the "Onze Taal", he made an important convert to the cause of Bushman art. His friend Grosskopf had arranged for him to stay with Reenen J. van Reenen. The two men became fast friends and it was through van Reenen that Pierneef was given his first large commission, the decoration of the Ficksburg High School's new hall. This hall with its Bushman murals by Pierneef and the art collection built up over the years by the valedictory

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<sup>6</sup> This design on Sheet 1843 is in the Pierneef file of the Nat. Arch. It is in pencil on grey paper, is signed Pierneef and is inscribed "Martjie deur Jan F. E. Celliers".

gifts of matric classes is now known as the S. H. Pellisier Art Gallery. The headmaster, at the time the hall was built, was Pellisier, who was a close friend of van Reenen. Together the two men visited farms in the area to see the Bushman paintings.

In his thorough research on these panels and on Pierneef and rock art, Schoonraad (1968 :125 - 126) came to the conclusion that Pierneef had made use of rock art copies made by George William Stow and Helen Tongue. He had not, in 1922, visited the shelters himself or made copies in them himself. Schoonraad did not attempt to explain how the copies had been made. Pierneef must have become acquainted with Stow's "The Native races of Southern Africa", published posthumously in 1906, when he was working in the State Library.

The only rock paintings illustrated are a panel with eland, lions and human figures, a panel with human figure, wildebeest, bush pigs, hippopotamus and snake and the famous blue ostriches. One can only conclude that he was allowed access to the Stow collection itself which was, at that time, in the care of Dorothea Bleek.

This is confirmed when one studies the Stow material which is now housed in the National Museum, Cape Town and compares it to the tracings and drawings overlaid by a grid which are in the Archive files in Pretoria. Stow imparted his own distinctive style to his copies of rock art and it was this style which surfaces in the copies made by Pierneef and transferred to the murals in

Ficksburg. The small gouache painting "Eland and Bird" in the Pretoria Art Museum collection illustrates this well.

When the photograph of the original painting on the rock face is compared to the Stow copy the stylisation is evident. The tracing of the subject is on the Pierneef rock art file in the National Archive, Pretoria. The lyrical acclaim accorded to the flowing lines of Bushman art that influenced Pierneef's use of line are therefore somewhat misplaced, the line is Stow's. No-one, however, who is acquainted with rock painting will deny the beauty of the art and agree with Pierneef that it is truly inspirational.

The Pierneef version of the Martienshoek eland and bird is the same size as the Stow copy and Pierneef has made use of much the same technique as that used by Stow; a gouache wash to simulate the rock face and the gouache motif painted over that. The Stow drawing had the instructions for colouring written in, white for the body, black line along the back and red for the brush down the face while the bird is indicated as white with black dots. These instructions were gracefully executed by Pierneef who placed the animal against an ochre ground and added black to the hooves.

When Pierneef went to Holland in 1925 he took 12 Bushman drawings with him which were to be part of his December exhibition in Amsterdam. They were well-received and admired. There are a few works similar in format and executed in the same manner in the

Pierneef file in the National Archive (T. C. A. D.) and it is possible that they were all part of the same series and used for exhibition, even if only on the walls of the artist's studio. One of these, No.2038 has five antelope and female figures sporting antelope head-dresses painted in black and siena.

The list compiled by Schoonraad (Univ. of Pretoria Art Arch. - Schoonraad Papers) assigns the drawings used for the Ficksburg panels to either Stow or Tongue. The Helen Tongue material was available in a publication put out in 1909 which could, therefore, have been available to Pierneef.

The painting "Still life with Pumpkins" dates from 1918 and shows the artist devoting himself to South African subject matter, the pumpkins and the bananas are very much fruits of the country and to the right on the sideboard shelf stands a small African clay pot with the distinctive triangular decoration on the vessel's shoulder.

The work has been painted on canvas and the fairly thick paint has been laid on in small short textural strokes of the brush. the colours are fairly sombre and may reflect his early academic approach. It is not quite to our eyes the "stippelmetode" of which he wrote to Mayer.

The clay pot and its characteristic triangular decoration leads one to what Pierneef described as "Kafferkins" without any pejorative intention. After intensive researches and use of the

books available in the State library he realised that the triangle, the chevron and the zigzag were the most basic elements of indigenous design and he made them his own. There are numerous sheets of drawings (T.C.A.D. - Pierneef Files) that attest to this. One of these (No.2079) has sketches of Zimbabwean artefacts in black ink on thick paper. Pierneef indicated his sources, one was from "Eldorado of the Ancients" by C. Peters which had been published in 1902. Meticulous as ever he even noted the page. Another source was "Ancient ruins of Rhodesia" by R.N.Hall and W.G.Neal, once more with the page indicated. The drawing was that of a soapstone carving from the Dhlo-Dhlo ruins. A third source was indicated as "Ruined Cities of Mashonaland" by J.T. Bent (No.1892).

The archival sources are too numerous to mention in this study but they include sheets of drawings recording Venda, Bakwena, Basutu, Amazulu and Amatonga decorations. Information regarding customs, rituals and beliefs accompany some of the drawings. Unfortunately Mrs. Pierneef placed an embargo on any reproductions of material donated to the Archive after the artist's death. The University of Pretoria was, fortunately, granted permission to publish some of the drawings (Nel 1990 :124). One sheet shows a clay pot with a double series of decorative triangles on the shoulder. The drawing is overlaid with a grid and along the outer edges the artist tried out variations of the triangular motifs that one finds in his designs for bookcovers such as "Wilgerboombogies".

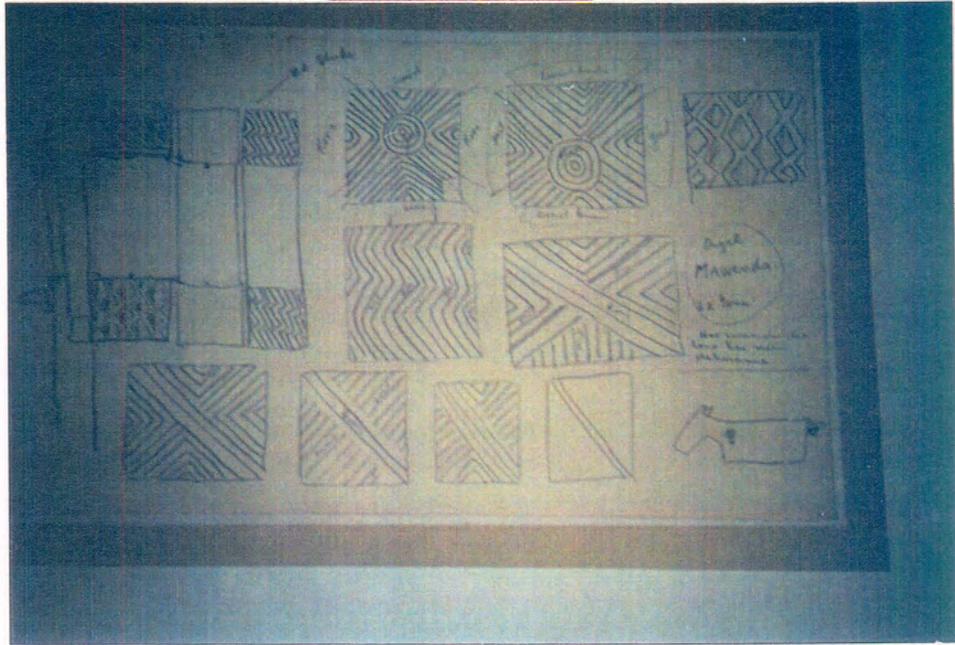


*Cat. 21 Still Life with Pumpkins*

This design (Cat. No.252) which has been clearly signed and dated above the depiction of the willow tree has a simple border and cross section of triangles. The other two examples of such decoration referred to above, are the design "Boer op Perd" where the circular central image has corners filled in with the familiar triangles. They also occur in the design for "Die Brandwag \_ Dubbel Nommer, 10 Desember 1916". In both cases they are Pierneef's triangular adaptation of the Greek meander design which he accompanies with a dot or small dash.

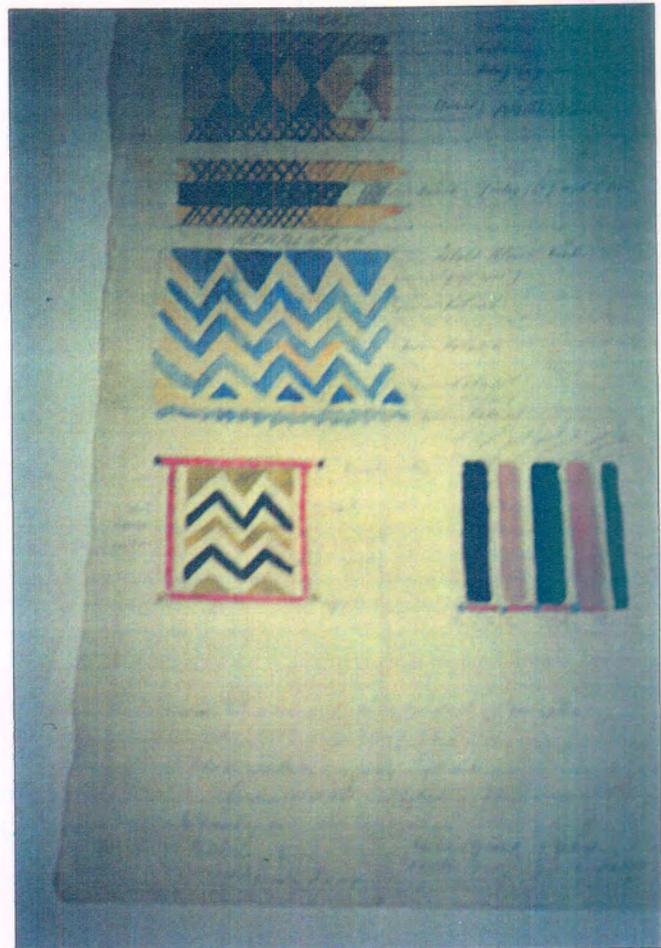
A design which is, unfortunately, not in the Pretoria Art Museum's collection (Nilant 1974 :173) has the familiar design as a border but is a fascinating small document recording the collaboration of three close friends. The play "'n Esau, Bosveld-drama in 4 Tonele" was written by Pierneef's good friend J.F.W. Grosskopf and the drawings supplied by J.H. Pierneef and E. Mayer. Pierneef's involvement with the theatre is illustrated and also the fact that he was , at this stage in 1920, working with Mayer. Their friendship seems to have cooled somewhat after Pierneef's divorce from Agatha Delen and his marriage to Mae Schoep. Anton Hendricks would later confess that he was not aware of any particular friendship between the two men.

The embargo on the publication of the wealth of material in the National Archive is particularly unhappy as it would be invaluable in placing Pierneef where he deserves to be, the first artist to recognise the unique riches of the indigenous arts of Southern Africa. The few examples that were permitted to be



Phot. Sheet of designs - Orgel Mawenda T.C.A.D.

Fig. 6



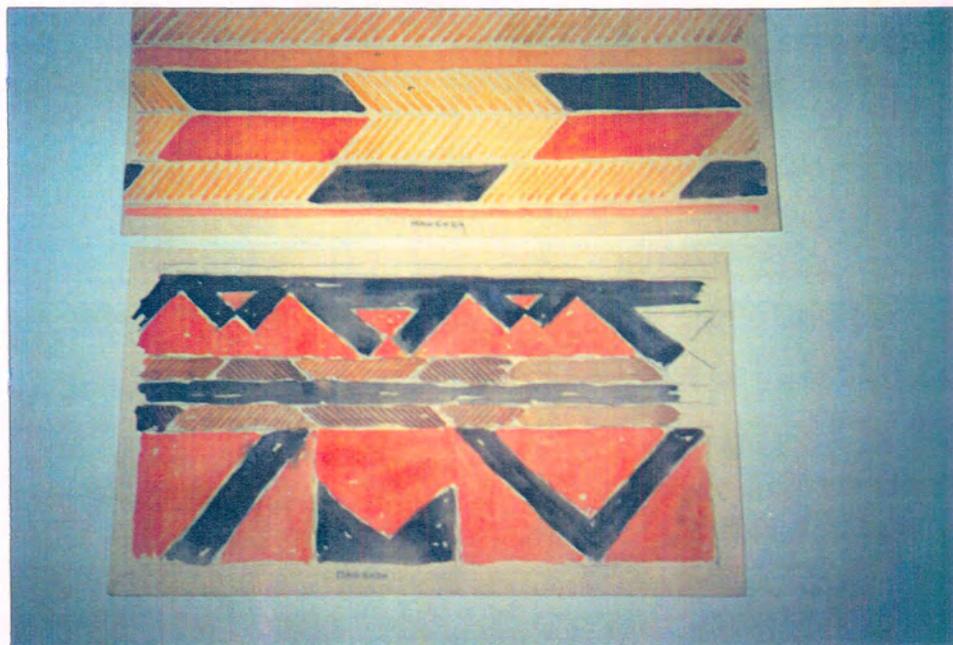
Phot. Sheet of designs T.C.A.D

Fig. 7



*Phot. Sheet designs - Mawenda T.C.A.D.*

*Fig. 8*



*Phot. Sheet designs - Mawenda T.C.A.D.*

*Fig. 9*



*Fig.10 The Martindale (Martienshoek) painting of an eland and bird as it appears on the rock face*



*Cat.85 Eland and Bird, gouache - Pretoria Art Museum collection*

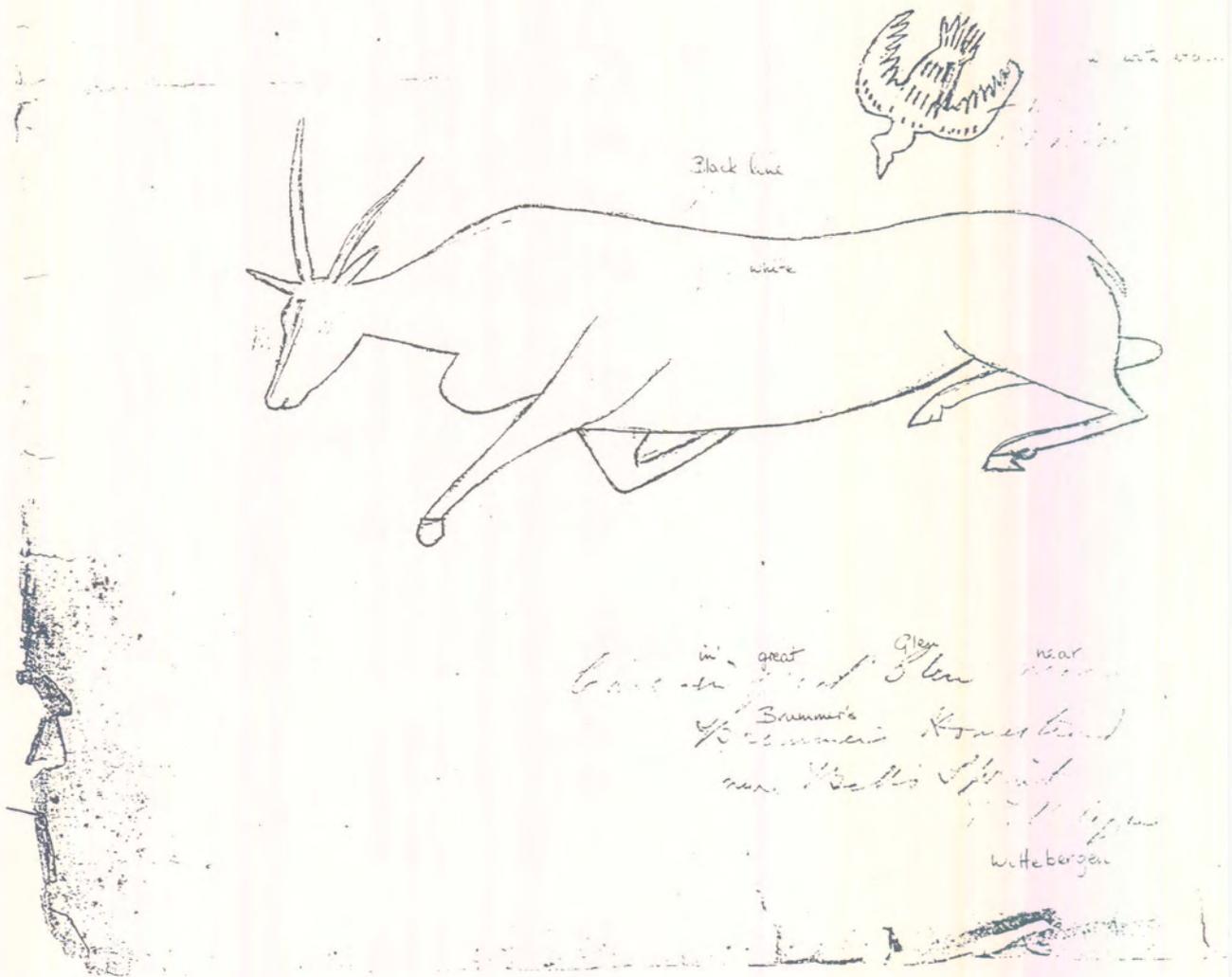


Fig.11 The Martindale eland and bird as copied by Stow. Reduced photocopy of the Stow drawing



Fig.12a Drawing no. 2079 T.C.A.D. Pierneef File

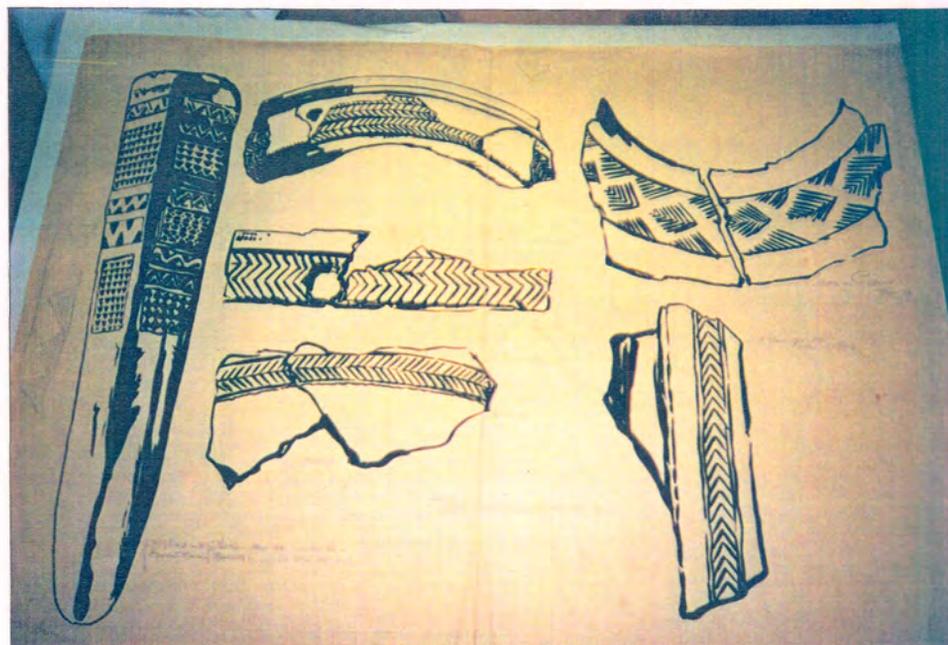


Fig.12b Drawing no. 2079 T.C.A.D. Pierneef File

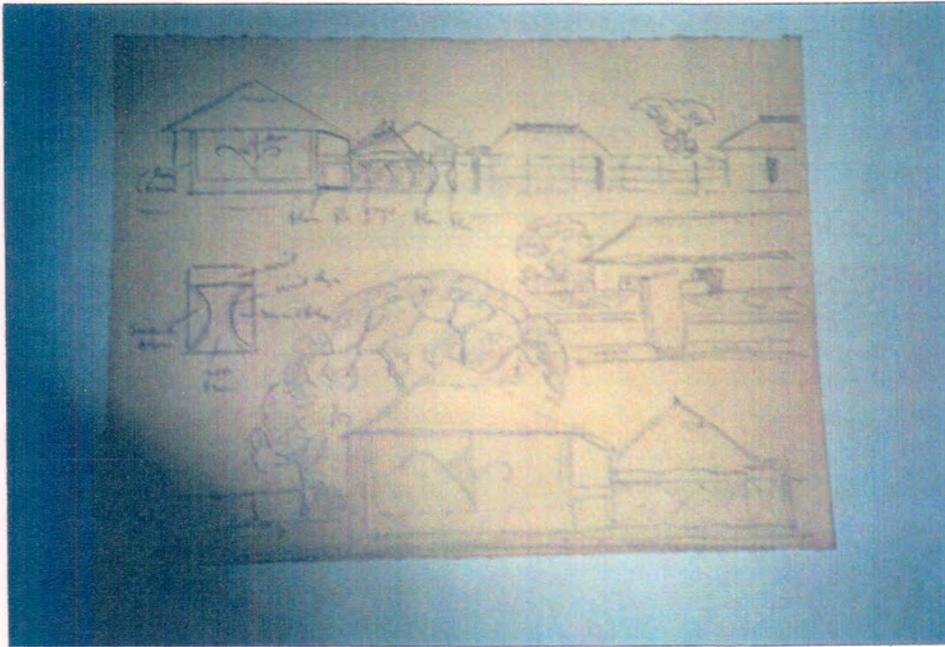


Fig.13 Enkeldoring - pencil drawing - Pretoria distr. Bosveld  
N. T. - NO. 2607 T.C.A.D.

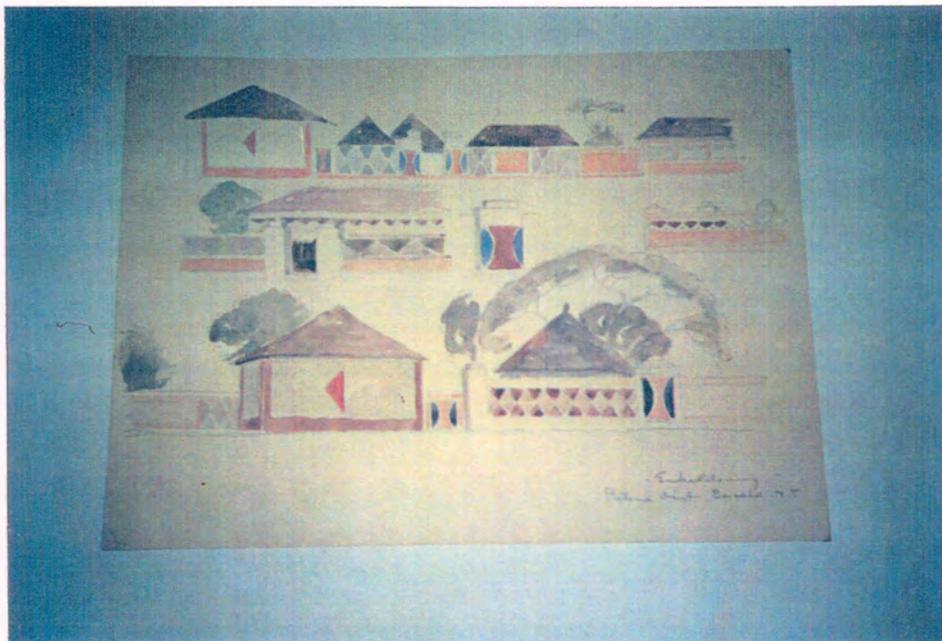


Fig.14 Watercolour of Fig.13 - T.C.A.D. NO. 2062

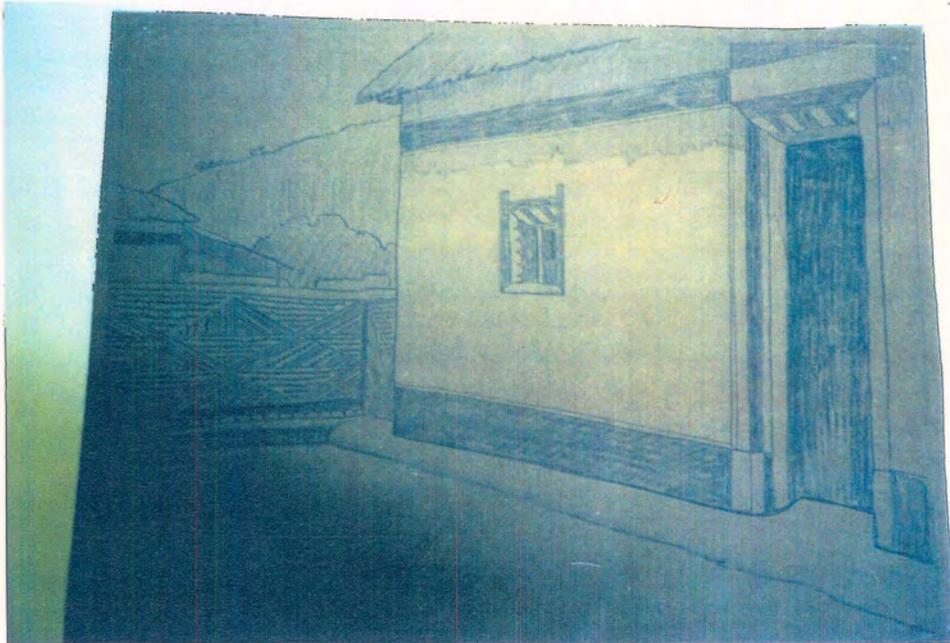
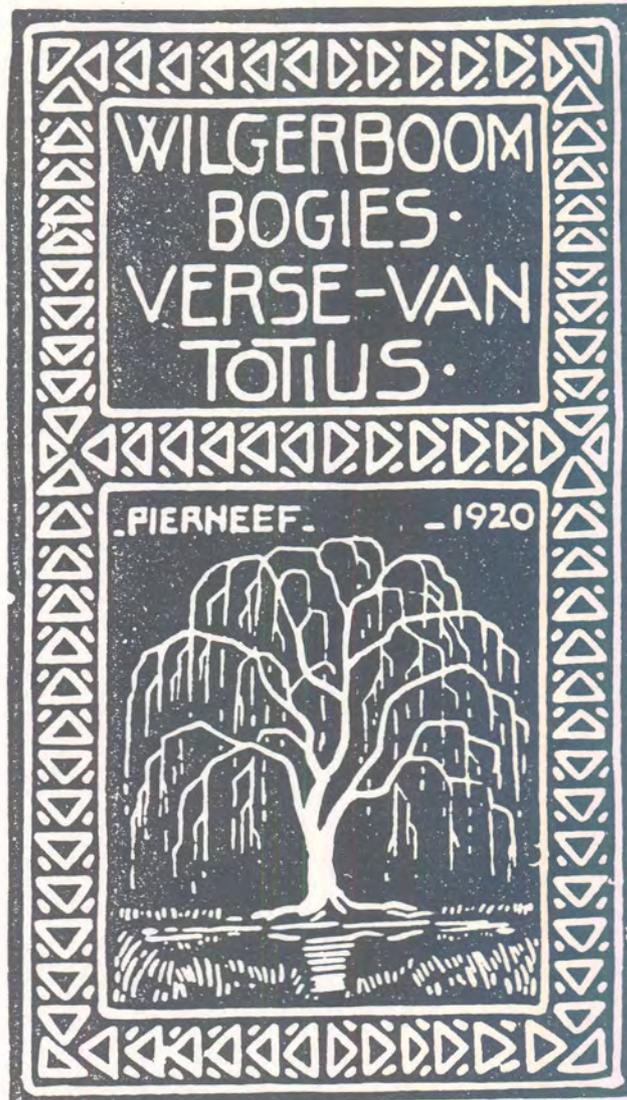


Fig.15 "Wonderboompoort" - charcoal drawing no. 2072 T.C.A.D.



Fig.16 Bushman drawing from "Eldorado of the Ancients" T.C.A.D.



WILGERBOOMBOGIES, VERSE VAN  
TOTIUS

*Cat. 252*



'N ESAU, BOSVELD DRAMA IN 4  
TONELE DEUR J.F.W. GROSSKOPF

*Fig.17*

published by the Univ. of Pretoria (Nel 1990 :124 - 125) have been incorporated most effectively in educational material on the artist by the William Humphreys Museum, Kimberley.<sup>7</sup> Pierneef's study of Bushman painting is here described as having a two-dimensional quality. This is well explained together with his debt to rock art by H.M. van der Westhuysen.

Among the many writers who discussed Pierneef and the art of the Bushman, is the carefully observed and penetratingly analysed contribution of Professor H.M. van der Westhuysen (1951 :87,89). It is worth quoting at length. After commenting on the growing scientific attention devoted to the study of the original roots and inspiration that formed South African culture, van der Westhuysen refers to the South African indigenous and also to the Dutch heritage which is not of concern here. He then refers to Pierneef as follows :

"Uit sy eerstehandse kennis van die Afrikaanse landskap self het hy in die inboorlingkunste die essensiële lyne van die landstopografie, die rustige horisontale, die kort en sterk vertikale, die boog van die oop lug bo en die driehoek van die spits koppe teruggevind.

Dit het sterk aangepas by sy eie siening van ons landskap en ook by sy uitgesproke sin vir liniêre ritme. Bowendien het hulle gebruik van tipiese aardkleure sy smaak vir die dekoratiewe element in ons landskap versterk... Beide in die Boesman-en Bantoeekuns word 'n mens getref deur 'n vorm van

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<sup>7</sup> Pierneef Worksheet, p6

vlakskildering. Ons het te doen met plat vlakke waarin afskaduwing van kleur en rondende kleurmodellering feitlik totaal ontbreek. Die verskillende kleure le in verskillende vlakke langs mekaar, elk op sy eie vlak aangebring. In die Suid-Afrikaanse natuur kry aparte voorwerpe onder ons skerp sonlig 'n plat-vlak karakter; van naby staan dit , visueel benader, enigsins silhoeetagtig teen die agtergrond, en ver op die agtergrond word dit yl, plat skywe... In Pierneef se skilderwerk, selfs voor 1925, word hierdie tipies landskaptrek ten duidelikste illustreer."

The artist's centenary was celebrated in 1986 and an article on his birth date featured a small picture of Adam and Eve in Paradise (Die Transvaler 1986 :p12). Under a spreading tree with the typical umbrella shape that has almost become the artist's signature stand a male and female figure. They are Bushmen and are accompanied by African creatures, a crane and a baboon. Eve is handing Adam what seems to be a flower spray. Unfortunately this painting in Marita Pierneef's collection is undated in the article. It deserves to be acknowledged as proof of Pierneef's early debt to Bushman art along with Battiss's "Early Men" which dates to 1938 (Schoonraad 1958 :44).

Pierneef was known for his study of Bushman art to his contemporaries. P.Bruchhausen (1921 Letter, T.C.A.D.) wrote to him from the office of the Administrator in Windhoek to suggest a meeting with his friend Maack whom he recommends as a Bushman

enthusiast.<sup>8</sup>

Dora and Gordon Price were great supporters of the artist. It was Dora Price who arranged for him to have an exhibition in their home in Pretoria before he and his new wife went overseas in 1924 and Gordon Price wrote them a letter of recommendation to friends in London in which he stated that "Mr. Pierneef is a recognised authority on Bushman art" and calls him "South Africa's leading artist" (Letter 30 June 1925 T.C.A.D.).

Pierneef completed the murals for the Ficksburg school hall in 1922 and it would be all of six years later that he would once more be able to tackle a like project in the Johannesburg Station panels. The school hall was a simple rectangular structure but the eight panels were subjected to a formal architectural and design discipline. A frieze runs along the top of the wall between the higher windows and the vertical panels below have an internal rhythm which is based on the circle while each panel is rounded off at the top by two flying bird forms.

Pierneef had, through his studies, become aware of the particular significance of the eland to the Bushman and wrote on this in lecture notes on Afrikaans art: "The eland is a recurrent theme in Bushman art. This is because the eland takes the place of a God (Cagn)" (Pretorius 1990 :92). He even, in writing to his

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<sup>8</sup> Reinhart Maack was a surveyor and well-known rock art researcher who discovered the so-called White Lady of the Brandberg in what is still known as Maack's shelter in 1917. Bruchhausen was responsible for the English translation of Maack's book on the Bushmen.



friend T.M. Steele equated the eland with the hereafter which he referred to as " the house of the eland".

The eland carved on the door to his home by his friend Coert Steynberg was inspired by one of the most beautiful rock art images of this animal from Burleigh in the eastern Cape. It is a happy chance that has this animal as the subject in the one small rock art copy in the collection of the Pretoria Art Museum.

## CHAPTER 4

### Pierneef Works in the Pretoria Art Museum Collection

The years up to 1925 and Pierneef's longed-for visit to Europe were certainly not as empty as implied by the radio programme of 1964. As demonstrated in the previous chapters there was a great deal of artistic development taking place.

There are very few paintings in the Pretoria Art Museum Collection from the years immediately before the European visit. There is one casein work, "The Green Veld", (Cat. no. 79) which is dated 1923. Another casein work, "Willows at Apies River" (Cat. no. 81) is undated, but could be from the same period, while a dated work such as "Mountain in Level Landscape" (Cat. no. 82) is dated 1926 and could, therefore, have been executed after the return from Europe. All these works show the artist working with colour in a very difficult medium where the execution had to be fast and sure. In "Willows at Apies River" (Cat. no. 81) the treatment is definitely impressionistic. The paint has been applied in short dabs of colour and the entire sky that is visible between the hanging fronds of the willow branches is composed of tiny pink and yellow dots. They impart the shimmer of a hot and light-filled sky. The same technique has been used in "Mountain in Level Landscape" (Cat. no. 82). This impressionistic technique was attempted in oil paint with somewhat less success. As discussed later in this chapter this technique reminds one of Mondrian (1872 - 1944) and other artists



*Cat.81 Willows - at Apies River*



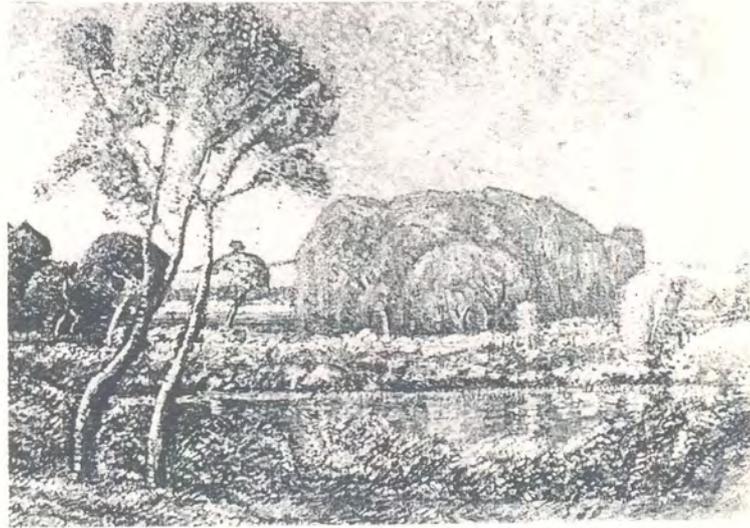
*Cat.82 Mountain in Level Landscape*

of the period.

The two earliest oil paintings in the Art Museum collection are both dated 1913 and are indicative of the artist's earliest painting style which, as has already earlier been stated in this study, owed much to the influence of Frans Oerder who was Pierneef's painting teacher before his return to Holland in 1908. The first is "Landscape with Hill" (Cat. no. 9). The landscape is brown, its forms laid down in sweeping brush strokes while the sky with its silvery tones, is also rendered in textural brushwork. The other painting dated 1913 is "Bank Lane after a Hailstorm" (Cat. no. 3) which entered the museum collection in 1957. There is a drawing in the collection of the Museum Africa (formerly the Africana Museum) which is dated to 1910, where the artist was looking down from a balcony in Pretorius street so that he was looking into Bank street which debouched on the north-eastern corner of Church Square. This same familiar view was the subject of his 1913 painting which was painted after one of Pretoria's violent hailstorms. The silvery-grey tonalities convey an impressionistic image of a cold wintery scene.

The 1918 "Still Life with Pumpkins" (Cat. no. 21) has already been discussed.

There is one oil painting that is dated 1925 and could have been painted just before Pierneef and his new wife left for Europe in July of that year. This is "The Peaks, seen from Lanzerac, Stellenbosch" (Cat. no. 13).



*Cat. 15 Rooiplaat*



*Cat. 19 Kraal, Derdepoort*

The oil painting "Rooiplaat" (Cat. no. 15) is dated 1927 and is one of Pierneef's most delicate impressionistic works in the medium. Small strokes, dashes and dots of fresh, light colour pink, green, blue, white and mauve define trees, vegetation and water. The parallel that runs about a third of the way up beneath the willow trees has been smeared in in a thick creamy line. This kind of textural handling of paint is not seen in the later Pierneef. The approach in "Mountains Derdepoort" (Cat.no. 19) is much darker although only painted two years later. It is a much larger painting and there are no strong parallel lines. The lines of the landscape dip and curve in a fashion reminiscent of Art Nouveau. The colour is a dark reddish purple and the short brush marks, especially in the sky are in Pierneef's "kolletjies tegniek" in which he had been experimenting as early as 1917 (Letter to Mayer: Univ. of Pret. Art Arch.).

These paintings are quite different in their handling of paint and in their whole approach to a painting which is dated 1924 and which was painted on the journey to Europe. This is "Harbour Scene, Port Sudan" (Cat.no.16). Here Pierneef was painting in an assured fashion with the sweeping brush strokes of an earlier style which owed much to Oerder. It is a spontaneous, colourful work. There is a high horizon line and on a line below it, slightly higher than halfway is a line of red-roofed harbour buildings with ships moored in the curve of a bay. Almost at the exact centre is a large ship with funnel and masts. The blue curve of the sea in the harbour is balanced by the golden land mass in the foreground. A darker shape of cast shadow reaching



*Cat.1 Mountains near Derdepoort*



*Cat.16 Harbour Scene, Port Sudan*

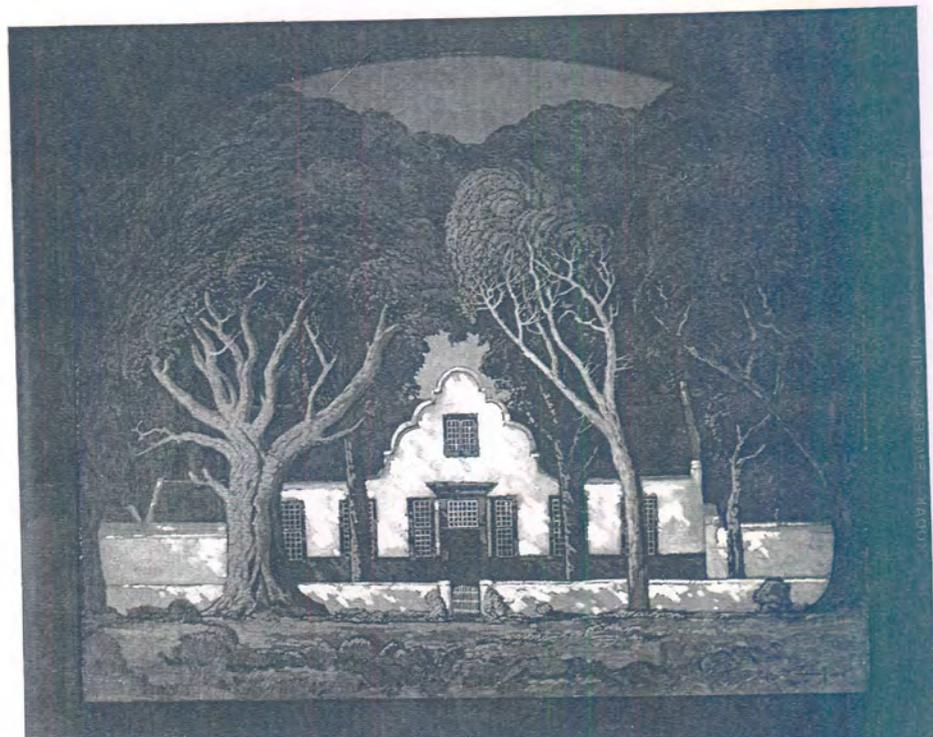
from the right foreground edges into it to about halfway across the canvas. A small building left of the centre foreground seems to have been placed with deliberation. The colours are light and bright. It is a happy picture.

Two paintings with Cape themes, the already mentioned "The Peaks seen from Lanzerac" (Cat. no. 20) and "Vergelegen and Somerset West, Hottentots Holland" (Cat. no. 13), the first painted in 1925 and the other in 1928, are painted in thick, short brush strokes in a naturalistic fashion with overtones of impressionism. The pink hues dominate in "The Peaks seen from Lanzerac", the composition is carefully balanced. A line of farm buildings lie on a horizontal line at about a quarter way up from the bottom. The gabled house at the centre is not quite foursquare on, but still establishes the central focal point on which the lines of the vineyard in the foreground converge. A rounded hill, centrally placed, leads the eye upwards to the peaks. Their bulk is balanced by clouds to the right and below them, occupying the middle level, by the dark bulk of tall trees. A dark shadow at the righthand bottom corner is balanced by a shadow at centre left. The very shallow curve of the foreground reminds one that Pierneef knew about repoussoir.

The other painting "Vergelegen and Somerset West, Hottentots Holland" is not quite as graceful in its solutions. It is far more rigid and formal with the heavy forms of dark trees dominating foreground and background. The white-gabled house is placed centrally forming a triangle while sidewalls and stoep



*Cat.13 The Peaks seen from Lanzerac*



*Cat.20 Vergelegen and Somerset West*



*Cat.5 The Soutpansberg*



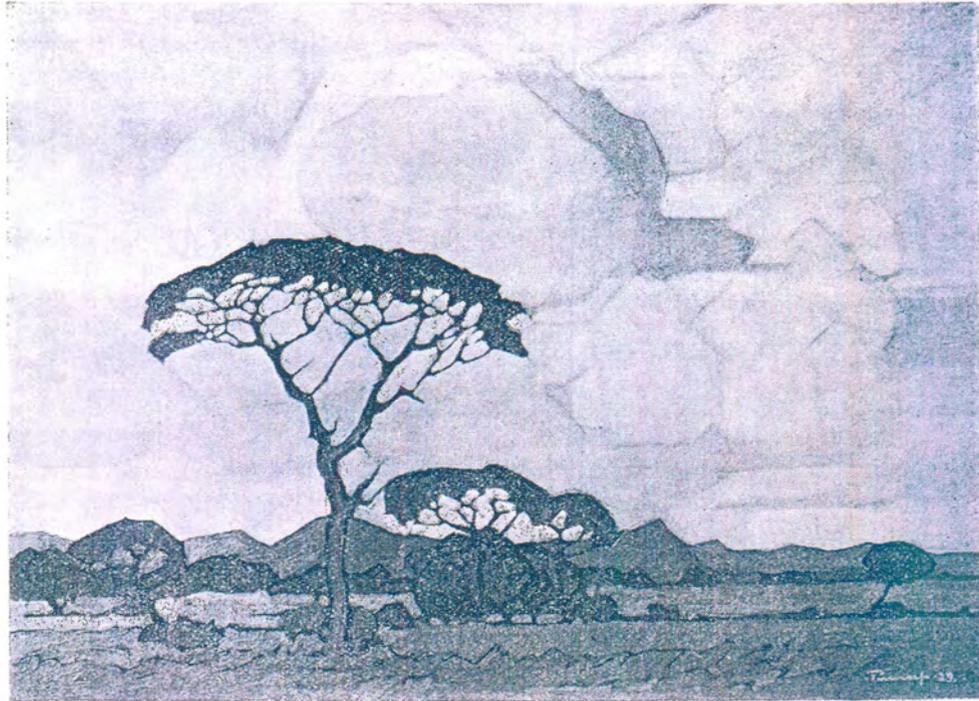
*Cat.6 Gorge between Two Ridges*

establish a strong horizontal along the lower quarter of the painting. The theme had been used for a design for the front cover of "Die Brandwag" of March 1918 where the simplification of the same elements worked well as a decorative solution.

"The Kraal, Derdepoort" (Cat. no. 19) presents a tranquil scene of African houses in a wide expanse of Transvaal landscape edged at a great distance by mountains and was painted in much lighter golden colours. Pierneef was undoubtedly more at home here in the Transvaal landscape, especially with a scene such as this one near Pretoria. His Cape scenes do not have the same deeply felt quality, they seem much more cerebral. From a slightly darker foreground the scene recedes in a series of parallels that imply a wide flat landscape. It is dated 1929 so that it falls only slightly later in the same period, the late twenties, as the two previously discussed Cape paintings. In this group of three it is, perhaps, the most successful.

In 1929 Pierneef received the commission for a series of landscape murals for the new Johannesburg station (Nel ed. 1990 :77). He could embark on a project dear to his heart, painting the South African landscape but also subjecting it to the formal discipline required by the architectural setting in which it had to be placed. These were not new concerns, he had been thinking about them for many years.

One small painting in the PAM collection, "The Soutpansberg" (Cat. no. 5) is a very important document, as it seems to bring together some of the influences and ideas that would be fully



*Fig.18 Bosveld (Nuwe Brandwag)*



*Fig.19 Photograph "Uit die Bosveld"  
(Schweickerdt Family Collection)*

realised in the station panels. The work is undated. The Pretoria Art Museum acquired it at a Sotheby's auction in 1975. If it is compared to another very similar work in the Schweickerdt family collection, a date of around 1929 may be conjectured.<sup>1</sup> The painting, which, according to an inscription on the back, should more correctly be entitled "Uit die Bosveld", was fully discussed by Anton Hendriks in "Die Nuwe Brandwag" (1929 :62 to 63). It was illustrated as "afbeelding 4". (See Figs. 18 and 19) Although there were signs of geometry in the composition, it was also more naturalistic than the "Study in Blue" which was on display in the same exhibition, and was far more rigidly geometrical, an approach which the public of the day could not accept.

"The Soutpansberg" (Cat. no. 5) is worth studying for the three different approaches which occur in it. The first of these is repoussoir, whereby a darker foreground sometimes continues up the sides. In this case the dark shapes of trees help to form a frame for the landscape seen in the background. This is calculated to lend a sense of distance to the view. The landscape reaches to the distant mountains which start fragmenting into

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<sup>1</sup> This painting was displayed as part of the Schweickerdt collection in the 1986 centenary exhibition held in the Schweickerdt Art Gallery. It was item 75, listed as "Thorntree Northern Transvaal", signed and dated 1923 in the catalogue. The use of imprimatura and repoussoir, as well as the geometric handling of the cloud formations and the laden brushstrokes in a muted pinky grey were strikingly similar to "The Soutpansberg" in the museum collection. The date 1923 was found unlikely on close examination of the painting itself. The owner and I could agree that 1929 was more likely. This conclusion is borne out by the discussion of this painting under the title "Bosveld" by Anton Hendriks in "Die Nuwe Brandwag" of February 1929, and illustrated on page 61.

sharper jagged shapes. This geometric fragmentation is continued in the shapes of the clouds and it is very clear why this was read as a cubistic exercise by an often disapproving public. The landscape and trees were painted with the use of black outline by the device of *imprimatura* which was characteristic of Wenning's painting. In this device the dark underpainting was allowed to remain visible as an outline defining the forms of the landscape. The painting, therefore, foreshadows certain techniques that Pierneef was to use and perfect in the station panels.

The Pretoria Art Museum is fortunate in that several of the works around the station panel project are in the collection. The most important of these is probably "Amajuba" (Cat. no. 10). The subject was immediately evocative for Afrikaners, because this mountain was the scene of British defeat in what was, to Afrikaners "The first war of Freedom", otherwise known as the first Anglo-Boer War. Pierneef may have been aware of the Swiss poster in which a mountain was depicted <sup>2</sup>. This poster was laden with symbolic significance and was a widely disseminated image of Switzerland at about the same period that "Amajuba" was painted.

Statements from a Hodler catalogue from the Kunsthaus Zürich are

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<sup>2</sup> A poster of the "Zermatt/Matterhorn" produced in 1908 by Emil Cardinaux was inspired by Hodler's portraits of the mountains and is one of the most striking examples of this marriage of tourism, patriotism and popular art. The image was reproduced on the cover of cultural magazines such as "Wissen und Leben" (Baumgartner 1988 :19).

illuminating in explaining an approach to nature that could very well apply to Pierneef:

"Es geht Hodler um die Enthüllung der verborgenen Ordnung in der Natur, um die Aufdeckung der Symmetrie" (von Waldkirch 1990 :120).

Revealing the symmetry and hidden order of nature was at the heart of their art for both artists. The description of one of Hodler's paintings "Der Niesen vom Heustrich aus" (1909) could as easily apply to "Amajuba" in all the salient features. As well as being described as a pyramid, the mountain is majestic and monumental, and its simplified form towers above the region occupied by humanity. The clouds and streaks of mist contribute to the decorative effect of Jugendstil.

One almost feels that Bouman (1938 :80) was familiar with the above imagery when he came to write his description of Pierneef's "Majoeba" (sic), so closely do the descriptions tally:

"Majoeba troon soos 'n piramide in Egipte, oprysend bo ander piramides, teerder van formasie en kleur. Die weidsheid (sic) word geaksentueer deur die plaashuis met sy ry donker bome".

The exercise whereby a work of art is systematically observed and described can be exceedingly rewarding, leading to discoveries of what is really there and to a sensing of the artist's concerns at the time that the work was produced. This has already been attempted in this study as regards the way in which Pierneef recorded the buildings of early Pretoria. A warning to be taken

to heart was recently voiced by Martin Kemp (1997 :16), when he stated that:

"We have tended to lose sight of the fact that paintings were, first and foremost, 'painting type' things, and were expected to do at any time what was required of them within the accepted parameters of the genre. They may do something else for today's social historian - and that may be fair enough - but we need to recognize the status of our reading-into as essentially exploitative in relation to the functional contexts within which the works were originally articulated."

Pierneef dramatised "Amajuba", making the mountain taller than it actually is. This is very obvious when one compares the painting to photographs of the actual scene (See Fig.4). The farmhouse and trees are still there but the small group of Zulu huts have disappeared. Interestingly enough the presence of the black man as well as that of the white farmer were implied on this land. "Amajuba" bears the date 1932 and, although I had always assumed that it was preliminary to the station panel it now seems that it could have been painted after the completion of the station murals, perhaps satisfying the artist's desire to consolidate a theme. In the station panel, of course, the image was even more vertically elongated to accommodate the viewer seeing it at quite a distance from below, which would have had a foreshortening effect. The inner geometry of the station panels may also be found in the Museum's painting. The vertical and horizontal lines would all cross each other together with those

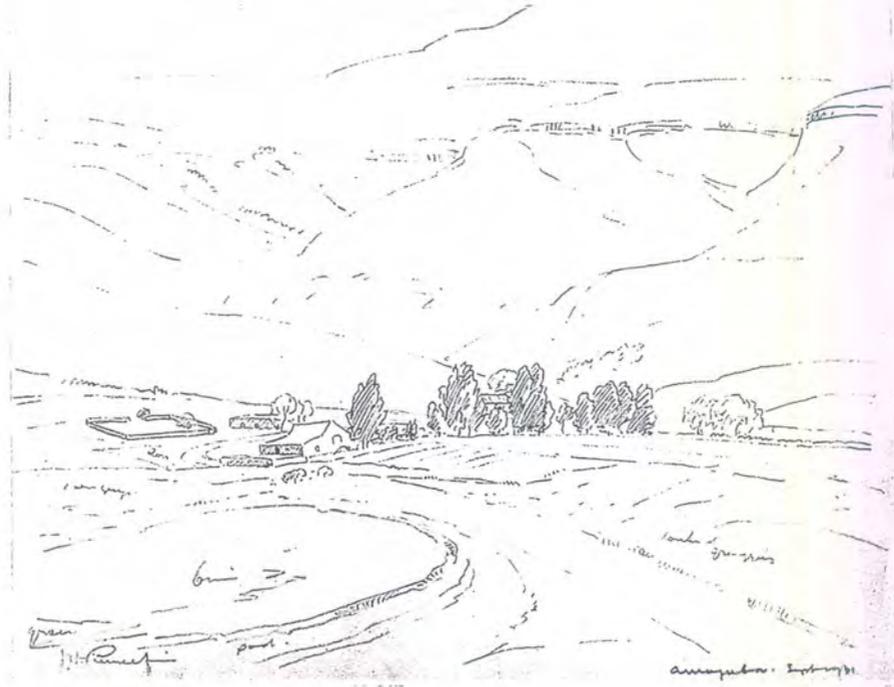


Fig.20 Pencil Sketch of Amajuba, Sept. 1931

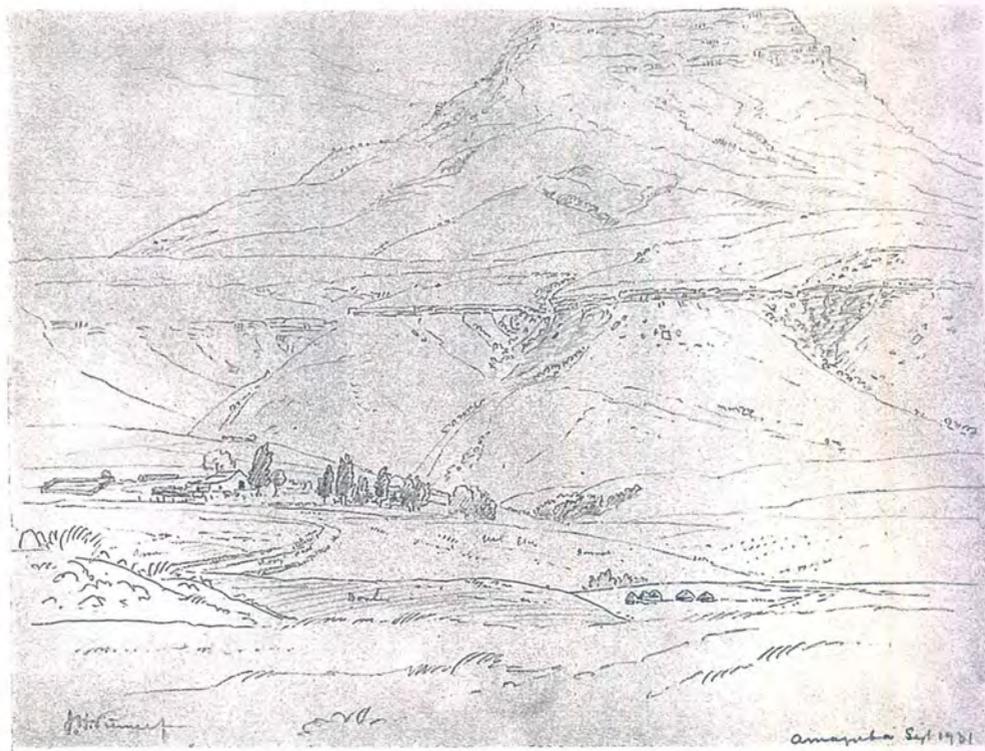
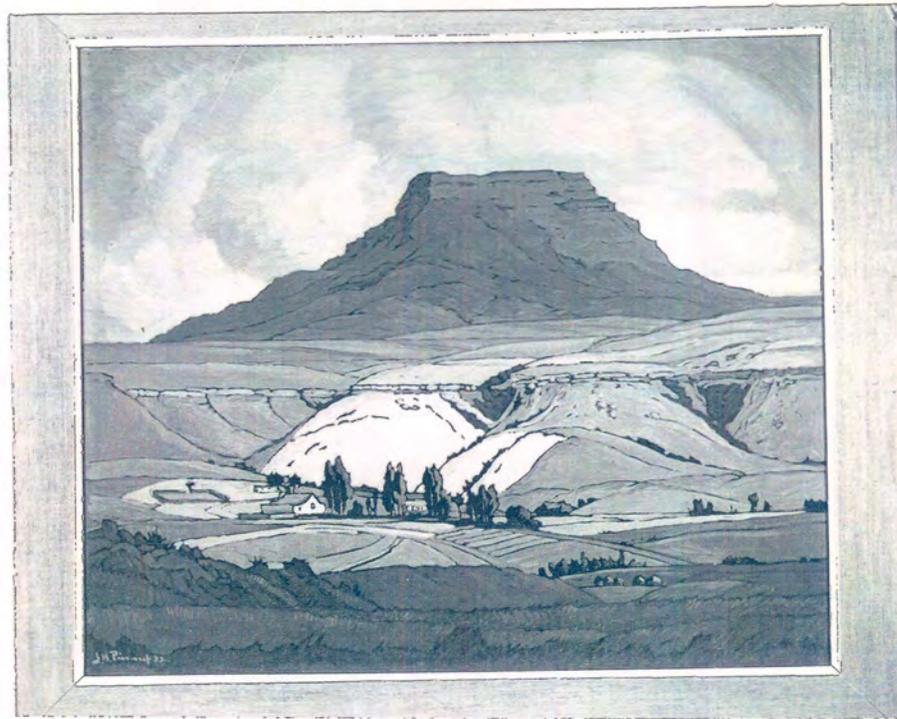


Fig.22 Pencil Sketch for Amajuba, Sept. 1931



*Cat.10 Amajuba*



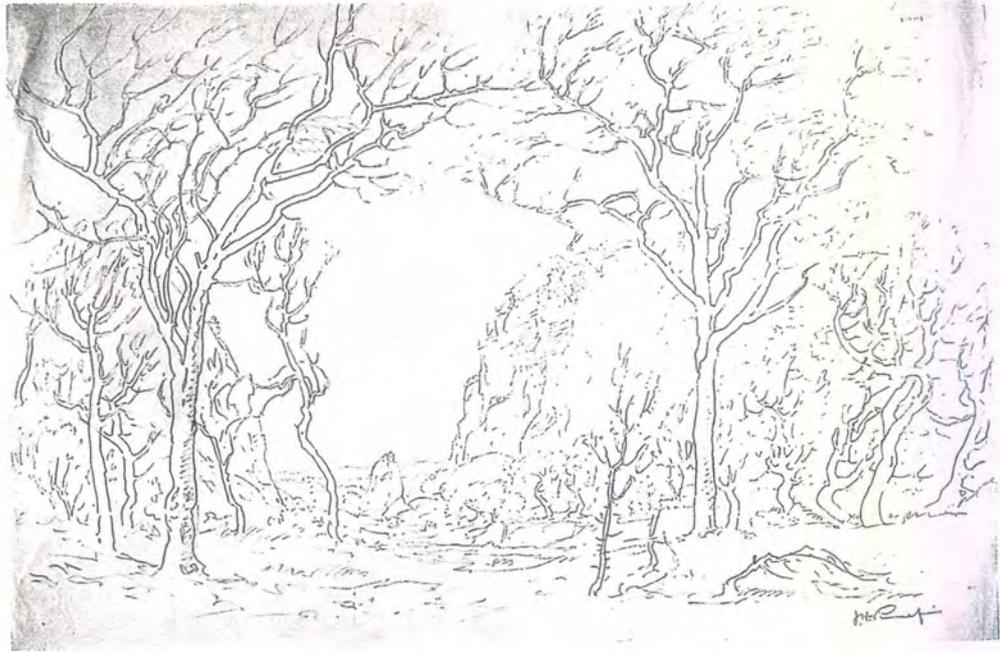
*Fig.23 Photograph of Amajuba*



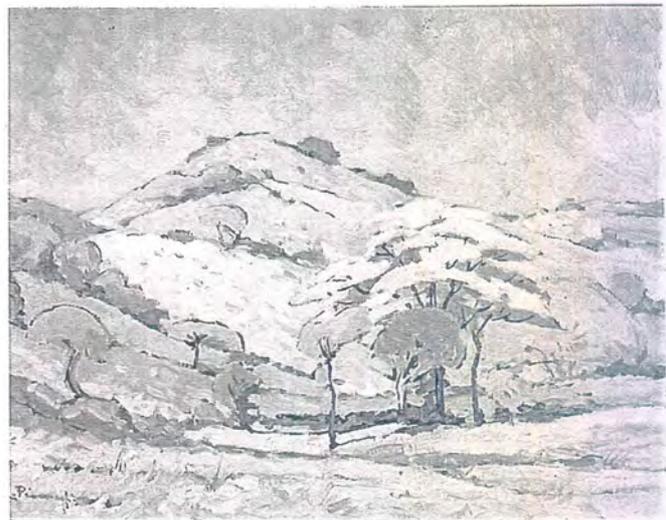
*Cat.24 Pienaarsrivier*



*Fig. 24 Sketch for "Pienaarsrivier"*



*Fig.25 Sketch for "Pienaarsrivier"*



*Cat.11 Landscape*



of the diagonals from each corner to establish a centre point. This centre point in "Amajuba" lies exactly in the small dark triangle above the light green hillside.

Pierneef did not reach his solutions easily as may be seen in sketches preserved in the T.C.A.D. and, fortunately available in photographic documentation in the Art Archive at the University of Pretoria. Some of them are signed and dated while others bear the stamp of authentication which was used by Mrs. Pierneef. The drawings were among the large volume of material left in the artist's studio after his death. Most of this material eventually came to rest in the Transvaal Central Archive Deposit after individual items were sold off by Mrs. Pierneef. As may be seen from the catalogue list, twenty-two items in the museum collection were acquired from Mrs. Pierneef at various times after the artist's death.

The two pencil sketches of "Amajuba" illustrated in this study as Fig. 20 and Fig. 22 were both executed in September 1931 as indicated in Pierneef's own handwriting at bottom right in each drawing. The signature at bottom left is, in both cases, a stamp. The first drawing shows only a section of the mountain with, below it, the farm and its outbuildings, the trees, the kraal and the large circle of what could be a threshing floor at bottom left. Indications for colour are pencilled in. The second drawing, Fig. 22, is already approaching the final concept used for the painting. The mountain is now seen in almost its entirety with the parallel line of rock defining its lower slopes. The

small kloof above the homestead lies near the centre of the composition. The evidence of man's habitation has become far more insignificant and the huts of a small Zulu kraal are part of the scene. The meticulous artist has again indicated colour, "geel groen" and "donker" may be distinguished. Thought and rethinking led to the final ordering of the landscape as painted in the station panel and in the Pretoria Art Museum's "Amajuba" which, incidentally, should be spelt as the artist did in both drawings, "Amajoeba".

"Pienaarsrivier" (Cat. no. 24) is another painting that was painted after completion of the station panels, if one takes its date of 1933 into account. Again one of the themes from a station painting is used. Here, however, there are no immediately apparent symbolic overtones. The painting has been executed in a range of dark pinkish-purple shades except for the light in the central cloud. It is as if the last rays of the sun are just catching the rocky outlines in evening light while shadows already fill the foreground. A very convincing example of repoussoir. The small glimpse of landscape and distant mountains establish a parallel line which is repeated at the lower and upper sections of the cloud formations. The underlying geometry is once more apparent and the centre of the composition lies just above the dramatically pointing central rock. The whole has been swept into a total unity by a great circle which accentuates the light-filled form of the cloud. Such a unifying, light-filled circle might, if one is so inclined, be read as a symbol of spirituality. The pointed rock at the centre could reinforce such

a reading.

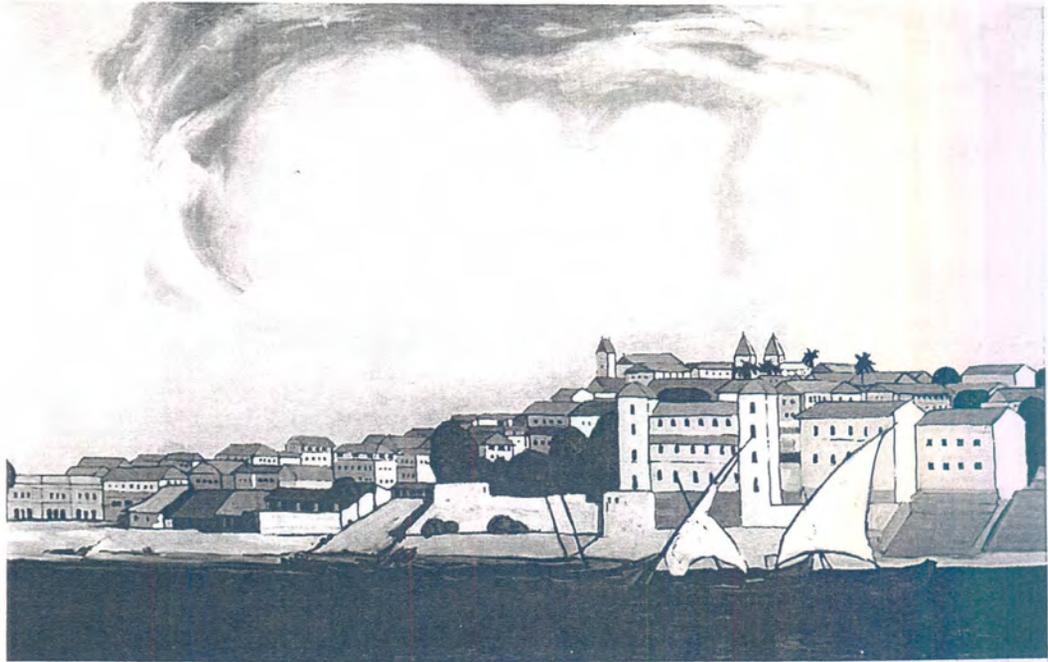
This last painting particularly provides an excellent demonstration of the criteria for mural art laid down by Bouman (1938 :55). The whole is painted in decorative rather than natural colour and the paint is thinly applied. The dark outlines and flat colour do not allow any great sense of modelling or three-dimensional form. Pierneef had, in painting the station panels, found his solutions to a monumental and decorative art form. In the best paintings, such as this one, the effect is powerful and dramatic. There was, unfortunately, a danger attached to formulaic solutions and, in some of his later work, where the inspiration was no longer as powerful, there was to be a falling-off and a failing in these very qualities where they simply became mannerism.

Fortunately, as with "Amajuba", there are two preparatory pencil sketches that may be referred to for preliminary ideas. Neither of these is dated and they both have the "J.H.Pierneef" stamp. The first, Fig.24, shows an empty foreground above which two diagonals converge slightly to the right of centre where a large tree fills the space almost to the upper edge of the drawing. To the left of the tree is a rocky landscape through which the eye passes to a lightly sketched pointed rock. Trees on the bank to the left form a frame together with the right hand tree. Through this frame the pointed rock becomes a focal point in the landscape. The second drawing, Fig. 25 seems to have evolved this idea. The foreground is simplified, the tall framing trees are

much larger, the dip between the rocky banks to either side, is water-filled and the pointed rock rises from this depression in the landscape. All the elements of the painting are there but the drama of Pierneef's final solution and the decorative reworking of all the actual landscape features has not yet taken shape.

A painting from 1930 "Gorge between two Ridges" (Cat. no. 6), deserves some attention. It falls in the period when Pierneef was still searching for a style and before he found his geometric formula for the monumental and decorative. The brush strokes are loose and spontaneous, delineating rocks and plants. The use of a fresh, sappy green is unusual and there are splashes of colour in the vegetation between the rocks. The two mountain ridges have been defined by *imprimatura*. The distant purple mountains are flat superimposed shapes and the sky is articulated in an impressionistic fashion from a very light to a darker blue and then to a mauve. The brush strokes with which this gradation is manipulated are tactile and impressionistic. The basic composition can be sensed in opposing diagonals balanced by the parallels of mountains and sky and the short yet powerful vertical of the single tree. It may be compared to "Ntabeni" in the National Gallery, Cape Town which Esmé Berman (1975 :39) described as follows:

"Pierneef projects the feeling that the structure of the landscape is the expression of a grand primordial design. He has analysed its elements in search of underlying logic and, having once perceived a formal plan, he reconstructs the scene accordingly. The individual natural features cease to



*Cat.4 Zanzibar*

be regarded as mere data of the landscape; they become units of the pictorial architecture and each contributes to the stability of the composition" (1975 :39).

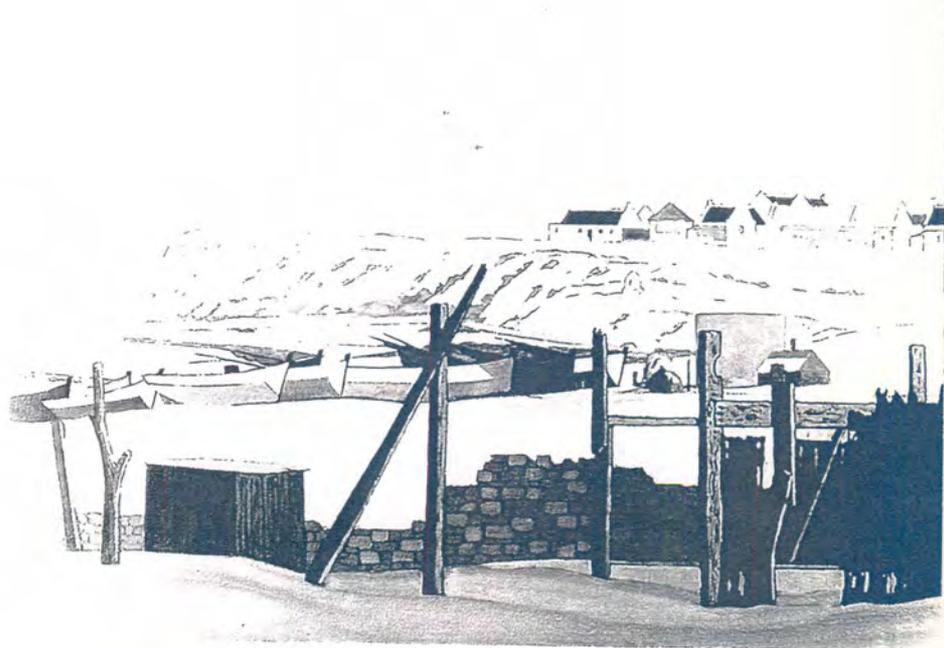
One is reminded of the fact that Pierneef would make countless drawings when working in the veld and would use these when executing his final oil painting in the studio. This has been well-illustrated in Figs. 20 to 25, further documentary photographs from the collection of the Art Archive of the University of Pretoria, and will also be demonstrated in the discussion of "The Kloof, Rustenburg".

"Zanzibar" (Cat.no. 4) is dated 1933 and is a very different East Coast painting to "Harbour Scene, Port Sudan" (Cat. no. 16) discussed earlier. It is a good example of what happened when Pierneef stiffened into a formal decorative style, there is no life or movement here.

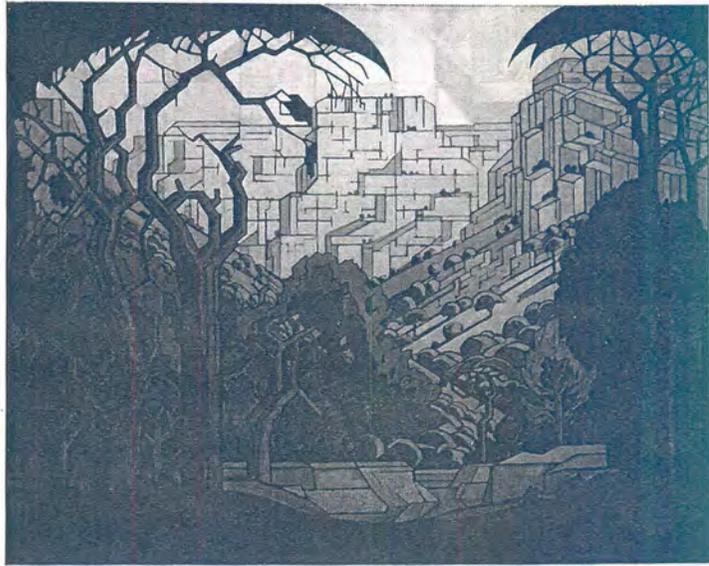
Two much later paintings, "Arniston" (Cat. no. 22) and "Zanzibar, Haunted House" (Cat. no. 23) may be compared to "Zanzibar" (Cat. no. 4). They are equally static and formulaic but, in spite of this, show how, at its best, this quiet and controlled manner of painting can succeed. The first painting, dating from the late years of the artist's life, was painted in 1948. It is a view of Arniston or Waenhuiskrans, where the ruined or temporary structures in the foreground form a kind of repoussoir for the line of fishing boats drawn up onto the beach and the headland with its sun-bleached structures reaching out across the horizon. The other, which is a scene from the East Coast, "Zanzibar,



*Cat.23 Zanzibar, Haunted House*



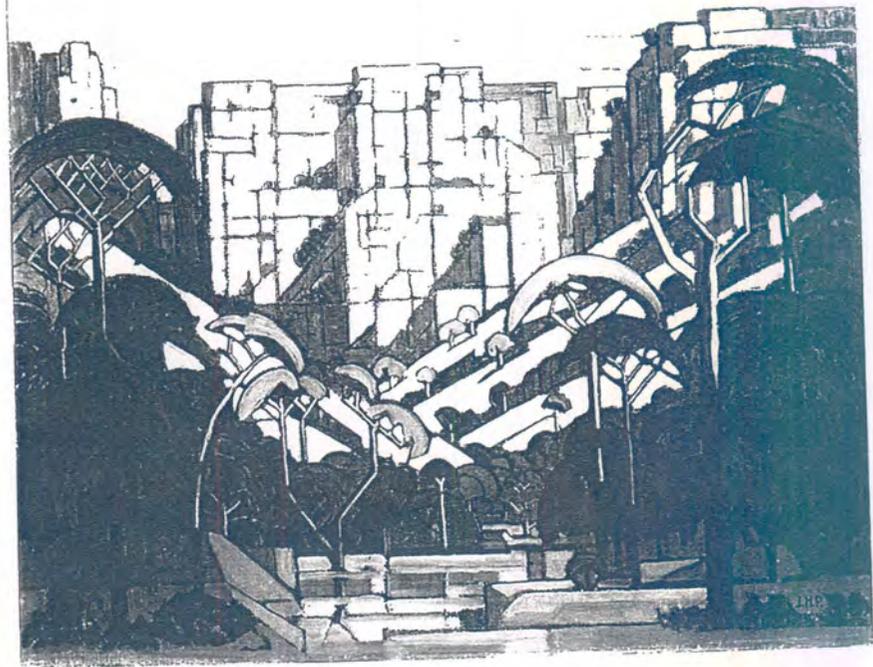
*Cat.22 Arniston*



*Cat. 18 The Kloof, Rustenburg*



*Cat. 90 Four Sketches: Studies for Oil Painting of Rustenburg Kloof*



*Fig.28 "Die Kloof, Rustenburg" bought at 1927 exhibition*



*Fig.29 "Die Kloof, Rustenburg" 1931 S.A. Transport Services*

"Haunted House" (Cat. No.23), is dated 1955. Here the rank vegetation has been simplified to line and pattern and yet conveys something of the strangling, claustrophobic atmosphere of the encroaching jungle which has already succeeded in almost totally engulfing the small building, which becomes a pathetic reminder of man's helpless presence. Both paintings show the bleak colours, thinly applied which, characterised the artist's later work, but the blonde yellow tones of "Arniston" work well for the light and atmosphere of the seaside while the light greys, mauves and shades of blue successfully convey the stillness and eerie quality of a ghostlike scene in "Zanzibar, Haunted House".

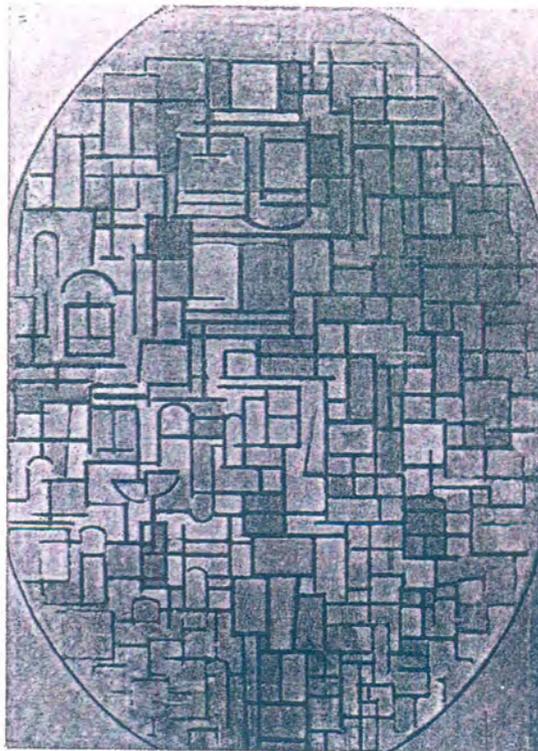
One of the most important works in the Museum collection is "The Kloof, Rustenburg" (Cat. no. 18). It is dated 1935 and must have been painted after the Pierneef family returned from London, where Pierneef had been working on panels for South Africa House.

"The Kloof, Rustenburg" is one of the jewels of the collection and seems to be the end result of the artist's involvement with a favourite subject to which he returned several times over a number of years. The pencil drawing (Cat. no. 118) in the Museum Collection is dated 1939 and was acquired from Mrs. Pierneef in 1964. The drawing presents a view of the dramatic split in the rocky and precipitous walls of the kloof and was the aspect elected for the Johannesburg station panel (Fig.29). The trees which feature in the mural do not, however, appear in the drawing. There was another view of the Kloof (Fig.28) to which

the artist returned more than once. He had painted this view before the 1927 exhibition in Bloemfontein where it was bought by Dr. Otto Krause. According to the documentation (Univ. of Pretoria Art Archive) the painting was later acquired for a private collection in Stellenbosch. (It was, in fact acquired by Dr. Anton Rupert and hangs in his office). It was painted in oils on canvas and in its rigid stylisation fits well into the period of experimentation that also produced the "Study in Blue". The rock face has the appearance of square building blocks, the diagonals of the lower mountain slopes run straight as a die and the trees have been formalised into tall umbrella shapes. As well as the drawing (Cat. no. 118), the museum is fortunate to possess four sketches (Cat. no. 90) which are, unfortunately, undated but demonstrate the manner in which Pierneef searched for a satisfying solution to a pictorial problem he had set himself. There are elements of the two paintings painted about ten years apart which are very similar. The 1927 "Rustenburg Kloof" is marked by two strong diagonals, tall trees stand vertically on either side, they form the frame for the V-shaped space in the centre which is filled by the towering rock wall. The foreground consists of flat parallels. In the Museum painting the basic composition is in many ways similar but the crossing of the two diagonals is masked by the foliage of a small leaning tree. The trees to the sides have been elongated so that their rounded umbrella shapes are cut by the upper edge of the frame. The foreground has been broken into a parallel line of rocks and water, flat faceted shapes, while the other parallels of the foreground dip into a rounded hollow. Everything remains angular



*Fig. 30 'Dune 11' by Mondrian, the Tate Gallery, London*



*Fig. 31 'Compositie' by Mondrian, Stedelijke Museum, Amsterdam*

and the colour is muted into shades of pink and brown with purplish overtones. One of the most telling differences lies in the structure of the mountain wall which fills the background.

It is in the broken play of short vertical and horizontal lines that make up the surface of the mountain, especially on the large flat expanse that lies centrally, that one is reminded of Mondrian (1872 - 1944). It was Esmé Berman (1975 :40, 41) who recognized that this kind of patterning was reminiscent of Mondrian and very like the all-over articulation into vertical and horizontal that is to be seen in a work such as "Compositie 10" (Fig.31) in the Rijksmuseum Kroller - Moller, Otterloo, Holland. Pierneef visited as many museums as he could on his visit to Europe (1925 - 1926) and Mondrian must have been an artist who intrigued him, because one finds other Mondrian echoes in some of Pierneef's work, especially where he was working in bright dashes of colour as in some of the casein paintings. Two works that may be compared to each other in this regard are, "Mountain in Level Landscape" (Cat. no.82) and Mondrian's "Dune 11" (Fig.30) in the Tate Gallery, London.

The narrow strip of sky above the mountain in "The Kloof, Rustenburg" has been faceted into flat geometric shapes in gentle opalescent colours. "Kloof, Rustenburg" has all the best qualities of the monumental and decorative that Pierneef was struggling to achieve, it is probably the end of Pierneef's long love affair with Rustenburg Kloof. Esmé Berman (1975 :41), while acknowledging that it is one of the most formal interpretations



Fig. 26 Sketch for "Die Kloof, Rustenburg" 1934

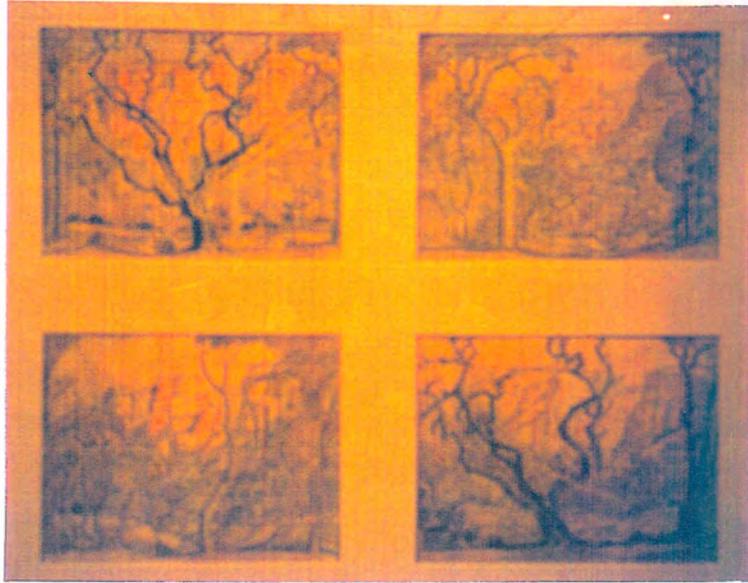


Fig. 27 Sketch "Rustenburg" 1934

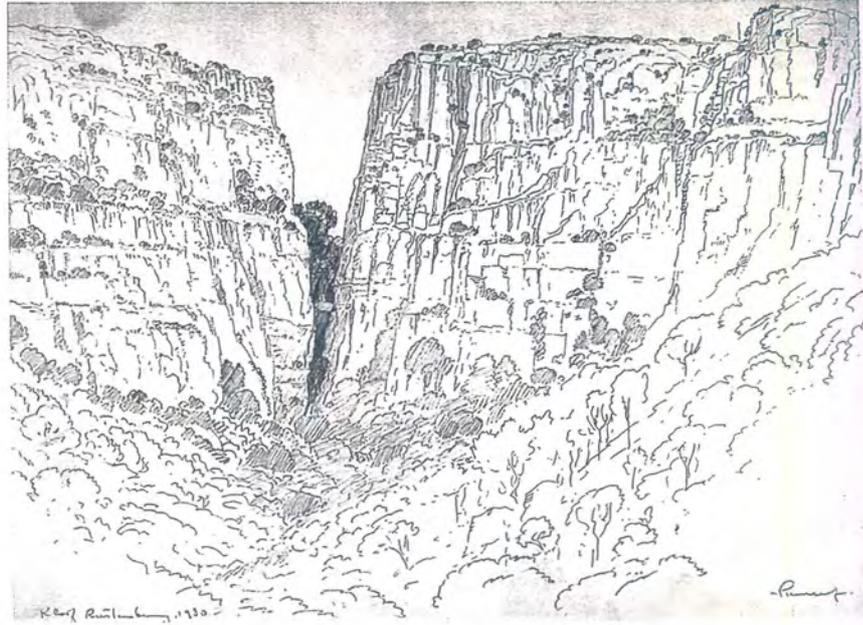


of the natural landscape achieved by Pierneef, also found that it shows signs of mannerism not present in earlier geometric compositions.

The four sketches of Rustenburg Kloof are particularly valuable as regards the insight they provide of the artist's working methods. Pierneef was obviously concerned with the problem of centrality and tried out different tree forms against the mountain backdrop. It is interesting to note the broken linear vertical and horizontal treatment of the rock face already appearing in the sketches. These are drawings, highlighted with watercolour. The pencil becomes quite heavy and black in the tree forms. When the artist found his solution, the one large tree in the left foreground was brought forward so that the trees form a frame through which the viewer's eye is led to the mountain itself. Around the selected sketch the marks of the grid which facilitated the transferral of the drawing to canvas may be discerned. The pencil drawing "Rustenburg" from 1934 (Fig. 27), is very similar to the two sketches in the lower register of the museum's "Four Sketches of Rustenburg Kloof". The clawlike V-shape of the central tree was an idea that was eventually not transferred to a painting. Another pencil sketch, also from 1934, shows many trees in the foreground to the mountain feature. In the museum drawing of four years earlier "Kloof, Rustenburg" (Cat.no.118) the trees are not as important and are simply the texture of the two diagonals which cross in the foreground and emphasise the dramatic rock formation. The acquisition of this drawing for the museum collection was well-considered as it shows



*Cat.90 Sketches, "Rustenburg Kloof" (as framed at present,  
old photograph obtained from museum a reverse image)*



*Cat. 118 Kloof, Rustenburg*



*Fig. 32 "Rustenburg" Pencil and watercolour*

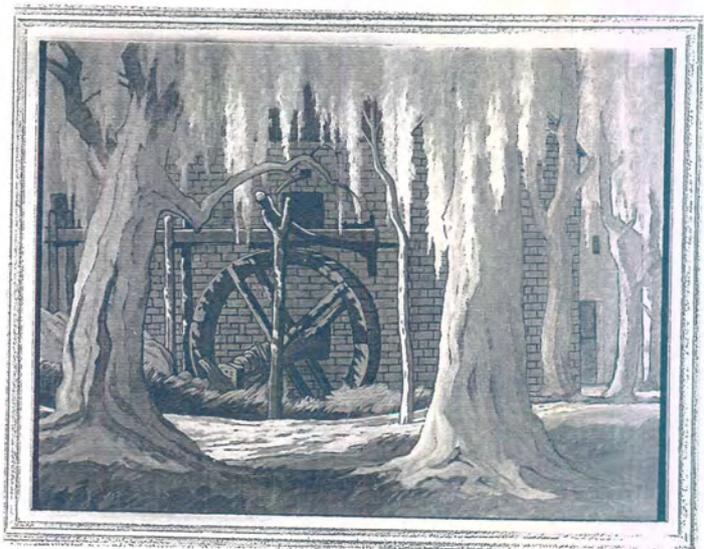
how well Pierneef could work with the natural features of a landscape and yet find compositional and geological structure.

The "Rustenburg" watercolour and pencil (Fig.32), from a private collection, is yet another presumably preparatory study of the subject which preceded the painting of the station panel as it is dated 1931. The station panels, the property of the South African Transport Services, are now housed in the Johannesburg Art Gallery. Elza Miles (1990 : 25) wrote about them recently and summarised their "one dominant theme - man and his structures are insignificant in the presence of Nature." The Pretoria Art Museum's painting is the magisterial solution to many years of an artistic search.

The small lyrical "Landscape" (Cat. no.11) with its light and delicate colouring, although well-composed, shows none of this cerebral approach and, together with the works in casein and a painting such as "Rooiplaat" (Cat. no, 15) very likely belongs to the same period as these colourful works. That would be somewhere around the late twenties. The Pretoria Art Museum does not have one of Pierneef's typical bushveld paintings in its collection. These are usually seen as the artist's most typical forms of expression and one, "Bushveld, Game Reserve" is illustrated in colour in "Art and Artists in South Africa" (Berman 1970 :opp. 192). The museum does, however, have several drawings on this subject which will be more fully discussed together with the drawings in the collection.



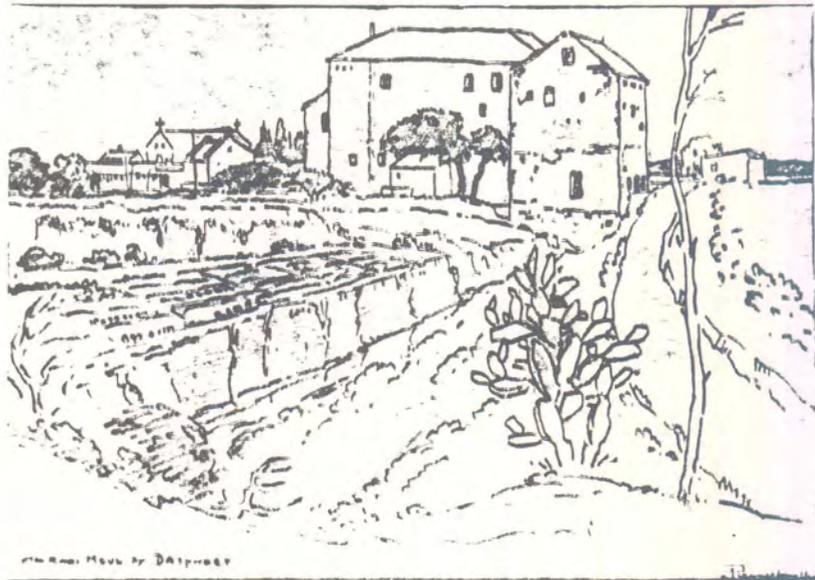
*Cat. 34 Van der Hove's Drift*



*Cat. 36 The Water Mill*



*Cat.27 Old Red Mill at Daspoort*



*Cat.53 Old Red Mill at Daspoort*

A few of the paintings executed as part of the 1948 "Old Houses of Pretoria" commission transcend the emotional gap lying between the original drawings from the period before and after 1912. "Apies River, Pretoria, Meintjieskop behind" (Cat. no. 40), has already been referred to for its romantic and nostalgic vision of this scene from Pierneef's early youth before the Union Buildings were built to dominate the slopes of the hill. Not even Engelenburg House is indicated in this scene of an early uninhabited Arcadia. "The Water Mill" (Cat. no.36), is another painting that works particularly well with the great wheel in a central position, the buildings behind half obscured by the willow trees in the foreground and the light defining the forms in the composition. Van der Hove's Drift is an area which Pierneef knew well and the painting bearing this title, (Cat. no. 34) is full of light and colour. The eroded banks of the Apies are carved into the parallel planes of the foreground where the odd bushes and trees have been simplified in the recognisable Pierneef manner while the shapes of the buildings reflect varieties of vernacular architecture with simple side gables, hipped thatched roofs and the built-out sections of "buitekamers".

"Old Red Mill at Daspoort" (Cat. no. 34) is another of these paintings which has retained the qualities of the original drawing and even dramatised them to even greater effect in the painting.

Pierneef's watercolours, except in the case of the case in paintings, may justifiably be described as watercolour drawings



*Cat.89 Landscape with Tree*



*Cat.91 Near Hartebeespoortdam*

as they are more often than not careful and meticulous drawings which have been highlighted with watercolour. This is the case with the four sketches for Rustenburg Kloof (Cat.no. 90).

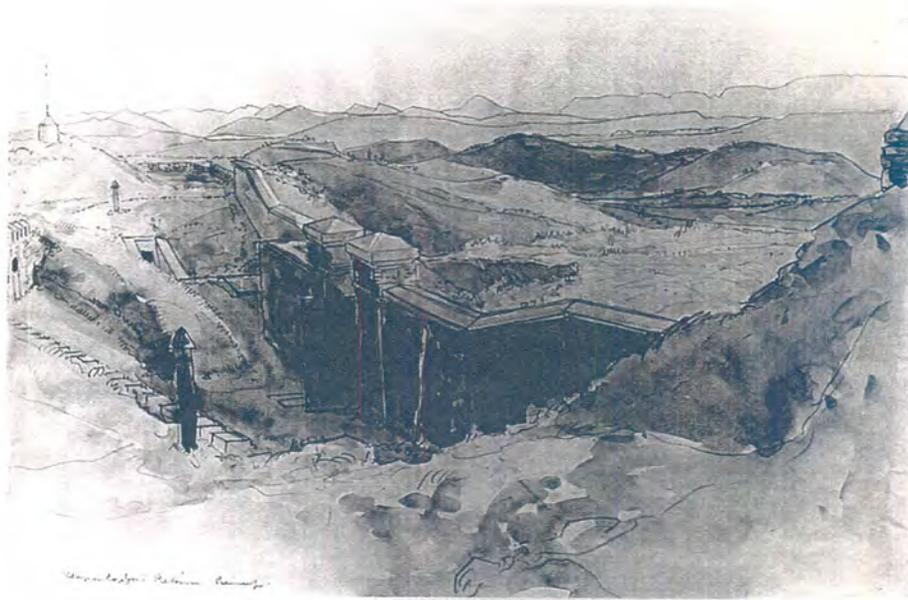
Another delightful example of this watercolour drawing in the museum collection, is "Landscape with Tree" (Cat no.89), in which a tree, half-uprooted, has fallen across a stream. It reaches diagonally across the whole format of the page. The roots and the texture of the bark have been meticulously rendered in great detail. The landscape forming the background, fills the upper half of the work while the stream with dark ridges of rock visible in the water, provides a counterbalancing diagonal movement to the slanting form of the tree. This detailed drawing where every pencil mark is plainly visible, has been completed by a light and delicate application of watercolour.

Other examples of such accomplished watercolour drawing in the museum collection are Cat. nos. 87, 94, 95, and 97. The first of these, "Klapperkopfort" (Cat .o. 87), presents a dramatic view of the wall and gateway of the fort seen from above. They form a dark focal point at the centre of a wide landscape of hills and distant vistas framed by the diagonals of the foreground.

The watercolour "Near Hartebeespoortdam" (Cat. no. 91) is the only pure watercolour by Pierneef in the museum collection. There are only a few light pencil marks visible. The scene is, almost wholly, laid in with the brush.



*Cat.97 Pretoria 1955: Preliminary Sketch  
for Centenary Painting*



*Cat. 33 Klapperkopfort*



*Phot. Pierneef sketching Pretoria - 1955*

**Fig. 34**

An important watercolour drawing (Cat. no. 97), a preliminary study for the commissioned Centenary painting of Pretoria (Cat. no. 17) was discovered fairly recently hanging in an office at Munitoria and was fortunately brought back to the museum before the fire that swept through the building on March 3rd 1997. Whether it be the smaller format or a certain freshness of approach, it is perhaps more successful than the much larger oil painting. The artist was photographed seated on the hillside, looking towards the city southwards from the north while he was working on this commission. This was the same spot from which Oerder had observed the scene for his two paintings of 1906. The artist is shown with a board laid across his knees. The paper on the board is stretched across the whole and appears to be of the same format as the watercolour work. It is tempting to believe that this might be the very painting which is now in the museum. See fig. 34.

It is, indeed, fortunate that it was discovered and removed to the museum before the fire although an Executive Committee Resolution regarding artworks in offices at Munitoria had already been accepted in May 1996. According to this resolution (16 February 1996) "the practice of the placing of works of art from the permanent collection in offices and board-rooms of top management and heads of departments/directorates" was terminated.

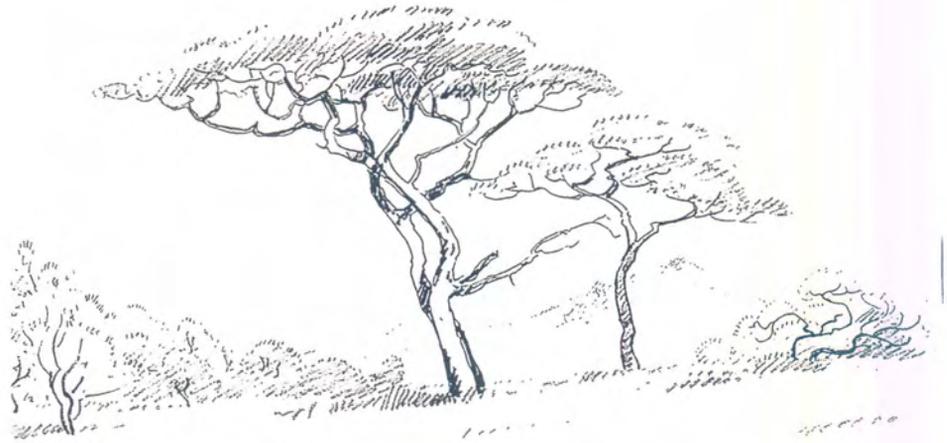
There are thirty-six drawings itemised in the Checklist (Catalogue) which forms the basis of this study.

along the lower edge. Above this a wide and far-reaching panorama stretches to the distant mountain range. One's eye moves down from a rocky rise at the right through a line of large trees diagonally defining the sloping terrain. There is small-scale human activity above the right hand level of this diagonal while at the left a small stone cairn holding a signpost is also indicative of the human presence which is so small and insignificant in the vast expanse of the landscape.

There are other complete landscape drawings in the collection such as "Malieps River" (Cat. no. 114) and the rare Cape scene of the "Langeberge" (Cat. no. 113) where the heavy line defining the edges of mountains shows the artist searching for structure in a delicately rendered naturalistic and panoramic view. This inclination to the decorative and simplified approach, the cerebral reworking of the naturalistic landscape, is well-illustrated by the large "Sketch for Decorative Panel: Landscape with Mountains" (Cat. no. 99). Once more the viewer is placed in an elevated position looking down into an extensive landscape with distant mountains and dramatic cloudy sky. The tall stylised tree silhouettes frame a landscape reduced to sharp lines that zig-zag into the distance. The white cloud shape in the background is centrally placed.

A new book on "Art Deco Style" reviewed recently (PJM 1997 :16) refers to the 'zig-zag' revolution. This simplified decorative drawing by Pierneef seems typical of this period and one is reminded that, to quote this review:

"In 1925, the Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs



Pennaf Rustenburg Tvl.  
Julius 1919

*Cat. 123 Wild Syringas (Rustenburg Tvl.)*



Arnold Rensburg

Pretoria 1920

**Cat. 109 Bushveld, Rustenburg**



**Cat. 108 Leadwood Trees, Hammanskraal**



Drakensberg vanaf Mica - Tvl. 1942

L.P. ...

**Cat. 111 The Drakensberg seen from Mica, Tvl.**



Bosveld Waterberg dist. 1942. P. ...

**Cat. 110 Bushveld, Waterberg District**

lit up the banks of the river Seine with a dramatic and ephemeral array of pavilions inspired by the Cubist paintings of Braque and Picasso, the sets and designs of the Ballet Russe and the pyramid and ziggurat forms of Egyptian and Mayan temples."

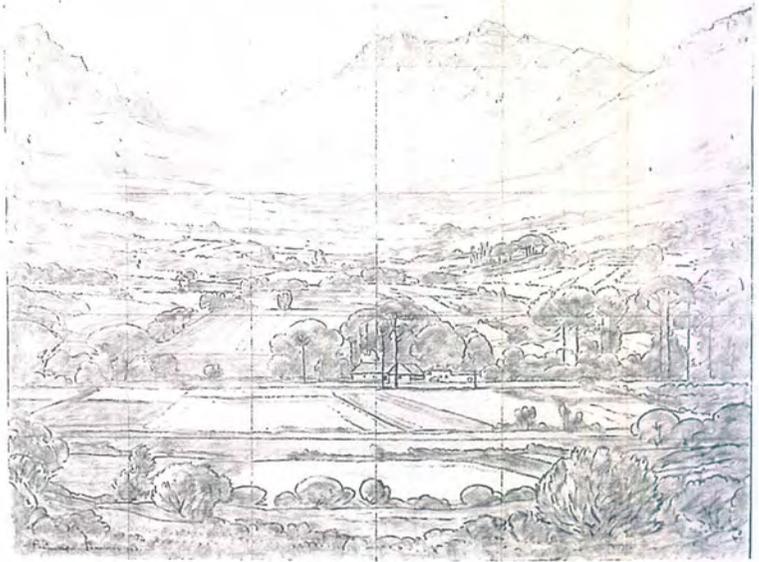
Pierneef, who was visiting Europe at this very time also travelled to Paris and it is unlikely that he would not have been aware of this great exhibition. Much of his decorative work from these years and later fit in very well with Art Deco style. There is even something in the elongated trees with their umbrella shaped tops which reminds one of the simplified tree silhouettes in the pottery of Clarice Cliff, the well-known decorator of ceramics in this period.

"Sketch for Decorative Panel" (Cat. no. 99) was, together with another large drawing, "Working Drawing: Landscape (Louis Trichardt)" (Cat. no. 98) bought from Prof. Tobie Louw in 1977. They are both important works in the collection and were safeguarded and framed for the Pierneef Centenary exhibition that was to be seen in the Pretoria Art Museum as part of the Pierneef celebrations in 1986. Both were executed in charcoal but the "Working drawing, a squarish rectangle is soft and atmospheric, altogether more naturalistic than its companion piece. It was signed at bottom left and bears the date of 1933 with the single word "Trichardt". The Pierneef family left for London where the artist was to work on Panels for South Africa House in June 1933 and it may be surmised that this drawing was made in preparation for this commission. The fact that the drawing is squared in

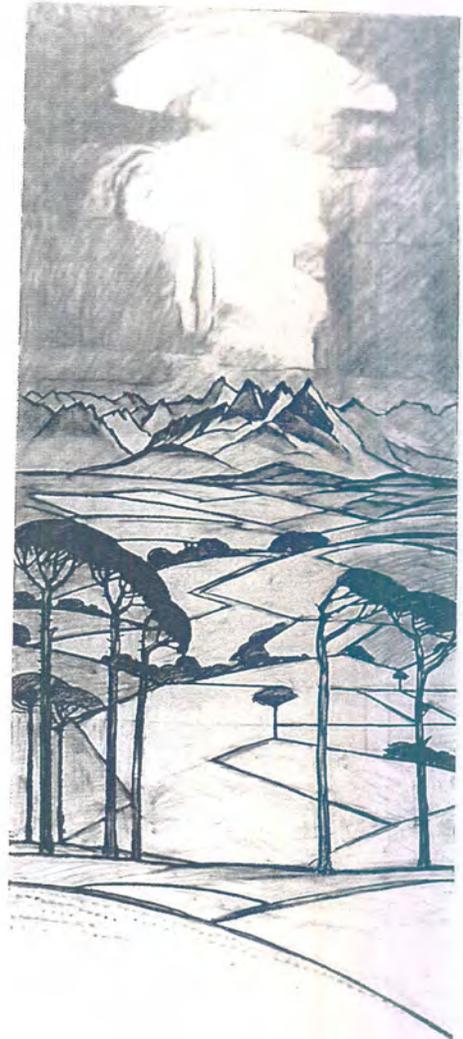
preparation for transferral to a larger surface bears this out.

The scene is remarkably detailed. Once more the viewer looks over an extensive landscape from an elevated position. The shallow, concave foreground with rocks, grass and small bushes provides Pierneef's favourite device of repoussoir. The perspectival lines of fields, farm buildings and trees lead to a central focal point which lies behind the farmhouse marked by tall trees on the central axis. The farmhouse and line of trees lie in a horizontal one third up from the bottom of the drawing. A lighter and more distant concave towards the upper third of the drawing holds the mountain range which forms a distant backdrop. This important drawing in the collection provides evidence of an artist who learnt well from the experience of painting the Johannesburg Station Panels, was at the top of his form and could reduce a landscape to an ordered composition without in any way losing the spirit of the place. The average viewer would recognise such a scene with total acceptance of its naturalism never realising how subtly the artist had ordered his material.

Among the numerous other drawings of landscape and trees such as "Huts, Bushveld" (Cat. no. 116), "Mica, Eastern Transvaal" (Cat. no. 115) and "Selatie near Leydsdorp" (Cat. no. 119) there are certain studies that show detailed attention to different plants and trees. One of these, "Aloes and Trees" (Cat. no. 120) with the date "Januarie 1939" in the lower lefthand corner, has four small landscapes with trees set out on the page. Two of them are more fully worked and have each been marked off in a frame. The two kinds of aloe in the drawing have been well-observed. One is



*Cat.98 Working Drawing: Landscape Louis Trichardt*

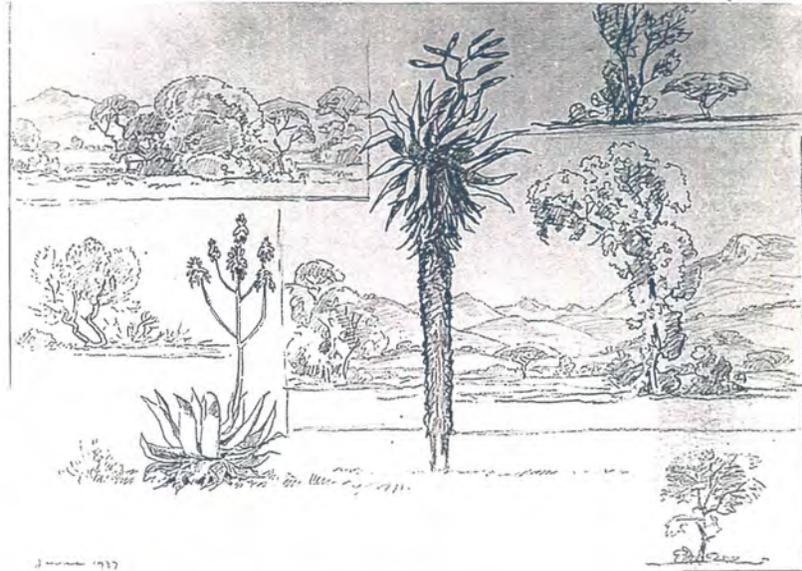


low on the ground with a tall branched flowerhead while the other is tall and stemmed like the plants one sees growing in the vicinity of Makapansgat. This could be *Aloe Marlothii*. They are similar to the two aloes on the page from a notebook (Cat. no. 125g). The previous page of this notebook (125f) shows a totally different form of aloe, much more of a compact rosette bearing a single flowerhead, perhaps *Aloe Peglerae* or the "bergaalwyn" which occurs in the Transvaal. Pierneef was to use such material for designs such as those he produced for stamps. These were not just the idea of an aloe but botanically correct and a specific aloe.

There are several sheets of tree studies where the trees are unspecified such as Cat. no. 100 and Cat. no. 105, but there are others such as Cat. nos. 106 and 107 where the trees are specified as "Wild Syringa and Boxwood" in the first drawing and "Boxwood and Syringa" in the second. Leadwood Trees have already been mentioned in Cat. no. 108. Cat. no. 121, a charcoal drawing, is a study of a "Resin Tree".

The single design of "Mountain Peaks, Jonkershoek" (Cat. no. 124) executed in black ink on stiff paper was a design for "Die Nuwe Brandwag" which may be seen incorporated in the black and white print in Cat. no. 262.

There are only six etchings in the museum collection. They may all be described as landscapes with trees, although the last two, which are identical are of a specific place, "Okahandja" (Cat. no. 138 and Cat. no. 139). The second which bears an earlier



*Cat. 120 Aloes and Trees*



*Cat. 121 Resin Tree*



*Cat. 100 Tree Studies*



*Cat. 101 Trees*

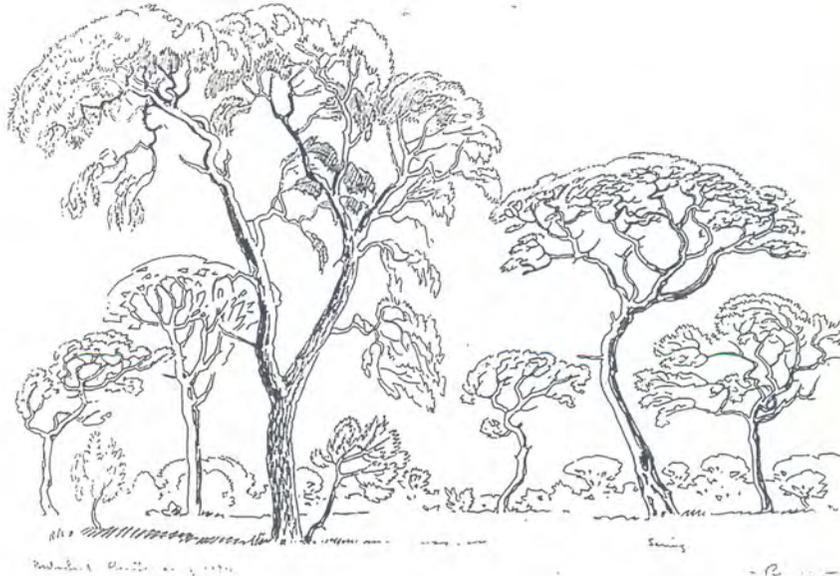


Wild Syringa



Boxwood - R. 1930

**Cat. 106 Wild Syringa and Boxwood**



**Cat. 107 Boxwood and Wild Syringa**

plate mark is also dated to 1920. It is of interest to note that Pierneef was esteemed as an etcher in his early career and that when he wrote to Erich Mayer after equipping his new studio (T.C. A. D. Letter 30 Oct. 1916 :4) he sent a drawing to show the layout which included a room for etching (See *Fig. 35* for 1912 article with photograph).

Nilant (1975) in his important work on Pierneef's linocuts dealt with the subject so well and so expertly that new insights are hardly possible. What has been indicated in the catalogue, however, is that confusion arose concerning a number of very similar prints of willow trees. This has been sorted out in the catalogue from Cat. nos. 207 to 211 and footnoted to clarify the situation.

The 1912 article from "Die Volksblad" (Univ. of Pret. Art Arch.) mentioned above, quotes the artist on the fact that he was about to embark on a new medium, that of the woodcut and that he had already ordered the materials for this from Europe:

"Ik heb nu in Europa alle ingredienten besteld voor houtsnijwerk. Daar stel ik me heel veel van vooruit. Is forser dan't werken met de etsnaald en't is 'n procedee dat hier helemaal nog niet beoefend wordt."

The choice of materials was, in these years, one must not forget the years of World War I, also dictated by a shortage of materials and, therefore, turning to what was available. Ad Donker remembered (1949 :143) Pierneef talking about this:

"Hij gewaagt ook van de moeilijkheden, met materiaal, met

verf, kwasten, etspapier, waarmee de schilders ook hier hebben te kampen."

"DE VOLKSTEM", 23 Augustus 1912 (uit u.P. Dokumentasie)

## Op bezoek bij Z. A. kunstenaars.

### J. H. PIERNEEF.

Kunstenaars zijn over 't algemeen belangwekkende mensen om mee te praten. Dat hebben wij onlangs weder ondervonden, toen wij 'n bezoek brachten bij de heer J. H. Pierneef, onze bekende etsers. Evenals de heer Fanie Eloff, dweept de heer Pierneef met kunst, geniet hij van al 't mooie, dat hij rondom zich ziet en hoort, met 'n intens genot dat wij gewone stervelingen niet kennen. Hij kan zich geëst-driftig vormeën in 'n enkel teer lichtje dat langs 'n wilgetak glijdt; hij kan in bewondering blijven saaan voor 'n stofwolk die ver 'n 'n brede straat op-dwarrelt en 'n ganse ossewagen in 'n vage rode schemer hult. Maar hij kan ook opgetogen spreken over 'n belangwekkend boek dat hij heeft gelezen, liefst 'n werk over 't histories mooi van Zuidafrika, over de oude huizen van de Kaap of over de mooi gestileerde meubelen uit de oud Hollandse tijd. Dar blijkt de heer Pierneef 'n echte zoon van dit land, die 't betreurt dat zoveel leliks en alledaags 't karakteristieke en 't stijlvolle van weleer geheel verdrongen heeft; maar dan ook kan hij zich op eenmaal weer verheugen over de opbloei van die oude Kaapse stijl.

Met zulke personen te spreken is aangenaam en ontwikkelend, maar voor 'n krantenman heeft 't 'n tegen: zij zijn niet geschikt om door 'n joernalist in geregeld verhoor te worden genomen. Zodra men ze volgens alle regelen der kunst wil interviewen, verdwijnt hun eigenaard, dan wordt 't gemakkelijke, vlotte praten plotseling dor en droog. We hebben dus de heer Pierneef laten gaan, toen wij bij hem op bezoek kwamen in 't grappige, kleine huisje dat hij tans zijn werkplaats noemt, van atelier spreekt hij niet. Dat woord schijnt hem, die zo bescheiden is, te groots en te weids. Die werkplaats dan is gelegen op 'n open erf onder bij de rivier, in de De Waalstraat. Voor 't blikken woninkje staat 'n mooie oude wilgeboom, die zijn lange dunne takken als glanzend zijden koorden liet hangen en zacht liet slingeren op de wiegende wind.

"Die oude wilg zou ik niet graag missen," zei de heer Pierneef, toen wij te zamen door de wildernis van gras naar zijn werkplaats stapten, en met lots van 'n liefkozing zag hij tegen de oude, trouwe boom op. "Hij heeft me al zo vaak tot studie gediend. Elke buiging van zijn stam of zijn zwaardere takken ken ik, elke wrong in zijn bast zou ik uit mijn hoofd kunnen tekenen. De wilgeboom is de mooiste boom die ik in Z.A. ken, vooral in de winter."

Ik keek de hoge reus, die zijn takken als zegenend over 't huisje uitspreidde, nu ook met meer dan gewone

brood en de meeste onzer artiesten werken nog in hoofdzaak alleen omdat 't scheppen voor hen lust is. Maar de tijd zal ook hier wel dagen dat kunst in ons midden meer gewaardeerd wordt.

Op 'n ezel in 'n andere hoek stond een der schilderijen die wij van de heer Pierneef op de tentoonstelling van individualisten hadden gezien. Wij bleven er voor staan.

"Wat komt ze hier veel beter uit dan in de Stadszaal, vindt u niet?" zei de heer Pierneef. "Nu ik mijn schilderijen hier weer terug heb, merk ik eerst recht dat de stadszaal voor 'n tentoonstelling helemaal niet deugt."

Dat hadden wij al dadelik bij 't binnenkomen dier zaal opgemerkt.

Men kan, vooral aan 't berglandschap, de waarheid onzer woorden toetsen. De ets van de in aanbouw zijnde Uniegebouwen, hebben wij, met alle waardering voor de goede kwaliteiten, meer opgenomen om 't aktuele van 't onderwerp.

Jammer is dat ons papier zich niet leent voor 't reproduceren van 'n heel mooi, klein etsje, dat wij ook bij de heer Pierneef zagen. 't Was 'n gezicht op Pretoria van af de kop achter 't geestig kafferkerkje in de Bloedstraat. Dit was in zijn innig gevoelige behandeling en in de kunstzinnige konseptie wel 't beste wat wij van hem zagen.

Terwijl wij deze tekeningen, en deze etsen vooral, bewonderden, ontsnapten



Fig. 35 -

J. H. PIERNEEF.

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Procedee dat hier helemaal nog niet beoefend wordt."

In 'n hoek, op planken dicht opeen, verschillende boeken, vooral over kunst maar ook over de tijden der Verenigde Cost Indiese Kompanje. Ik ben al gezegd dat de heer Pierneef veel van boeken houdt. Op die stadium bekend as etsers maar "Ik heb nu in Europa alle ingrediënten besteld voor houtsnijwerk. Daar stel ik me heel veel van vooruit. Is forsier dan 't werken met de etsnaald en 't is 'n

## CHAPTER 5

### Conclusions and Assessments

The systematic investigation of the Pierneef works in the collection of the Pretoria City Council has created a unique opportunity for a fresh approach, not only to the collection but to the artist himself. The strengths and weaknesses of the collection may also be more accurately determined. Although not the largest collection of works by the artist, it may be affirmed that the collection is important and significant.

This survey of 265 works by the artist J. H. Pierneef has necessitated looking very closely, not only at the works in the Pretoria Art Museum collection but at many others as well and it was an enriching experience to be permitted to handle and examine the wealth of material preserved in the T.C.A.D. This importance of the paintings and drawings left by an artist, the documents of his life and work, was put very well by Richard Kendall when writing on Dégas (1994 :59):

"An artist leaves behind thousands of documents of his life in the form of images. Though their evidence is often oblique, paintings and drawings tell us about shifting tastes and periods of stability, working practices and contacts with peers. We must be unafraid of these objects, interrogate them, tease them and place them at the centre of our

enquiries."

The first consideration throughout this study has, therefore, been the firsthand information that may be gleaned from the works themselves. The artist's pronouncements and ideas as these are revealed in his letters to friends and in the lecture notes which are fortunately preserved in various archives, are also a valuable guide to his thinking. As indicated in Chapter 3 the books in the artist's own collection and others to which he had access such as those belonging to Erich Mayer and those in the State Library where he worked for nine years, allow further insight in this regard.

Among the first forty-three paintings in the checklist there are a number that are of major importance. "Amajuba" (Cat. no.10), "The Kloof, Rustenburg" (Cat. no.18) and "Pienaarsrivier" (Cat. no.24) immediately come to mind while the delicate charm and impressionistic qualities of "Rooiplaat" (Cat. no.15) and vast landscape of "Kraal, Derdepoort" (Cat. no.19) present the artist sensitive to the moods of nature. A case may be made, as has been attempted in the text of this study, for the importance and significance of almost every painting in the list. The value of the eighteen paintings of early Pretoria and of the Pretoria Castle "Union Buildings" (Cat. no.43) has already been emphasised.

The works in pastel which formed the basis for the "Old Pretoria" paintings are, as has been stated, empathetic works by a man in

love with his subject, the vernacular architecture of the city in which he was born and grew up.

The group of nineteen watercolours include six casein works, the colourful qualities of which always exert a very definite appeal to the viewing public when they go on exhibition. Perhaps the most important in the group may be "Willows - at Apies River" (Cat. no.81) because it represents one of the artist's favourite subjects as well as an unusual approach to the depiction of light. The watercolours also demonstrate Pierneef's qualities as a draughtsman. Pure watercolours are rare in his oeuvre and this makes "Near Hartebeespoortdam" (Cat. no.91) a valuable item in the collection. A late addition to the collection, "Eland and Bird" (Cat. no.85) is of particular significance because it provides a clue to Pierneef's debt to Bushman art. There are only a few such works in public collections. Even the Pierneef collection in the Pierneef museum has only seven. This material was in the possession of the artist's family, being in his studio when he died and the greater part was deposited in the T.C.A.D. by Mrs. May Pierneef with an embargo as to reproduction of any kind placed thereon. It is only when one reads the letters and other documents in the various archival deposits that one begins to realise the importance that the artist himself attached to this influence on his work. This was fairly fully explored in the section on Pierneef and the indigenous. The greatest gap in any museum collection therefore, occurs in this area.

Thirty-six drawings in the collection are an excellent indication

of the artist's qualities as a draughtsman and of the importance and primacy of drawing in the practice of his art. Although he was mainly acknowledged as an etcher during the early part of his career, the museum can only boast six etchings on the list and two of these are duplicates. In adding to the collection, if at all possible, this is an area where acquisitions would be desirable.

The number of black and white linocut or woodblock prints in the collection stands at one hundred and twenty-five according to the checklist compiled for the purpose of this study and represents a nearly complete series in this field. Again the acquisition of any work not yet represented in it or missing from it, should be considered.

The study has made possible a reassessment and reconsideration of a major South African artist and a testing of many of the accepted opinions on his work. The judgements of his contemporaries, of later critics and of the most recent socio-political or politically correct condemnations could be examined in the light of the works themselves and what the artist himself wrote and said. Certain conclusions could be arrived at and these are, as far as is possible, objective.

Keeping Hagg's (1987 :1) criterion of hagiography in mind, it was a surprise to find little of this present in Grosskopf's (1919) or Hendriks' (1951 :1,2) accounts of the artist who was also their friend. A piece written for a Dutch magazine, "Elzevier's

Maandschrift" by A. C. Bouman (1926) seems on careful rereading remarkably balanced and even-handed. It is perfectly true that Pierneef achieved a popularity with the Afrikaans public that led to adulation and hagiography. He was hailed, as Esme Berman put it, (1970 :223) as "a prophet with honour in his own country".

In this research a re-evaluation of the earlier writing on the artist had to be made. One of his loyal friends was J. F. W. Grosskopf who wrote on the man and the artist "J. H. Pierneef - die man en die kunstenaar" early on in "Die Brandwag" (1919). He stressed Pierneef's knowledge of books and realised at this early date that Pierneef's involvement with Bushman art was from the point of view of the painter and artist, not the ethnologist or archaeologist (1919 :204):

"Nie uit die gesigspunt van die volkekundige nie, maar van die skilder, het hij met steeds groter geesdrif die Boesmantekeninge begin ondersoek en bestudeer...hij voel dat die Boesmans hier in ons land seker eienaardighede ontwikkel het, wat uitstekend in harmonie is met ons landskap, ons kleure, ons atmosfeer."

Grosskopf must be given credit for seeing Pierneef as the first South African artist to see Bushman art as art and not curiosity. He acknowledged the study made by the artist of the indigenous arts of the country and the significance of the crafts practiced by the black peoples. These were a happy source for his own work. Grosskopf was also later to write the first book on the artist (1945). His judgments seem objective and measured. He discusses

the dream of a national art, Pierneef's love for the landscape and even the symbolism of his work. He described him as one of those who was always seeking, always learning, always striving. These judgments are confirmed when looking at the works themselves.

There were, however, always a few critical voices that expressed a certain doubt. Esmé Berman herself, (1970 :224) voices a certain dissatisfaction in discussing the artist's later work and speaks of:

"... virile stylizations solidifying into static mannerisms;" She had put it even more baldly a number of years earlier (1964) when she ended her review of an exhibition by the artist with a question mark:

"Pierneef het as 'n gevierde skilder gesterwe. Maar as daar een enkele gedagte is wat hierdie uitstalling onontkombaar nalaat, is dit dat Pierneef sy groot talent nie ten volle verwesenlik het nie.

En dit laat die tergende vraag onbeantwoord: HOEKOM?"

The same sense of something not fully realised is to be found in the radio profile "Die Wêreld van Pierneef" (1963) where the voices of those who knew him well, who loved him and admired him could be heard. The programme was intended as a gesture honouring the artist, the intention was certainly laudatory. It was, in the sense suggested by Hagg, hagiographic and also rather superficial. His friends all remembered his good humour and his love of jokes. Hiemstra, his neighbour at "Elangeni", described

him as the best conversationalist that he had ever encountered. This lightheartedness was also, however, seen as a mask behind which lay sadness and a darker mood. What emerges from this account, is the fact that he inspired affection in those around him and that he had great personal charm. There is a vague feeling, especially when Anton Hendriks is speaking, of disappointment, one senses that he felt that some great potential had remained unrealised. On the one hand, as confirmed by the drawings and watercolours was the immediacy, the emotional response to the natural world. On the other was the painter in his studio who reduced all this spontaneity to a formal and intellectual process which all too often left his supporters with a sense of disappointment, a feeling that something great had not been achieved. It remains unclear what they actually wanted from him. No-one had the courage or the insight to formulate this. Having, throughout this study, looked intently at the work of the artist and, making the attempt to follow his struggle, trace the way he fought to find an own style and reduce his material to the most powerful statement possible, I somehow feel that I have been privileged to find an overall picture not affected by personal considerations. The 265 works in the museum collection surveyed in this study have, indeed, revealed an artistic development of fascinating and impressive breadth as well as instances of a most assured and confident artist at work.

It is also apparent that the seemingly open and likeable man had a hidden side to his personality. His wife could confess in the 1963 interview in the Aviva Hotel with Professors Nilant and Van

der Westhuizen that her husband had remained something of an enigma to her. After years of marriage she sometimes felt that she did not know him at all.

On the human level Pierneef seems to have been a man of much charm who knew how to make and keep his friends. There is one sad exception. The intense friendship with Erich Mayer seems to have cooled somewhat after Mayer's return from internment during the First World War or even later when Pierneef divorced his first wife and married for a second time. They were, however, still collaborating in 1920 when they designed the bookcover for the play "'n Esau" by their friend, Grosskopf. In the article for "Building" (1922) in which Mayer pleads for "A Distinctly South African Art" he fully acknowledges the role played by Pierneef in this search and uses his illustrations of African artefacts. Whatever the reason, their paths seem to have diverged somewhere around the mid-twenties.

An attempt has been made in this study to explore all the influences Pierneef could have undergone in the course of his development as an artist. These started close to home with the friends he made and the contact he had with an artistic confraternity. The printed word also provided contact with ideas that were current worldwide and he would have been familiar with some of these even before his enriching experiences on the visit to Europe in 1925. The formal concerns that began to dominate his art even before the departure for Europe were to be found in other artists of the time and the meeting with Willem van



Konijnenburg was more a meeting of like-thinking minds than the shattering revelation it is often presumed to have been. S. P. E. Boshoff was perhaps the first to recognise this when he wrote on Pierneef in "Skone Kunste in Suid Afrika" (Nienaber ed.1951) and made use of a letter that had been written to Pierneef in 1929 by Willem van Konijnenburg. The writer mentions the perseverance (volharding) he noted in Pierneef and saw this as rooted in a deep love for nature. This was what gave him great pleasure, this love was abundantly present in Pierneef and would be his assurance of victory in the task he had set himself. Pierneef had obviously sent him a "Nuwe Brandwag" as well as photographs of some of his paintings. They evoked favourable comment as did the four woodcuts that had also been sent. He thanked him for all this and in a postscript added that he had entrusted one of his prints entitled "Lewensgang" to a certain Mr. Tas who was to deliver it to Pierneef (Letter Univ of Pretoria Art Archive).

This reference to love as a necessary component of Pierneef's artistic endeavours brings one close to the love mentioned by Marthinus Versfeld (1902 - 1995), the noted Afrikaans philosopher, who in his Foreword to a guide to Plato's "Republic" (1970 :6) also saw love as a necessary component in any worthwhile endeavour:

"Sonder liefde is daar steriliteit, biologies en geestelik."

This exchange between van Konijnenburg and Pierneef is also noticeable in an earlier letter to Pierneef written in March 1929



(University of Pretoria Art Archive). In this case van Konijnenburg complimented Pierneef by drawing a picture with a South African theme in the top half of the first page of the letter and inscribing it "vrij naar Pierneef".

The Cape critic, Eldred Green (Arts Records - Cape Argus 1971) saw a "Radical change in style of Pierneef" when he wrote a review on an exhibition of pictures from the State Archives which were on display at the South African National Gallery. After a careful scrutiny of these he could decide, from works dating to before 1925:

"That van Konijnenburg was, so to speak, preaching to a convert who had already come a long way from an earlier Art Nouveau."

Green had also looked penetratingly at dated works from 1902 and 1903 and found these exercises which have been discussed earlier in this study to:

"show much interest in symmetry, the use of angles rather than curves and the simplification of curves themselves. No.19 is reminiscent of an early drawing of roofs by Van Gogh and shows an increasing search for pattern in nature. The conclusion seems inescapable that Pierneef's reconciliation of a formalised representation of the environment with what the eye actually saw, was to tone down the colours, at the same time simplifying the colours in large areas."

Miles, Ozinski, Coetzee and Vinassa have all voiced a critical view of the artist which reduced his work to a tool of political ideology. It is sufficient to quote only one (Vinassa 1991 :13):

"Sy werk is 'n volmaakte voorbeeld van die gebruik van kuns as politieke wapen en die sameswering van die kunstenaar met die politici ten einde 'n politieke doel te bereik."

This may, however, be placed against the considered view of a critic who subjected the works themselves to sensitive scrutiny and wrote the following (Arnold 1986):

"Pierneef was a courageous artist. He confronted the issue of transformation, declining merely to imitate the South African landscape, he attempted to analyse his visual responses and to find pictorial equivalents for visual sensations of light, colour and space.

This cerebral approach sometimes led to sterile paintings dominated by a formula. In his best works he locates a balance between sight and concept and between timeless land masses and ephemeral foliage. Pierneef renewed his vision constantly by drawing...The unevenness of his output during a long career is a testimony of his determination to define new expressive modes...His courage is all the more remarkable given the the conservative climate of opinion in which he operated."

The same art historian had earlier written on the artist in similar perceptive vein (Pretoria News July 18 1984):

"When viewing Pierneef's drawings and watercolours, one

realizes with renewed delight just how acute and sensitive an eye the artist possessed...line, is apparent in his pencil studies of trees. His paintings of trees seldom lack conviction because they retain particularisation even in the severely geometric phase...Ultimately an artist stands condemned of only one sin - complacent acceptance of one formula and stultifying repetition. Pierneef was not guilty of this charge. He trusted and refined his senses and teased his mind with the objective of renewal."

Marion Arnold commended Pierneef's painting and drawing while Nilant accorded him full acknowledgment for his mastery of the black and white woodcut and linocut print. This important aspect of his work was fully explored in "Pierneef - Hout- en Linosnee". Barry Maritz reviewing an exhibition of these works in Durban (Natal Mercury 1970) expressed an almost reluctant admiration:

"...the works on this exhibition are descriptive pieces but such is Pierneef's command of design that the subject matter... becomes part of a very strict formal organisation ... (they) demonstrate a supreme if old-fashioned control over technique and design that is quite compelling."

This old-fashioned control, however, could produce a small masterpiece with Op- and Pop-art overtones such as "Sebra" (Cat. no.264).

It was probably through contact with George Leith, his school friend, Gordon Leith's father and Anton van Wouw, his godfather



that Pierneef became aware of the fascination of Bushman studies. George leith was one of the first to realise that the "Bushmen...possessed the artistic faculty in a high degree" (Brunhilda Leith 1964 :23). He also realised that the Bushman drawings had meaning. These ideas must have been confirmed for Pierneef when he was able to read a book such as "The Native Races of Southern Africa" by Stow who regarded the Bushman and his art with such sympathy and admiration, when he was working in the State Library, Pretoria. As maintained earlier in this study he must have made an intensive study of the Stow drawings which were, at that time in the possession of Dorothea Bleek. Murray Schoonraad did a great deal of thorough research for his survey of Pierneef's copies of Bushman art and concluded that he had made use of Stow and of Helen Tongue. It was only in April 1936 that Pierneef eventually visited a rock art site himself. This is confirmed by inscribed and annotated drawings in the T.C.A.D. "Plaas Eben Haeser by Fouriesburg. O.V.S."

Grosskopf has been cited as being the first to realise that Pierneef was the first South African artist to recognise the aesthetic quality of Bushman painting. According to his own account he had embarked on these studies around 1914.

This claim has been made very strongly by Walter Battiss (Schoonraad 1985) whose investigation of the petroglyphs along the Riet River in the company of his mentor, William Fowler took place between 1917 and 1920. Battiss had his first encounter with rock paintings in early 1933. In 1938 he painted a picture to

which he gave the title "The Early Men". In the inscription on the back of this work he lays claim to being the first in the field:

"This work is therefore the first painting by a South African artist using our primitive art as a direct reference."

He seems to have forgotten the wallpaintings executed by Pierneef in the hall of the Ficksburg High School which were executed in 1922. They certainly used our primitive art as a direct reference albeit by copying from Stow and Helen Tongue. There is also the work "Adam and Eve" in the collection of Marita Bailey-Pierneef mentioned earlier in this study. This was in all likelihood produced much earlier than 1938.

I would in no way care to minimise Battiss' important contribution to the aesthetic appreciation of Southern African rock art but would wish to see Pierneef's pre-eminence in the field acknowledged. His pre-eminence as a South African artist in the fields of painting, drawing and graphic art was, in the course of this study, confirmed.

Certain statements made in "Pierneef, Land and Landscape" (Coetzee 1992) seem to have, in large measure, been refuted in the course of this study in spontaneous fashion. The first of these has to do with Pierneef's Dutchness. It is only right and proper that a man should not deny his antecedents and, in Pierneef's case he certainly never did so, but to aver that he "remained noticeably Dutch throughout his life" is contradicted

1916:

"Jammer laat hul nie se dat mij moeder nog van die Voortrekker geslag is, sij is puur Afrikaans en ik glo dat ik mij meeste idee van haar het."

When he visited Holland in 1925 and again in 1933 he did not pretend to be a Hollander but an Afrikaner. In the Christmas issue of the "Volks - Universiteit" (1933) he is described as "den Afrikaanschen schilder" and the lecture which he was to deliver on December 20th was to be in Afrikaans. He himself put it as follows:

"My lesing sal handel oor die karakter van die Afrikaanse landskap met invloed op die boustyl van die blanke rasse en Boesman en Kaffer-kuns, om 'n idee te gee hoe 'n kultuur in Suid - Afrika bestaan."

Coetzee correctly identifies the artist as deeply religious (1992 :26). His Calvinism was tempered by the Romantic worship of nature that Coetzee had discussed earlier in "Pierneef en die Noordelike Romantiese Tradisie" (1986). There was, however, another spiritual influence which reached him through his study of Bushman art. This was touched on earlier under the heading of "Pierneef and the Indigenous" in this study. He recognized that the eland was the supreme spiritual symbol for the Bushman and he wrote to his friend Thom Steele describing the afterlife as "the house of the eland" (Pretorius 1990 :92).

Coetzee also averred that he could find no evidence of Pierneef



having had any interest in local history (1992 :30). The unique collection which records the architectural history of early Pretoria indicates otherwise. The concern showed by the artist for also photographically recording the sites of these early buildings as they appeared in 1948 also implies an historical interest. It would be of value for the Pretoria Art Museum to attempt to recover these photographs so that the series of "Old Pretoria" buildings could be exhibited as the artist intended. If these photographs can not be found at least the 1948 Pretoria News series which have been photocopied from the files of the University of Pretoria Art Archive and appear in the Appendix of this study, could be used. They could further be supplemented by photographs of these sites as they appear today. This could be full and fascinating exhibition material.

The drawings in the T.C.A.D. Pierneef files also indicate Pierneef's interest in the architecture and crafts of the black peoples and his strong interest and championship of Bushman art is also, in a sense, historical.

This dissertation has confined itself to one collection only of the artist's work, that of the Pretoria Art Museum. There are other collections of importance as was indicated at the beginning of this study. The wealth of material housed in archival deposits, especially that of the T.C.A.D., need to be exploited. A catalogue raisonné would be a mammoth but worthwhile enterprise.



Nilant (1975 :ix) concludes that the role of an artist such as Pierneef in the story of South African art could not be accurately assessed before a thorough and full overview of all his work had been undertaken. He himself had tried to do this as fully as possible for the artist's woodcut and linoleum prints.

The publication of "Pierneef His life and his work" by the Cultural History Department at the University of Pretoria was very thorough and much valuable material was gathered together. Yet it remains, in the main, a cultural historical study which does not, in any depth, investigate the art works themselves.

Nilant's conclusion in his Foreword still stands (1975 :ix) :

"Solank ons kennis van Pierneef se oeuvre onvolledig is, moet enige poging om invloed van die werke onderling en die groei van die skilder se werk deur die jare provisories beskou word."

## CATALOGUE OF PIERNEEF WORKS IN THE COLLECTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF PRETORIA HOUSED IN THE PRETORIA ART MUSEUM

This catalogue is the result of work done over the past two years, 1995 and 1996. The works were checked in the storeroom and controlled from the museum catalogue and the acquisition registers. These have often proved to be incomplete with some works inadequately documented and, in a few instances, not documented at all. Wherever this is the case it has been indicated in the catalogue. Some of the earliest items listed in the old registers could not be identified at all. The disastrous fire that swept through Munitoria on March 3rd 1997 has now destroyed any hope of locating lost or missing works. It is fortunate that the paintings housed in the Mayoral suite could be removed to safety and are now at the Art Museum. They are nos 20 and 43 in the catalogue. The preparatory watercolour drawing for the commissioned centenary painting of Pretoria (1955), was fortunately removed to the museum at an earlier stage.

It seems as if there was an hiatus between the death of the last curator who was in charge of the collection when it was housed in the City Hall and its passing into the care of a new curator under whose supervision the collection was moved to its final home, the Pretoria Art Museum. There are scant records for this period of transition. Mrs Gerda Oerder (b1887) died in 1961 and Albert Werth was appointed as curator of the new art museum in 1962. The new museum building opened its doors to the public in May 1964.

This list, therefore, needs to be edited and all works that cannot be accounted for, removed therefrom. A new set of catalogue numbers should be attached to a new, controlled catalogue.

The works listed fall into the following categories:

Oil Paintings

Watercolours

Works in Pastel

Drawings

Etchings

Linocut/Woodcut Prints

Where some of the images accompanying the catalogue are not as clear as could be wished, this is, in some cases, due to the quality of available photographs and in others, the faintness of the material itself. Pencil drawings are often of a light and delicate nature and do not photograph well. It is hoped, however, that enough of the originals may be recognisable for purposes of identification.

Note: The eccentric spelling of the words such as “revier” and “wilverbome” is Pierneef’s own. Afrikaans had, in his day, not yet been subjected to official spelling rules.

List of works by J. H. Pierneef held in the Art Collection of the City Council of Pretoria and housed, for the most part, in the Pretoria Art Museum.

## OIL PAINTINGS

(All measurements in millimetres)

1. **Mountains near Derdepoort**  
**Berge naby Derdepoort**  
Oil on wood, 755 X 910  
Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef  
Dated 1929



P1511

2. **Mountain Landscape** <sup>1</sup>  
**Berglandskap**  
Oil on canvas, 370 X 500  
Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef  
Undated



00/175

3. **Bank Lane after a Hailstorm** <sup>2</sup>  
**Banklaan na Haelstorm**  
Oil on canvas, 645 X 680  
Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef  
Dated 1913



P1502

4. **Zanzibar**  
Oil on panel, 928 X 1535  
Signed bottom right J. H. Pierneef  
Dated 1933  
Bought: Mr E Schweickerdt 29. 03. 1960

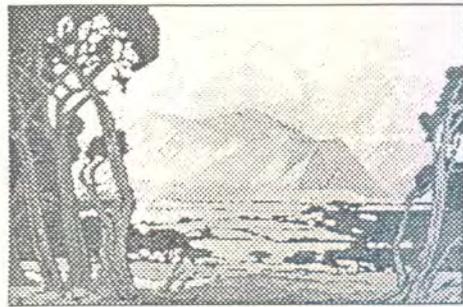


No accession number

<sup>1</sup> This could be the painting acquired by the City Council in 1927. Date unknown.

<sup>2</sup> Bought for the museum collection by Anton Hendriks at the December 1957 sale of the artist's effects. (10.12.1957)

5. **The Soutpansberg** <sup>3</sup>  
**Die Soutpansberg**  
 Oil on panel, 293 X 416  
 Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef  
 Undated  
 Bought: Sotheby's Auction March 1975



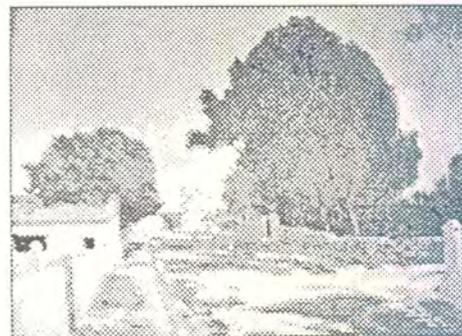
75/27

6. **Gorge between Two Ridges**  
**Kloof tussen Twee Rante**  
 Oil on canvas, 920 X 1220  
 Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef '30  
 Acquired from Mrs Hertzog



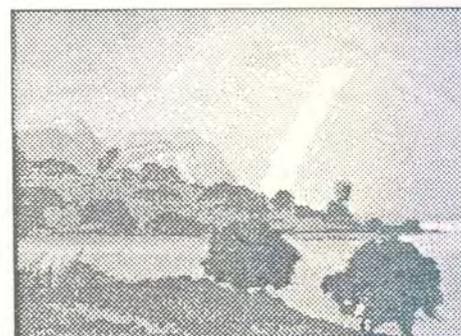
70/10

7. **Street in Heidelberg** <sup>4</sup>  
**Straat in Heidelberg**  
 Oil on canvas of coarse texture, 496 X 640  
 Signed bottom left Pierneef  
 Dated 1919  
 Bought February 28, 1958 Mrs J Rooth



No accession number

8. **Near Hartebeespoort Dam,**  
**Landscape with Rainbow**  
**By Hartebeespoortdam,**  
**Landskap met Rëenboog**  
 Oil on wood, 165 X 220  
 Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef  
 Date 1946  
 Bought: Mrs L Jacobsz December 1957



800/164

<sup>3</sup> When this painting is compared to a securely dated work in the Schweickerdt family collection the date 1923 may be regarded as possible.

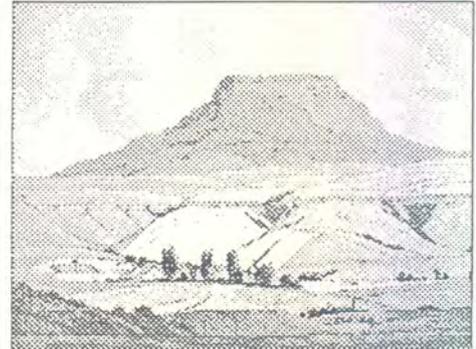
<sup>4</sup> This work was not donated but bought. Confirmed by information on file, although catalogue cards record a donation.

- 9. Landscape with Hill** <sup>5</sup>  
**Landskap met Heuwelkoppie**  
 Oil on canvas, pasted on board, 440 X 639  
 Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef  
 Dated 1913  
 Bought from Schweickerdt 28 11 1958



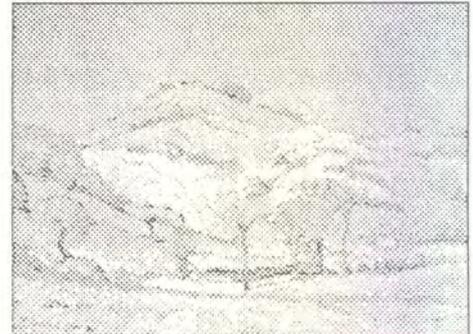
00/176

- 10. Amajuba**  
 Oil on canvas, 545 X 646  
 Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef  
 Dated 1932  
 Bought from Dr A de V Visser 30. 9. 1968



68/101

- 11. Landscape**  
**Landskap**  
 Oil on canvas, 218 X 288  
 Signed bottom left Pierneef  
 Acquired 1964  
 Bought from Dr J van Rooyen October 1964



S/P/64/50

- 12. Dutch Landscape, Volendam** <sup>6</sup>  
**Hollandse landskap, Volendam**  
 Oil on canvas, 385 X 583  
 Signed bottom left Pierneef  
 Dated 1925  
 Bought from Mrs A E Reich 15. 10.1981



No accession number

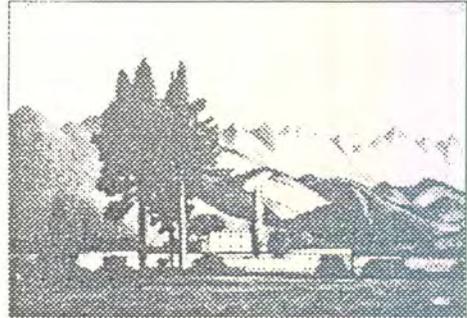
<sup>5</sup> This is the earliest dated oil painting in the collection and clearly in the style of Frans Oerder, Pierneef's painting teacher, who had returned to Holland in 1908.  
<sup>6</sup> This painting dates from the period when the artist and Mrs. May Pierneef visited Europe. There seems to be a definite correspondence between Pierneef's cityscapes of this period and the cityscapes of Dutch artists such as George Hendrik Breitner (1857 - 1923) and Willem Witsen (1860 - 1923).

13. **The Peaks seen from Lanzerac, Stellenbosch**  
**Die Pieke vanaf Lanzerac, Stellenbosch**  
Oil on canvas, 471 X 580  
Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef  
Dated 1929  
Bought from Dr G H R Holzhausen, 31. 8. 1970



70/20

14. **Near McGregor**  
**By McGregor, K. P.**  
Oil on canvas, 447 X 592  
Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef  
Dated 1942  
Bought from Mrs A C S van Eck October, 1958



P1563

15. **"Rooiplaat"** <sup>7</sup>  
Oil on panel, 340 X 490  
Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef  
Dated 1913  
Bought: Mrs T C Boezaart 16. 9. 1967



S/P/67/10

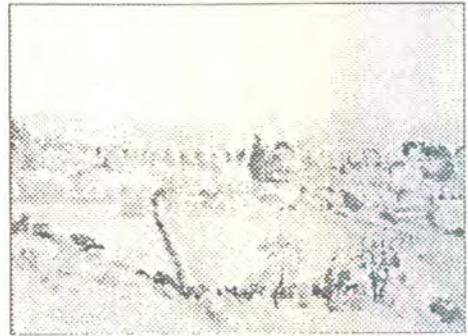
16. **Harbour Scene, Port Sudan**  
**Hawetoneel. Port Sudan**  
Oil on canvas, 400 X 547  
Signed bottom left Pierneef  
Dated 1924  
Bought from Mrs M Pierneef 12. 3. 1964



S/P/64/23

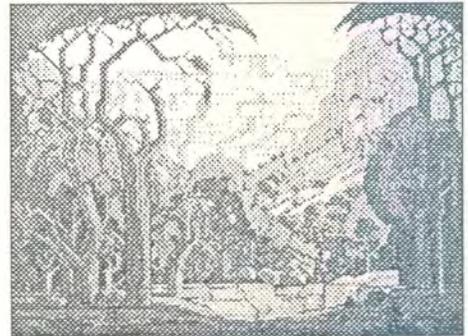
<sup>7</sup> This is a totally impressionistic painting with no black and no outline, painted in small light-coloured dots. There is thicker paint on the horizon line. As early as 1916 the artist was experimenting with the "kolletjies-tegniek." This may be, in 1927, the result of seeing Neo-Impressionism in Belgium in 1925-1926.

17. **Pretoria, Centenary painting** <sup>8</sup>  
**Pretoria Eeufesstuk**  
Oil on canvas, 1370 X 1830  
Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef  
Dated 1955



P1501

18. **The Kloof, Rustenburg**  
**Die Kloof, Rustenburg**  
Oil on canvas, 593 X 760  
Signed bottom left Pierneef  
Dated 1935



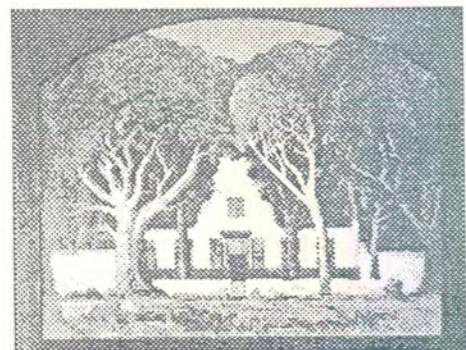
P1514

19. **Kraal, Derdepoort**  
**Naturellekraal, Derdepoort**  
Oil on canvas, 745 X 1000  
Signed bottom right J. H. Pierneef  
Dated 1929  
In the collection before 1936



P1515

20. **Vergelegen and Somerset West,** <sup>9</sup>  
**Hottentots Holland**  
**Vergelegen en Somerset Wes,**  
**Hottentots Holland**  
Oil on wood, in gold mount rounded at the top  
740 X 880 rounded to 610 X 880  
Signed bottom right J. H. Pierneef  
Dated 1928



P1506

<sup>8</sup> Commissioned by the City Council in August 1952 to mark the Centenary of the city. Completed 1955.

<sup>9</sup> In Munitoria - Mayor's Suite

**21. Still Life with Pumpkins  
Stillewe met Pampoene**

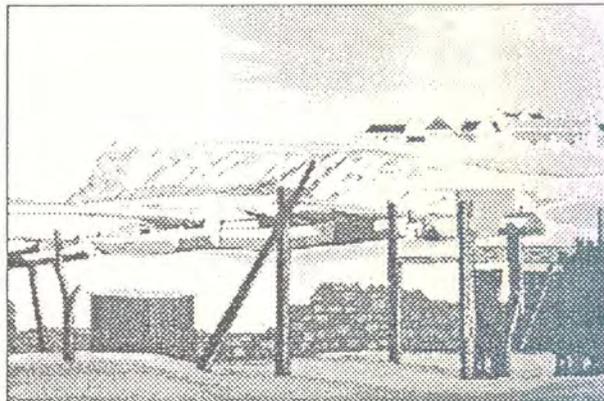
Oil on canvas, 480 X 640  
Signed top right Pierneef  
Dated 1918  
Bought from Dr A W O Bock 31. 9. 1970



70/19

**22. Arniston  
Waenhuiskrans, Arniston**

Oil on panel, 542 X 798  
Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef  
Dated 1948  
Bought from the artist December 1948



P1505

**23. Zanzibar, Haunted House <sup>10</sup>  
Zanzibar, Spookhuis**

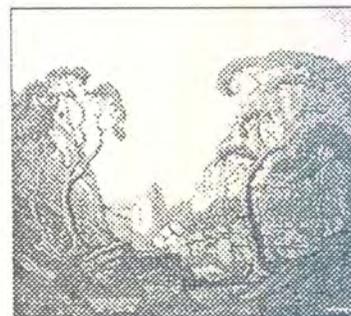
Oil on canvas, 612 X 765  
Signed bottom right J. H. Pierneef  
Dated 1955



P1507

**24. Pienaarsrivier**

Oil on canvas, 730 X 788  
Signed bottom right J. H. Pierneef  
Dated 1933  
Bought from Mrs Mabel Jansen March 1965

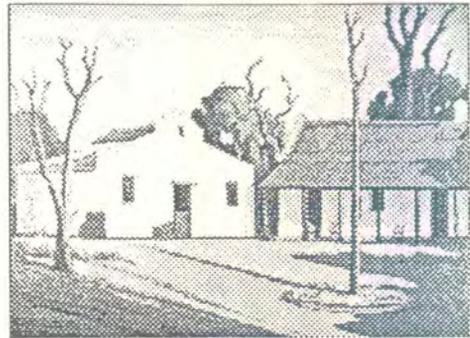
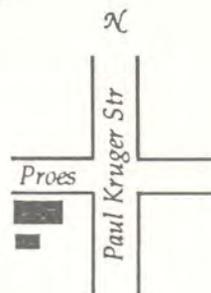


S/P/65/7

<sup>10</sup> Centenary gift, Student Council, Normal College, Pretoria, 1955

**25 Houses Proes and Market Street 1883**  
**Huise - Proes en Mark 1883**

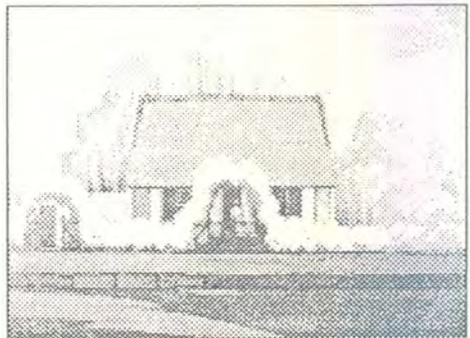
Based on drawing of 1912  
Oil on masonite, 493 X 645  
Signed bottom left Pierneef  
Dated 1948  
Donation the artist, July 1949



P1545

**26 House Andries and Schoeman Streets**  
**Huis - Andries en Schoemanstr**

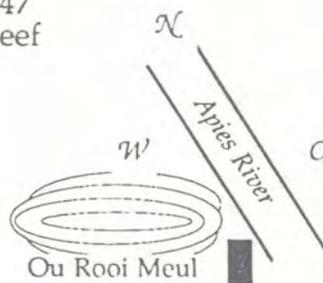
Oil on masonite, 493 X 646  
Signed bottom right Pierneef  
Dated 1948  
Bought July 1949



P1541

**27 Old Red Mill at Daspoort <sup>11</sup>**  
**Ou Rooi Meul by Daspoort**

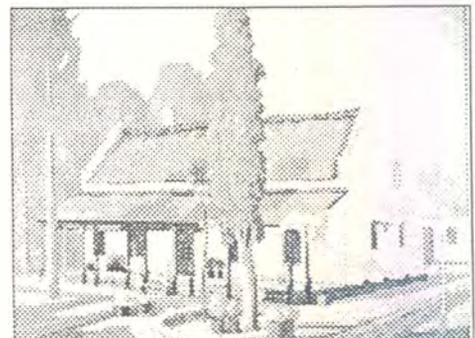
Oil on masonite, 453 X 647  
Signed bottom left Pierneef  
Dated 1948  
Bought July 1949



P1549

**28 House - Prinsloo and Struben Streets <sup>12</sup>**  
**Huis - Prinsloo en Strubenstraat**

Oil on masonite, 545 X 646  
Signed bottom right Pierneef  
Dated 1949  
Bought July 1949



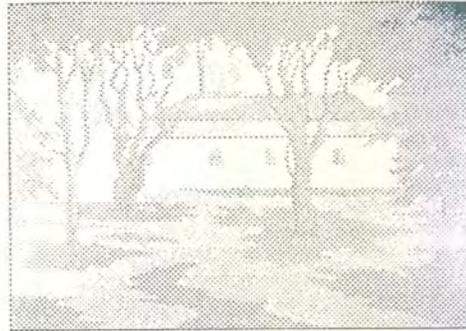
P1546

<sup>11</sup> Cleaned and restored by Julian Gous in 1988

<sup>12</sup> There was a confusion between this painting and the pastel drawing on which it was based as the same accession number, P1531 was assigned to both painting and pastel. Although the description in the old register does not exactly tally, it would seem that P1546 may be assigned to the painting.

29. House - van der Walt and Scheiding Sts  
Huis - van der Walt en Scheidingstraat

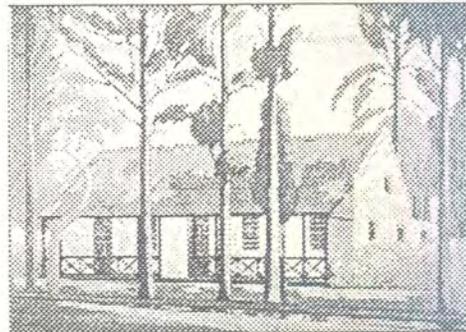
Oil on masonite, 500 X 650  
Signed bottom left Pierneef  
Dated 1948  
Bought July 1949



P1542

30. Old House - Pretorius and Andries Sts  
Ou Huis - Pretorius en Andriesstraat

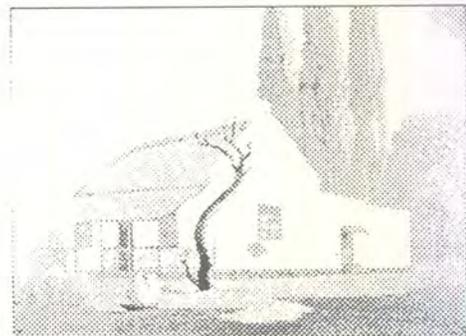
Oil on masonite, 492 X 645  
Signed bottom left Pierneef  
Dated 1948  
Bought July 1949



P1553

31. Old House - Market and Proes Streets  
Ou Huis - Mark en Proesstraat

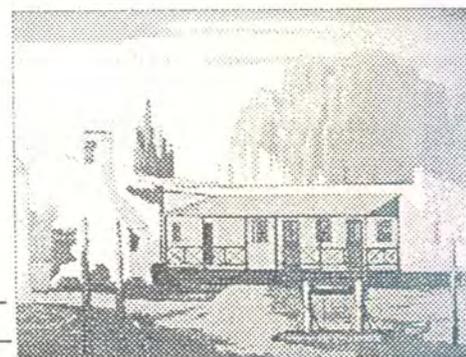
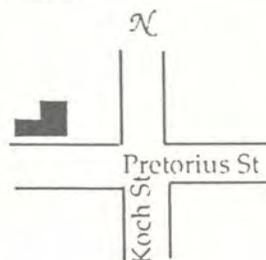
Oil on masonite, 495 X 646  
Signed bottom left Pierneef  
Dated 1949  
Donation the artist July 1949



P1543

32. House - Koch and Pretorius Sts <sup>13</sup>  
Huis - Koch en Pretoriusstraat

Oil on canvas, 493 X 645  
Signed bottom left Pierneef  
Dated 1949  
Bought July 1949



P1551

<sup>13</sup> In a booklet of the Foundation Simon van der Stel dating from 1962 this house is illustrated on p. 4 and bears the following caption: Huis in Pretoriusstraat wes van Bosmanstraat. (Voorheen bewoon deur mnr. J. Marais, Tesourier-Generaal, Z.A.R.) At this time Dr. Willem Punt was a member of the Regional Committee and probably supplied this as well as the further information accompanying the illustration.

- 33. House - Koch and Schoeman Streets** <sup>14</sup>  
**Huise - Koch en Schoemanstraat**  
 Oil on masonite, 495 X 645  
 Signed bottom right Pierneef  
 Dated 1949  
 Bought July 1949



P1556

- 34. Van der Hove's Drift**  
**van der Hove se Drif**  
 Oil on artist's board, 500 X 650  
 Signed bottom left Pierneef  
 Dated 1949  
 Bought January 1949



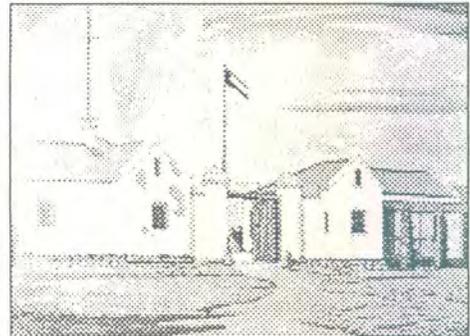
P1518

- 35. Jail - Visagie Street**  
**Tronk, Visagiestraat**  
 Oil on masonite, 492 X 647  
 Signed bottom left Pierneef  
 Dated 1948  
 Bought July 1949

∞

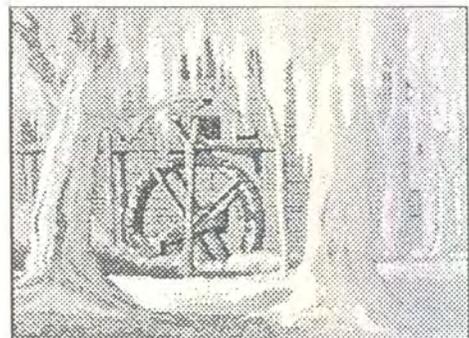
Visagie Street

Ou  
 Tronk



P1550

- 36. The Water Mill**  
**Die Watermeul**  
 Oil on masonite, 500 X 650  
 Signed bottom left Pierneef  
 Dated 1948  
 Donation the artist July 1949

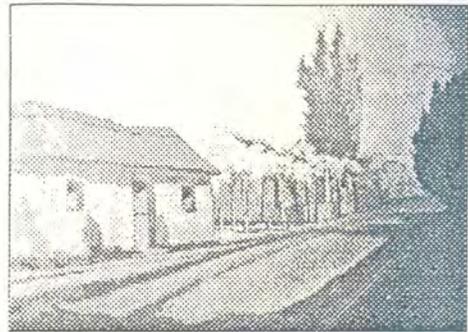
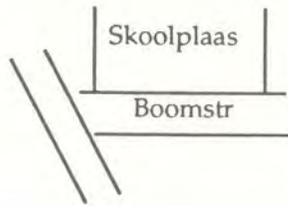


P1512

14 *Ibid.*, bears a caption: "Bachelor's Club" in die Volksmond bekend as aan die "Heerengracht" NW. Hoek van Koch - (Bosman) en Schoemanstr.

37. Street in Skoolplaas, Pretoria  
Straat in Skoolplaas, Pretoria

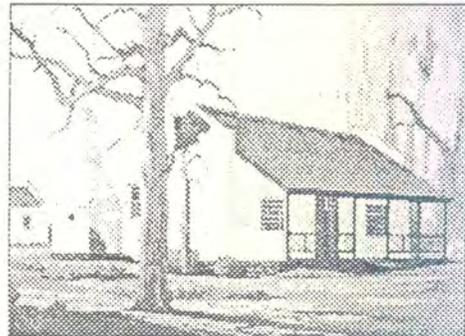
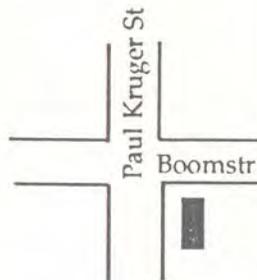
Oil on masonite, 494 X 647  
Signed bottom left Pierneef  
Dated 1948  
Bought July 1949



P1554

38. House - Boom and Market Streets  
Huis - Boom en Marketstraat

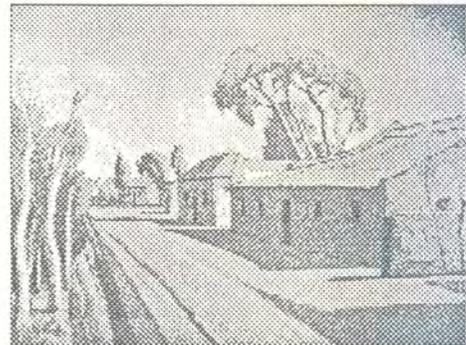
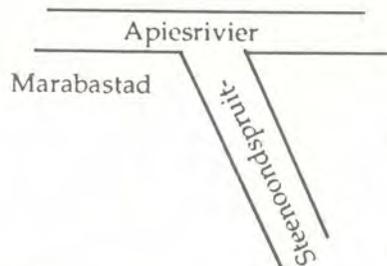
Oil on masonite, 493 X 650  
Signed bottom left Pierneef  
Dated 1949  
Donation the artist July 1949



P1552

39. Street in Marabastad  
Straat in Marabastad

Oil on masonite, 495 X 645  
Signed bottom right Pierneef  
Dated 1948  
Bought July 1949



P1544

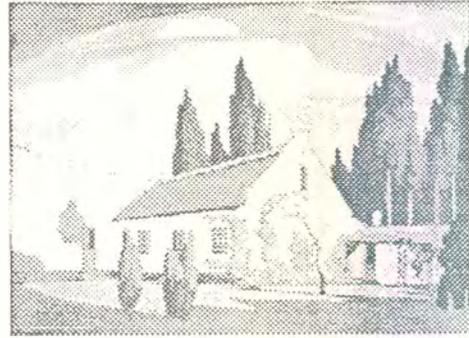
40. Apies River, Pretoria  
with Meintjeskop behind  
Apiesrivier, Pretoria, Meintjeskop agter

Oil on masonite, 500 X 650  
Signed bottom left Pierneef  
Date 1948  
Bought January 1949



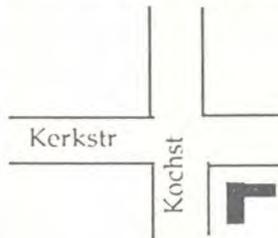
P1513

41. **Jess's Cottage** <sup>15</sup>  
Oil on masonite 495 X 645  
Signed bottom left Pierneef  
Dated 1948  
Donation the artist July 1949



P1547

42. **Buildings - corner of Church and Koch Sts (now Bosman)**  
**Geboue - hoek van Kerk en Kochstraat (nou Bosman)**  
Oil on masonite, 494 X 644  
Signed bottom left Pierneef  
Dated 1949  
Bought July 1949



P1562

43. **Pretoria Castle - Union Buildings 1939** <sup>16</sup>  
**Pretoria Castle - Uniegebou 1939**  
Oil laid down on board, 9005 X 2125



44. **Gabled House** <sup>17</sup>  
**Gewelhuis**  
Oil on masonite, 500 X 650  
Signed bottom right Pierneef  
Dated 1949  
Whereabouts unknown - No photograph

45. **Blue Horizon** <sup>18</sup>  
**Blou Horizon**  
Oil on canvas, 760 X 915  
Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef  
Dated 1929  
Whereabouts unknown - no photograph

15 *Ibid.*, bears the caption: *At one time home of Sir Rider Haggard.*

16 *This painting is not documented or recorded in the museum catalogue. There is no blue card housed in the administration records, nor is there a yellow card with photographs in the general catalogue. The painting, however, holds pride of place in the Mayor's office at Munitoria. Nel, editor 1990. Page 87.*

17 *No yellow catalogue card - Blue card, administration file indicates locality as Munitoria. Whereabouts unknown.*

18 *This painting is recorded in the old acquisition register but does not seem to be in the collection at the time of writing this catalogue. It is also not clear whether the measurements are in inches or centimetres. Judging from the acquisition number of P1503 as well as the general size of Pierneef's painting it is probably safe to assume that the measurements are metric.*

## WORKS IN PASTEL

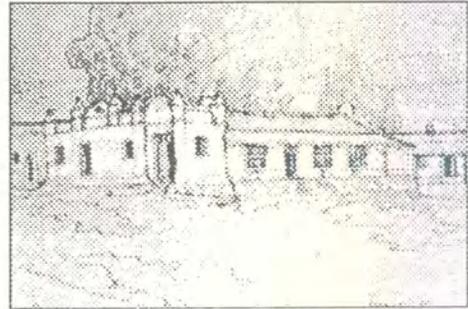
The group of pastel works executed between 1910 and 1913 were all, with only five exceptions, gifts made to the collection by the artist himself. They are of exceptional art-historical value as documents of early Pretoria and its vernacular architecture. The artist used them as the source for the series of views of early Pretoria commissioned by the City Council in 1948. They were donated to the collection by the artist after completion of the commission.

They are often more lively and immediate than the sometimes rather stiff and insensitive oil paintings for which they formed the source material.

### 46 Buildings - Church and Koch Streets

#### Geboue Kerk en Kochstraat

250 X 340 Donation, the artist  
Signed bottom right J H Pierneef 1929  
Title bottom right - Kerk en Koch st

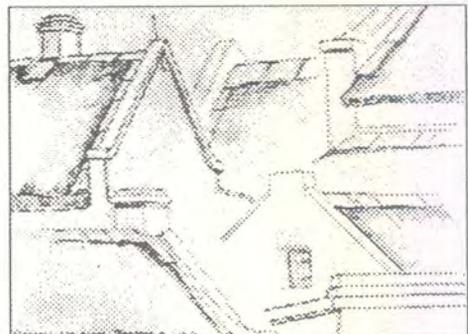


P1535

### 47 Gables of old Houses, Pretoria

#### Gewels van Ou Huise, Pretoria

250 X 350 Donation, the artist  
Unsigned  
Title and date bottom left - Gewels ou Huise,  
Pretoria 1912



P1521

### 48 House - Prinsloo and Struben Streets

#### Huis Prinsloo en Strubenstraat

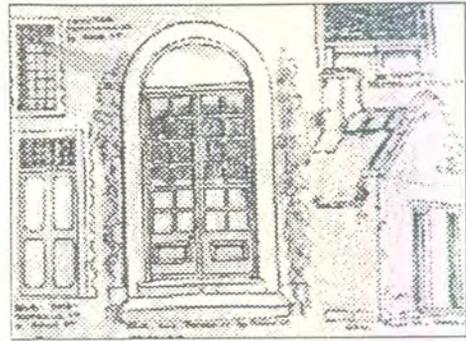
255 X 340 Donation, the artist 1949  
Signed bottom right J H Pierneef 1912  
Title bottom left - Prinsloo & Struben



P1531

**49. Doors and Windows of Houses, Pretoria**  
**Deure en Vensters van Huise, Pretoria**

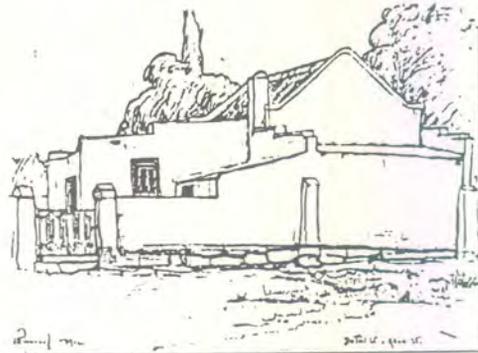
240 X 325 Donation the artist 1949  
 Signed bottom left J H Pierneef 1912 -  
 each drawing  
 bearing an identification:  
 Top left - Venster Pretorius st. by Koch st.  
 Bottom left - Deur. Pretorius st. by Koch st.  
 Centre bottom - Deur. Huis. Proes st. by Mark st.  
 Top right - Bo venster. Pretorius st. by Andries  
 Bottom right - Gewel. Proes st - Mark st.



P1525

**50. House - du Toit and Church Streets**  
**Huis du Toit en Kerkstraat**  
**(Preller se Huis)**

250 X 340 Donation, the artist 1949  
 Signed bottom left J H Pierneef 1912  
 Title bottom right du Toit St. + Kerk St.



P1527

**51. Van der Howe's Drift - Apies River**  
**v d Howe's Drif - Apiesrivier**

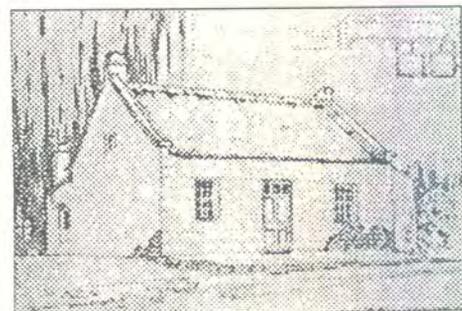
243 X 333 Donation, the artist 1949  
 Signed bottom left J H Pierneef 1911 -  
 followed by v d Howe's Drif  
 At bottom right - Apies Revier



P1523

**52. House - Koch Street between Proes and Vermeulen Streets**

**Huis: Kochstraat tussen Proes en Vermeulenstraat**  
**(Staatsdrukkery)** 255 X 355 Bought 1949  
 Signed bottom left J H Pierneef 1912  
 Title bottom right - Koch St tussen Vermeulen en Proes St  
 Inscription at top right - Koch St. Staats Drukkery



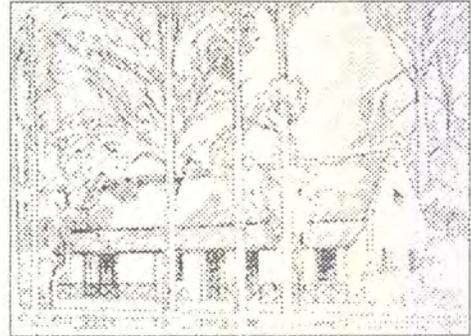
P1524

53. **Old Red Mill at Daspoort**  
**Ou Rooi Meul by Daspoort**  
 252 X 352 Bought 1949  
 Signed bottom right Pierneef '12  
 Title bottom left



P1537

54. **House - corner of Pretorius**  
**and Andries Streets**  
**Huis - h/v Pretorius en Andriesstraat**  
 279 X 360 Donation, the artist 1949  
 Signed bottom right J H Pierneef '11  
 Title bottom left - Hoek Pretorius - Andries St.



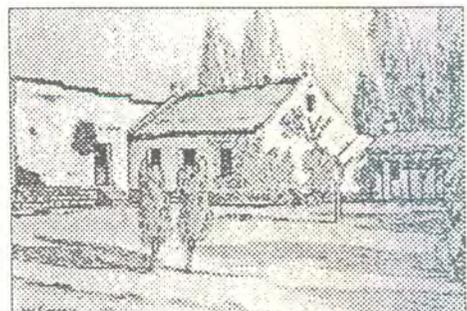
P1560

55. **House corner of Market and Proes Sts**  
**Huis: h/v Mark en Proesstraat**  
 265 X 365 Donation, the artist July 1949  
 Title bottom left - Hoek Mark en Proes st -  
 and immediately following - J H Pierneef  
 1912



P1520

56. **Jess's Cottage**  
 260 X 360 Donation the artist July 1949  
 Title bottom left followed by signature  
 and date 1910



P1530

57. **Van der Howe's House on the Apies Rivier**

**v d Howe's Huis by Apiesrivier**

265 X 360 Donation, the artist 1949

Signed bottom right J H Pierneef 1911

Title bottom left - v d Howe's Huis by Apiesrevier



P1540

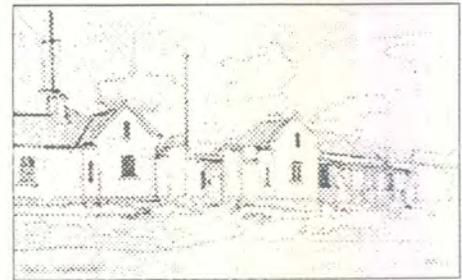
58. **Jail, Visagie Street**

**Tronk, Visagiestraat**

210 X 350 Donation, the artist July 1949

Signed bottom right J H Pierneef 1912

Title bottom left



1516

59. **Smithy, Prinsloo Street**

**Smidswinkel, Prinsloostraat**

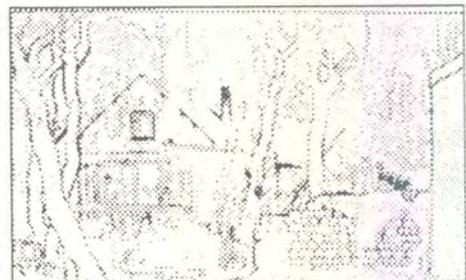
**Fowler en/and von Hagen**

268 X 350 Donation, the artist 1949

Signed bottom right J H Pierneef 1912

Title bottom left - Smidswinkel. Prinsloo st.

Fowler & von Hagen



P1559

60. **Eink's Brewery - corner Proes and Koch Streets**

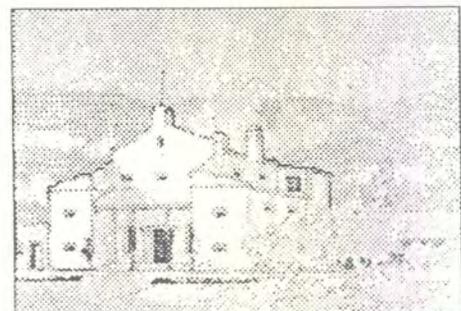
**Eink's Brouery hoek Proes en Kochstraat**

240 X 310 Donation, the artist 1949

Signed bottom right J. H. Pierneef 1912

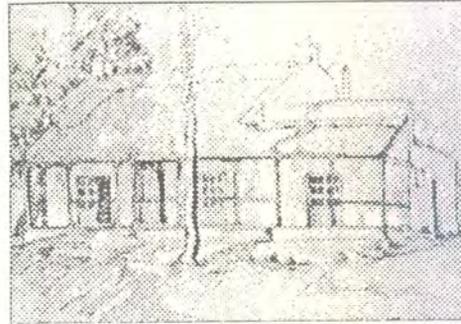
Date 1933

Title bottom left - Eink's Brouery hoek Proes en Koch st.



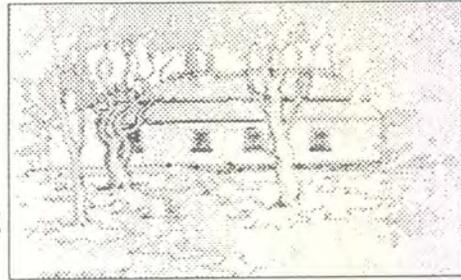
P1557

- 61. Schoeman Street**  
**Schoemanstraat**  
 262 X 339 Donation, the artist 1949  
 Bottom left J.H. Pierneef 1912  
 Bottom right - Schoeman st.



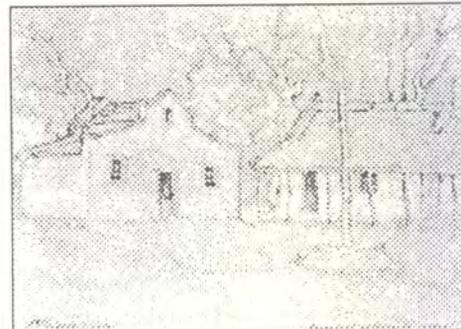
P1526

- 62. House: v d Walt and Scheiding Sts**  
**Huis: v d Walt en Scheidingstraat**  
 220 X 335 Donation the artist 1949  
 Title bottom left v d Walt en Scheiding St.  
 Initialled and dated bottom right: JHP 1912



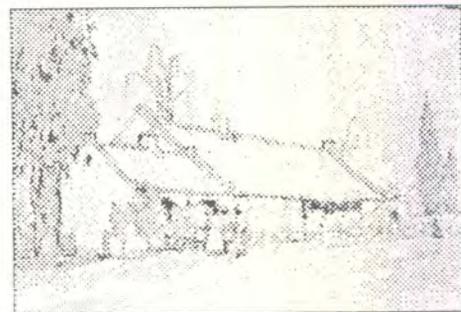
P1534

- <sup>20</sup>  
**63. House: Proes street by Market Street 1883**  
**Huis: Proes by Markstraat 1883**  
 260 X 330 Bought  
 Signed bottom left J.H. Pierneef 1912  
 Title bottom right - Proes st. by Mark st. - 1883



P1545

- <sup>21</sup>  
**64. House: Proes Street by Market Street**  
**Huis: Proes by Markstraat**  
 255 X 360 Donation the artist 1949  
 Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef 1912  
 Title bottom right - Proes st. by Mark st.

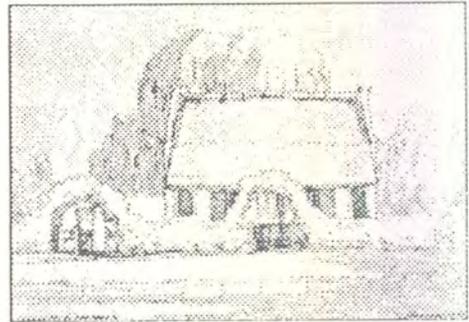


P1519

<sup>20</sup> Drawing dated 1912 but the date 1883 indicates some earlier source, whether drawing or photograph.

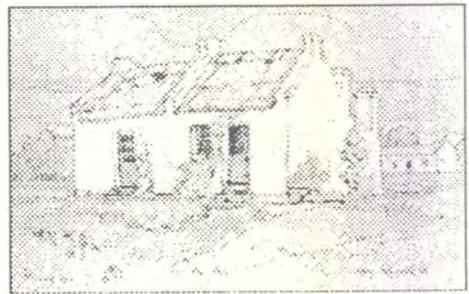
<sup>21</sup> This is one of the rare early drawings in which the human figure appears.

- 65. House: Andries by Schoeman Street**  
**Huis: Andries by Schoemanstraat**  
259 X 355 Donation the artist 1949  
Signed bottom right J. H. Pierneef 1912  
Title bottom left - Andries st. by Schoeman st.



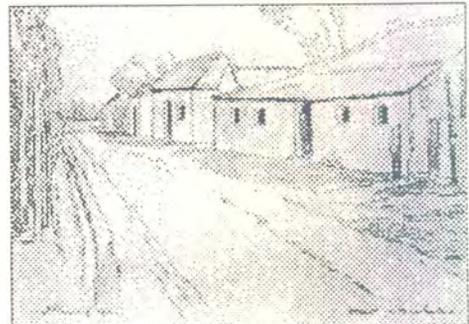
P1555

- 66. House: Koch and Schoeman Streets**  
**Huis Koch en Schoemanstraat**  
229 X 353 Donation the artist 1949  
Signed bottom left J H Pierneef 1912  
Title bottom right - Koch en Schoeman st.



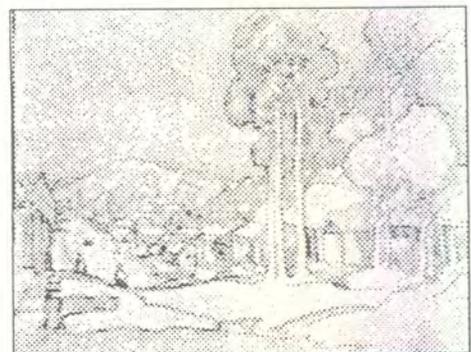
00/182

- 67. Sreet in Marabastad**  
**Straat in Marabastad**  
275 X 367 Donation the artist 1949  
Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef 1912  
Title bottom right



P1558

- 68. Boom Street from the Asiatic Basaar**  
**Boomstraat vanaf Asiatebasaar**  
265 X 340 Donation the artist 1949  
Signed bottom right 1912  
Title bottom left - Boom St. vanaf As. Basaar

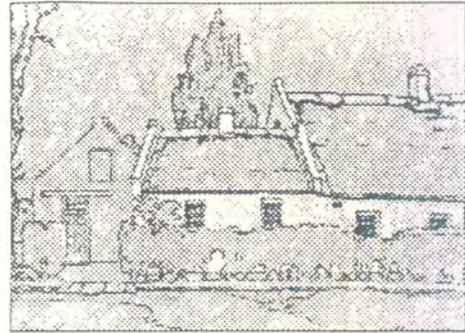


P1529

**69 House: Proes Street**

**Huis: Proesstraat**

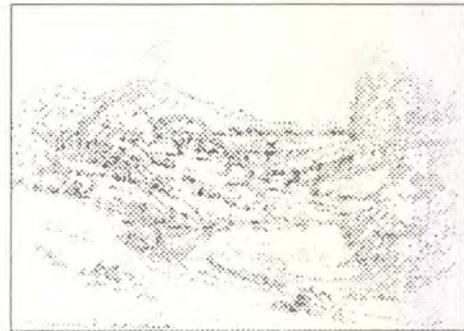
260 X 340 Donation the artist 1949  
 Signed bottom right J. H. Pierneef 1912  
 Title bottom left - Proes St.



P1522

**70. Apies River at v d Hove's Drif**  
**Apiesrivier by v d Hove's Drif**

270 X 360 Donation the artist 1949  
 Signed bottom right Pierneef 1913  
 Title inscribed bottom left: Apiesrevier by v d  
 Hove's Drif



P1536

**71. House: Boom and Market Streets**

**Huis: Boom en Markstraat**

250 X 356 Bought  
 Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef 1913  
 Title bottom right - Boom & Markt St.



P1528

**72. House: Koch and Pretorius Streets**

**Huis: Koch en Pretoriusstraat**

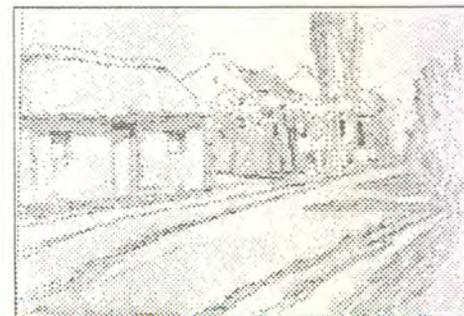
253 X 360 Bought  
 Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef 1913  
 Title bottom right - Koch - Pretorius St. Pretoria.



P1533

**73 Street in Skoolplaas, Pretoria**  
**Straat in Skoolplaas, Pretoria**

260 X 370 Donation the Artist 1949  
 Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef No date  
 Title follows on after signature on left with  
 Pretoria at bottom right

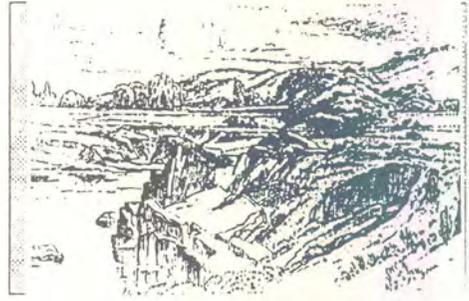


P1538

**74. Apies River**

**Apiesrivier**

265 X 367 Donation the artist 1949  
Signed bottom right Apiesrevier. 1913. Pierneef

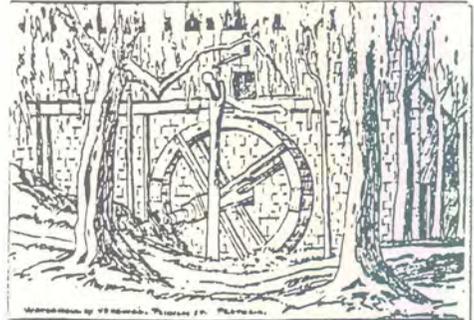


P1532

**75. Water Mill at v d Hove's Drif**

**Watermeul by v d Hove se Drif**

260 X 370 Donation the artist 1949  
Signed bottom right J. H. Pierneef No date -  
1925 on catalogue card  
Title from bottom left - Watermeul by vd  
Howe's. Prinsloo St. Pretoria



P1539

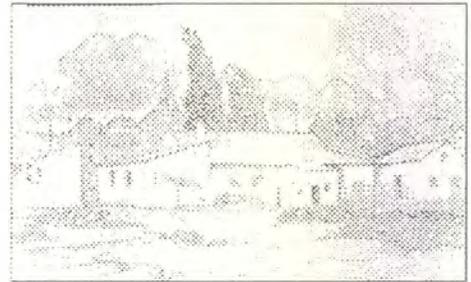
**76. Pretoria Club**

250 X 365

Title bottom left

Signed bottom right J. H. Pierneef 1912

Ex Melrose House - permanent return to the  
Pretoria Art Museum Collection



**77. Afternoon in the Veld Fraudulent? <sup>22</sup>**

**Middag in die Veld**

200 X 290

Signed bottom right in pencil



**78. Back View of Building**

**Agterplaasgeboue**

Signature in pencil at bottom left with what could  
be 12 following, written in a sloping hand which  
is totally unlike Pierneef's signature which is char-  
acteristically vertical.

<sup>22</sup> The last two items on this list, 77 and 78, are highly suspect and should be listed as doubtful Pierneef material.

## Watercolour Paintings

This section includes watercolours, gouache and casein works. Pierneef very seldom painted what may be described as a pure watercolour. There is only one example in this collection, No 90 on the list, where a few faint pencil marks may be distinguished but the marks of the watercolour brush predominate. The Pierneef collection, housed in the National Cultural History Museum, also has a good example of what may be called a pure watercolour painting by the artist.

The catalogue card usually describes a Pierneef watercolour as executed in pencil and watercolour. These works may also be described as watercolour drawings. As in the four preliminary studies for Rustenburg Kloof (No. 90) the drawing dominates and is highlighted by touches of watercolour.

The small copy after Stow, "Eland and Bird" (No. 85) is the only example of a gouache in the collection except for No. 86 where gouache may have been used in an attempt at repair.

Six works executed in casein are included in this section and are among the artist's most charming and colourful in this genre. In an appreciation written by Ernest Lezard in 1927, he supplies an excellent explanation of casein: - "the materials used for binding the colours are casein, with the addition of albumen, wax, resin and occasionally a little oil or balsam. - Prepared by Fritz Gerhardt of Düsseldorf. It is not likely that it will become a very popular process with artists owing to the extreme difficulty of its manipulation, as after application to the prepared surface the mixed paint sets like a fine and indestructible cement." \*

This may be part of the reason for the impressionistic technique often employed by Pierneef in this medium. It is admirably demonstrated in No. 81 where the sky, visible behind the delicate trails of willow branches, has been rendered in small dots of pink and yellow. The largest and most beautiful example of the artist's mastery of this difficult medium is the view of Zanzibar harbour in the collection of the National Cultural History Museum, Pretoria.

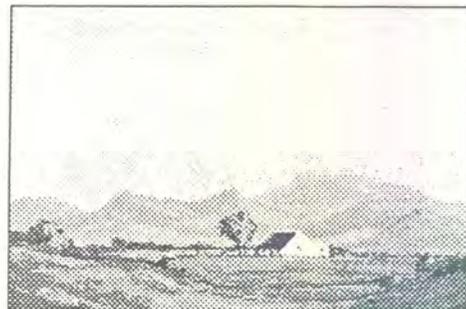
\* Exhibition catalogue.

79. **The Green Veld**  
**Die Groen Veld**  
Casein 360 X 520  
Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef 1923  
Donation Prof E H D Arndt 6. 3. 84



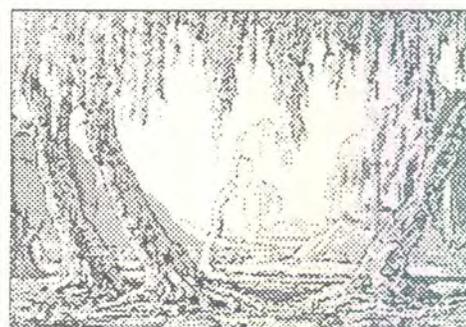
84/20

80. **Farmhouse near Rustenburg**  
**Plaashuis naby Rustenburg**  
Casein 138 X 195  
Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef. Undated  
Bought from Mrs T Vlok Aug/Sept 1972



72/26

81. **Willows - at Apies River**  
**Wilgerbome - by Apiesrivier**  
Casein 217 X 294  
Signed bottom left Pierneef  
Donation Mrs T Hugo 29. 3. 71



71/9

82. **Mountain in Level Landscape**  
**Berg in Vlak Landskap**  
Casein 216 X 246  
Signed bottom left Pierneef '26  
Bought M J Beyers 6. 3. 75



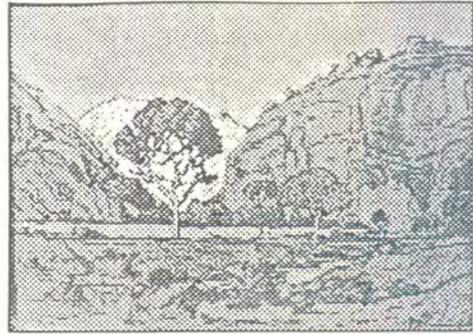
75/25

83. **Karoo Scene near Prince Albert**  
**Karootoneel by Prins Albert**  
Casein 216 X 285  
Signed bottom right J. H. Pierneef Undated  
Bought from J P Fitzgerald 5. 5. 87



87/17

- 84. Near Rustenburg**  
**By Rustenburg**  
 Casein 216 X 290  
 Signed bottom right J. H. Pierneef  
 Bought 20. 1. 90



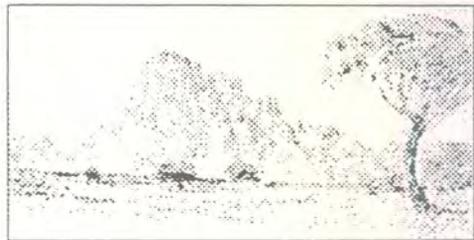
90/05

- 85. Eland and Bird**  
**Eland en Voël**  
 Copy after Stow  
 Gouache 250 X 365  
 Unsigned, undated  
 Authenticated by Mrs M Pierneef  
 Bought from Mrs Flather 1992



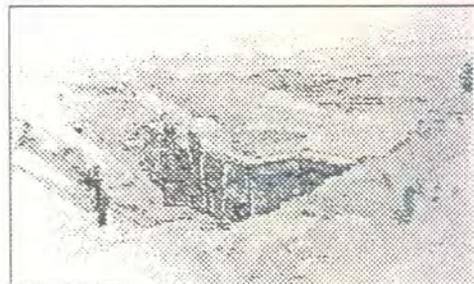
94/06 (also 92/76)

- 86. Rocky Outcrop with Tree**  
**Klipkoppie met Boom**  
 Watercolour with gouache repair 100 X 186  
 Donation D du Buisson May 1972  
 Stamped JHP bottom right



72/20

- 87. Klapperkopfort**  
 Watercolour and pencil 356 X 537  
 Signed bottom left Pierneef Undated  
 Bought from Mrs M Pierneef 11. 6. 65



65/32

- 88. McGregor** <sup>23</sup>  
 Watercolour and Pencil 260 X 358  
 Signed bottom right Pierneef  
 Title bottom left Undated  
 Bought from Dr C L Botha 4.7.67



67/17

<sup>23</sup> Restored, mounted, reframed by G Engelbrecht 27. 5. 96

**89. Landscape with Tree  
Landskap met Boom**

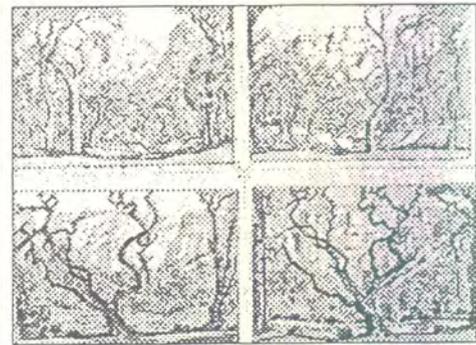
Watercolour and Pencil 246 X 348  
Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef Undated  
Bought from Mrs S Groblelaar 4. 11. 75



75/62

**90. Four Sketches: Studies for oil painting of  
"Rustenburgkloof"  
Vier Studies vir olieverfskildery van  
Rustenburgkloof**

Watercolour and pencil 4 X 176 X 232  
(each small panel)  
Overall measurement 409 X 517  
Bought



P1508

**91. Near Hartebeespoortdam  
By Hartbeespoortdam**

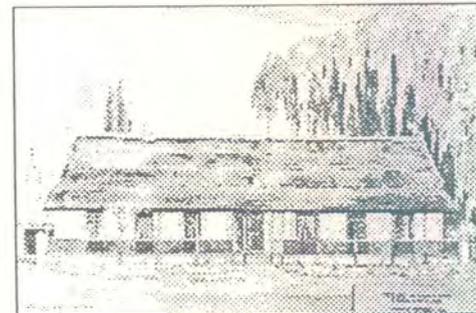
Watercolour 255 X 352  
Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef April 1946  
Bought from Mrs L Jacobz December 1957



Boo/164

**92. First House of President Kruger  
Eerste Woonhuis van President Kruger**

Watercolour Drawing 53 X 73  
Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef 1910 - Pretoria  
Bought July 1949



No acquisition number

**93. Prinsloo House <sup>24</sup>  
Prinsloo Huis**

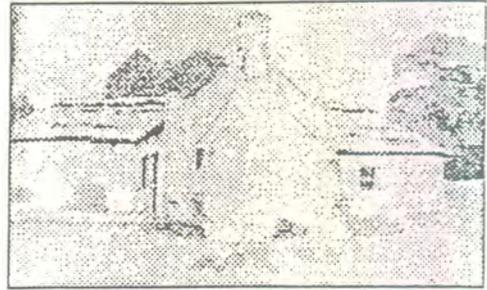
Watercolour and Pencil 115 X 162  
Title bottom left Prinsloost. - bottom right Pretoria  
On bottom right below drawing J. H. Pierneef  
1812  
Ex Melrose House



No acquisition number

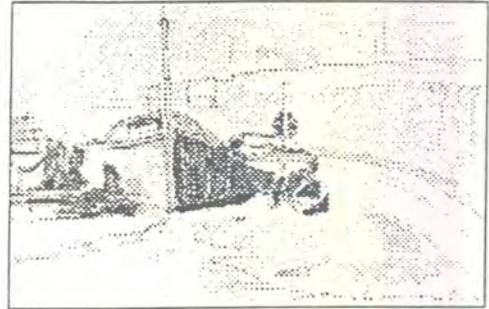
*24 This watercolour together with No 94 and the pastel No. 75 were transferred back to the Art Museum from Melrose House in 1985. See Pretoria Art Museum Bulletin Volume 20 No 1 January 1986.*

94. House - Silverton  
Huis - Silverton  
Watercolour and pencil 180 X 283  
Signed bottom right J. H. Pierneef 1919  
Ex Melrose House



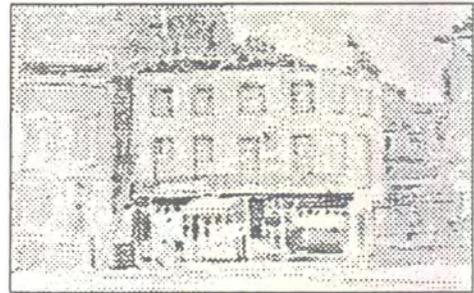
No acquisition number

95. Boats on the Thames  
Bote op die Teems  
Watercolour and pencil 230 X 350  
Signed bottom right Pierneef May/1934  
Thames. London  
Bought from Mrs M Pierneef 12. 3. 64



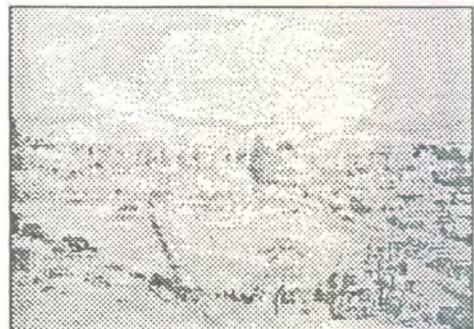
64/21

96. Cheyne Walk, Chelsea  
Watercolour and pencil 232 X 354  
Title bottom left: Cheyne Walk. Chelsea. London  
Signed bottom right Pierneef Mei 1934



64/22

97. Pretoria 1955 : Preliminary sketch for the  
commissioned centenary painting <sup>25</sup>  
Pretoria 1955 : Voorskets vir die opdrag  
eeufees-skildery  
Watercolour and pencil 540 X 717  
Signature Date  
Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef Pretoria 1955



No acquisition number

<sup>25</sup> This painting was unknown and housed in an office at Munitoria. It was brought to the Art Museum and displayed with a collection of early South African watercolours: the Whitehead Collection, Pierneef and Charles Peers, in the Preiss Hall of the Museum during May/June 1996. It remains to be fully documented.

## Drawings

Pierneef had a natural drawing ability which he practised and refined over many years. His godfather, mentor and friend, Anton van Wouw, had admonished: "Jonge, niet alleen met je handen werken, maar goed uit je ogen kijken" and insisted in that he should first of all learn how to draw accurately before trying to paint. (Pierneef notes and reminiscences made at the time of van Wouw's death. <sup>26</sup>

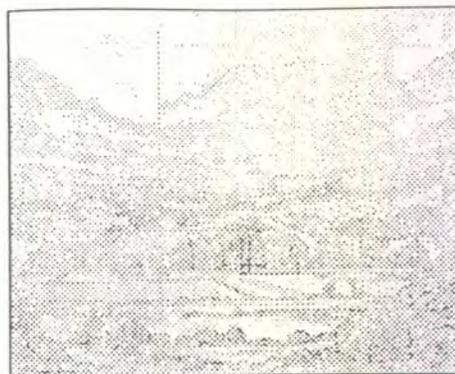
Most of the drawings in the collection were executed in pencil but there are a few (Cat Nos 98, 99 and 121) that are in the medium of charcoal while one, a decorative design (Cat No 124) which was subsequently used as a cover design for DIE NUWE BRANDWAG, was executed in black on stiff paper (Nilant 1974:181).

A good many of the drawings such as the group with acquisition numbers 65/1-20 were purchased from Mrs Pierneef after the artist's death as indicated in the catalogue.

However mannered the artist's later paintings became, his drawings were always full of life and witnessed to a close observation of nature. Cecil Skotnes remembers visiting the aged artist together with Alexis Preller and other art students and being totally fascinated by the drawings of gnarled tree-forms, rock formations and the like (Godby 1997:106). His drawings retained this quality until the very end.

<sup>26</sup> *Pierneef notes and reminiscences jotted down at the time of van Wouw's death in 1945. University of Pretoria Art Archives*

98. **Working drawing:  
Landscape (Louis Trichardt)**  
**Werkstekening:  
Landskap (Louis Trichardt)**  
Charcoal on paper 76 X 91  
Marked with an overall grid for transposition  
onto canvas  
Signed bottom left Pierneef. Trichardt 1933  
Bought from Prof. Tobie Louw 7. 6. 1977



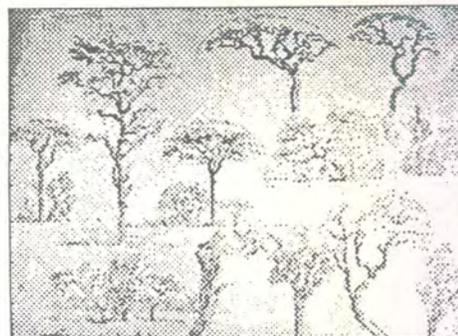
77/22

99. **Sketch for Decorative Panel:  
Landscape with Mountains**  
**Skets vir Dekoratiwewe Paneel: Landskapmet Berge**  
Charcoal 142.5 X 62  
Unsigned, undated  
Bought from Prof. Tobie Louw 7. 6. 1977



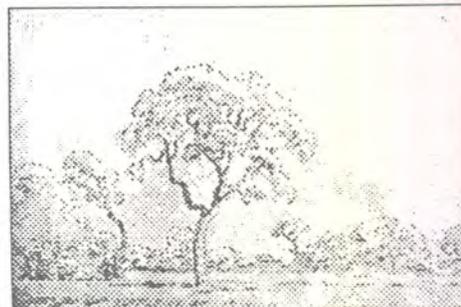
77/21

100. **Tree Studies  
Boomstudies**  
Pencil on paper 336 X 440  
Inscribed bottom left J. H. Pierneef. 1941.  
Boomstudies  
Bought from Mrs Pierneef 12. 3. 1964



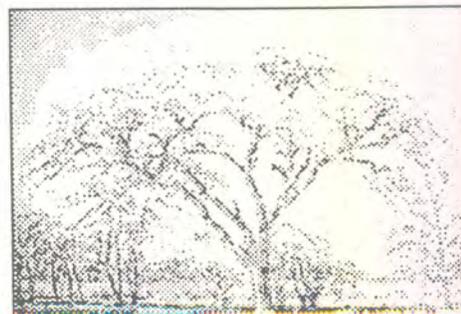
64/1

101. **Trees  
Bome**  
Pencil on paper 270 X 376  
Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef. Julie 46.  
Bought from Mrs M Pierneef 12. 3. 1964



64/2

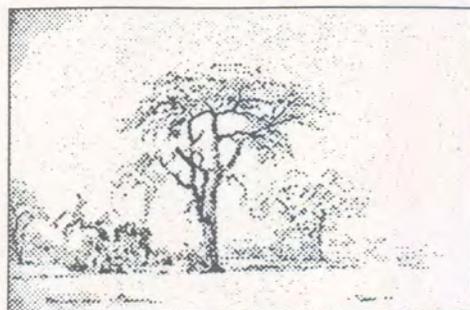
102. **Trees - Bushveld  
Bome - Bosveld**  
Pencil on paper 265 X 370  
Signed bottom left Pierneef. Julie 1946.  
Bought from Mrs M Pierneef 12. 4. 1964



64/8

**103. Bushveld  
Bosveld**

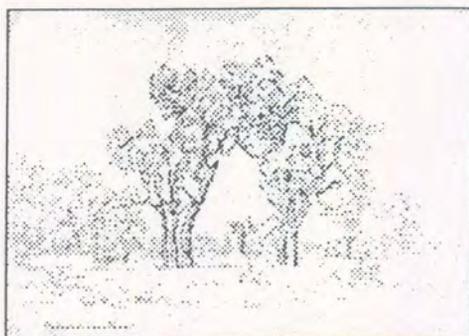
Pencil on paper 265 X 375  
 Inscribed bottom left Bosveld. 1943 - Pierneef  
 Inscribed bottom right Transvaal  
 Bought from Mrs M Pierneef 12. 3. 1964



64/4

**104. Bushveld  
Bosveld**

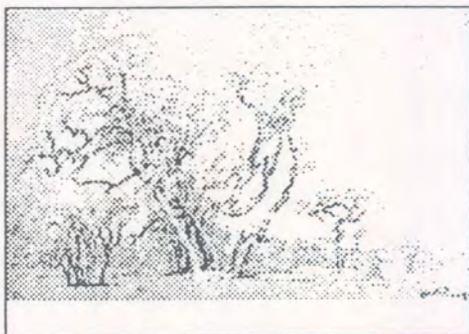
Pencil on paper 260 X 368  
 Title and signature bottom left Bosveld.  
 1943. Pierneef  
 Bought from Mrs M Pierneef 12. 3. 1964



64/5

**105. Trees  
Bome**

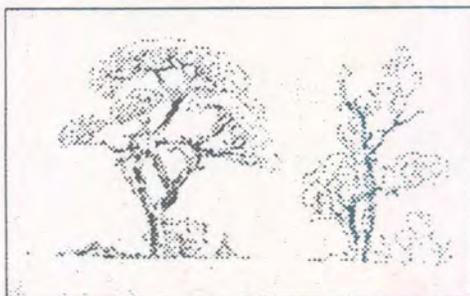
Pencil on paper 215 X 340  
 Stamped or signed bottom right  
 J. H. Pierneef  
 Undated  
 Bought from Mrs M Pierneef 12. 3. 1964



64/6

**106. Wild Syringa and Boxwood  
Wilde Sering en Boekenhout**

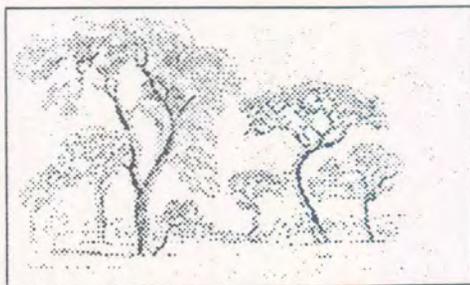
Pencil on paper 270 X 360  
 Signed bottom right Pierneef. 1939  
 Inscribed "Wilde sering" at bottom left  
 Inscribed "Boekenhout" at bottom right  
 before signature  
 Bought from Mrs M Pierneef 12. 3. 1964



64/7

**107. Boxwood and Syringa, Rustenburg  
Boekenhout en Sering, Rustenburg**

Pencil on paper 270 X 360  
 Inscribed at bottom left Boekenhout,  
 Rustenburg 1930  
 Inscribed below the tree at bottom right  
 Sering  
 Signed below to the right Pierneef  
 Bought from Mrs M Pierneef 12. 3. 1964



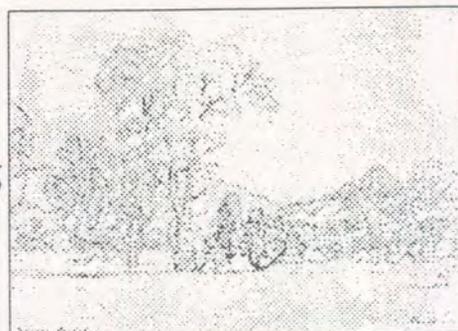
64/8

108. **Leadwood Trees, Hammanskraal**  
**Hardekoolbome, Hammanskraal**  
Pencil on paper 328 X 442  
Inscribed and signed from bottom left  
Hardekoolbome  
Hammanskraal Julie 1943. J. H. Pierneef  
Bought from Mrs M Pierneef 12. 3. 1964



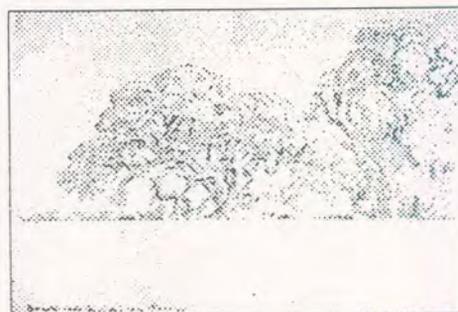
64/9

109. **Bushveld, Rustenburg**  
**Bosveld, Rustenburg**  
Pencil on paper 270 X 310  
Inscribed bottom left Bosveld, Rustenburg  
Signed and dated bottom right Pierneef  
1930  
Bought from Mrs M Pierneef 12. 3. 1964



64/10

110. **Bushveld, Waterberg District**  
**Bosveld, Waterbergdistrik**  
Pencil on paper 265 X 365  
Inscribed and signed from bottom left  
Bosveld. Waterberg dist. 1943. Pierneef.  
Stamped or signed bottom right  
Bought from Mrs M Pierneef 12. 3. 1964



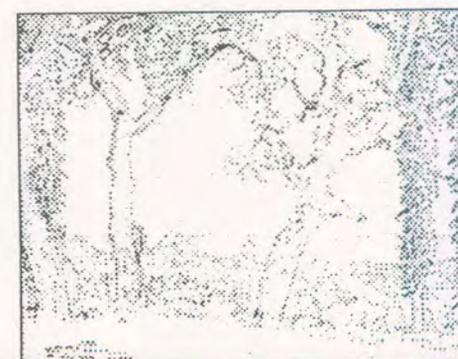
64/11

111. **The Drakensberg seen from Mica, Tvl**  
**Drakensberge vanaf Mica, Tvl**  
Pencil on paper 350 X 440  
Inscribed bottom left Drakensberg vanaf  
Mica. Tvl. 1943  
Signed bottom right J. H. Pierneef  
Bought from Mrs M Pierneef 12. 3. 1964



64/12

112. **Lowveld, Mica**  
**Laeveld, Mica**  
Pencil on paper 350 X 440  
Signature bottom left J. H. Pierneef and  
below Laeveld. Nov. 1944.  
Inscribed at bottom right Mica. O. T.  
Bought from Mrs M Pierneef 12. 3. 1964



64/13

- 113. Langeberge, K. P.**  
Pencil on paper 363 X 547  
Inscribed bottom left Langeberge. K. P. 1931  
Signed bottom right Pierneef  
Bought from Mrs M Pierneef 12. 3. 1964



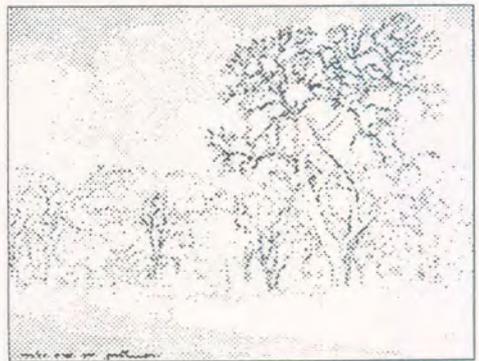
64/14

- 114. Malieps River**  
**Maliepsrivier**  
Pencil on paper 243 X 345  
Inscribed bottom left Junie 1937.  
Maliepsrivier.  
Signed bottom right Pierneef  
Bought from Mrs M Pierneef 12. 3. 1964



64/15

- 115. Mica, Eastern Transvaal**  
**Mica, Oos-Transvaal**  
Pencil on paper 346 X 436  
Inscribed bottom left Mica. O. Tvl. 1943  
followed by signature J. H. Pierneef  
Bought from Mrs M Pierneef 12. 3. 1964



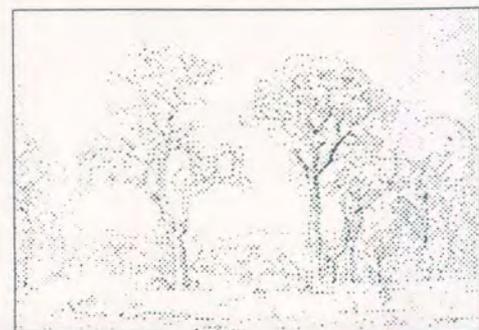
64/16

- 116. Huts, Bushveld**  
**Naturellehutte, Bosveld**  
Pencil on paper 130 X 200  
Stamped J. H. P. at bottom right  
Bought from Mrs M Pierneef 12. 3. 1964



64/17

- 117. Rustenburg**  
Pencil on paper 265 X 369  
Inscribed bottom left Maart. 1930.  
Rustenburg  
Signature bottom right J. H. Pierneef  
Bought from Mrs M Pierneef 12. 3. 1964



64/18

**118. Kloof, Rustenburg**

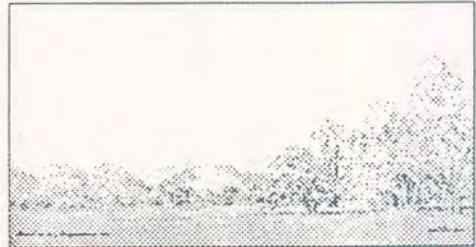
Pencil on paper 266 X 374  
Inscribed bottom left Kloof Rustenburh. 1939  
Signed bottom right Pierneef  
Bought from Mrs M Pierneef 12. 3. 1964



64/18

**119. Selatie near Leydsdorp  
Selatie by Leydsdorp**

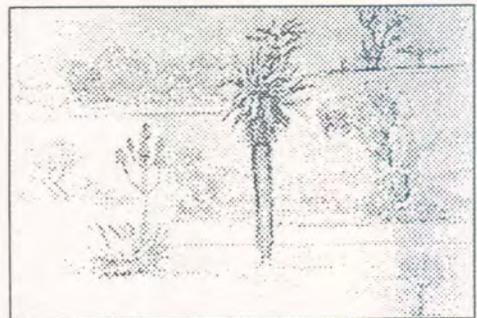
Pencil on paper 275 X 491  
Title at bottom left Selatie by Leydsdorp.  
42  
Signed bottom right J. H. Pierneef  
Bought from Mrs M Pierneef 12. 3. 1964



64/19

**120. Drawings - Aloes and Trees  
Tekeninge - Aalwyne en Bome**

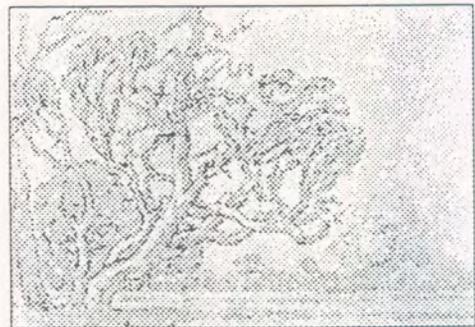
Pencil on paper 249 X 348  
At bottom left Junie 1937  
Unsigned  
Bought from Mrs M Pierneef 1965



64/20

**121. Resin Tree**

**Harpuisboom**  
Charcoal on grey paper 267 X 356  
Inscribed from bottom left Harpuisboom.  
Pierneef. 43  
Bought from Miss K Skawran  
October 1964



65/33

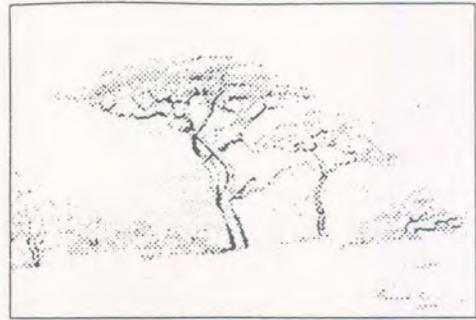
**122. Ars Longa Vita Brevis**

Pencil on paper 120 X 150  
Signed and dated bottom left J. H.  
Pierneef Sept. 1. 1936  
At bottom right ARS LONGA VITA  
BREVIS  
Legacy Dr Kessel



78/11

123. Wild Syringas  
Wilde Seringbome  
Pencil on paper 352 X 517  
Inscribed at bottom right Pierneef. Rustenburg  
Tvl with below that Julie 1919  
Acquired from Dr F Lategan



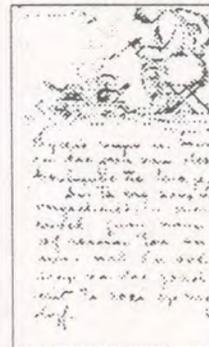
64/18

124. Mountain Peaks, Jonkershoek -  
Design for Nuwe Brandwag  
Bergpieke. Jonkershoek -  
Ontwerp vir Nuwe Brandwag  
Black ink on stiff paper 311 X 392  
Signature bottom right in design



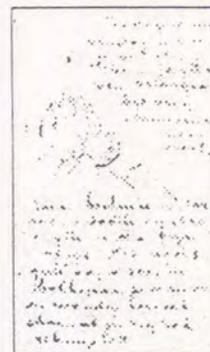
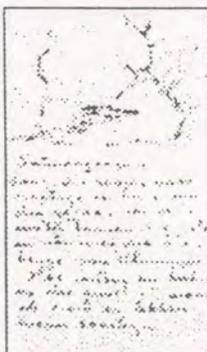
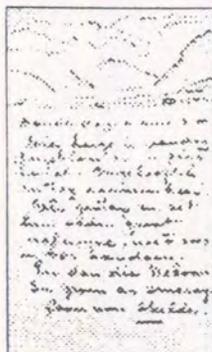
64/19

125. Seven pages from a Notebook: 27  
a) Maandag - By die vuur...  
b) Woensdagaand  
c) Donderdag. 11. uur. vm.  
d) Vrijdag nm.  
Gisteraand kamp opgeslaan tussen  
Pietersburg en Haenertsburg  
Pencil 194 X 114  
e) Saterdagoggend  
f) Sondag. 12 uur. - Aalwyn  
g) Sondagaand 9. uur - Aalwyne  
At bottom left Junie 1937  
Unsigned  
Bought from Mrs M Pierneef 1965



a

b



c

d

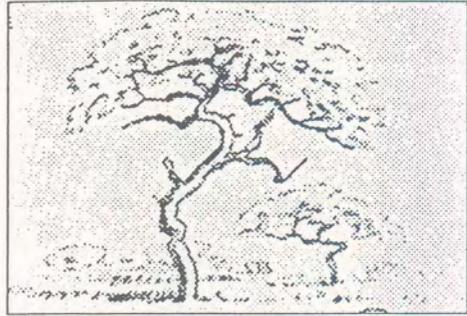
e

f

g

27 These drawings, No 125 to 133 were entrusted to the Curator of the Pretoria Art Museum. The source was Dr F C L Bosman who died in Pretoria in 1981. Frieda Harmsen used the seven small sketches in No. 125 for an article entitled OUT-OF-DOORS WITH PIERNEEF as well as two other sketches No 126 and No 128 (pp 168 - 178). The article was written for ART AND ARTICLES in honour of Heather Martienssen. (Balkema 1973) so that this material must have been donated before the above date.

126. **Thorn tree**  
**Doringboom**  
Pencil 8 X 114  
Top section of notebook page. Writing  
cut away

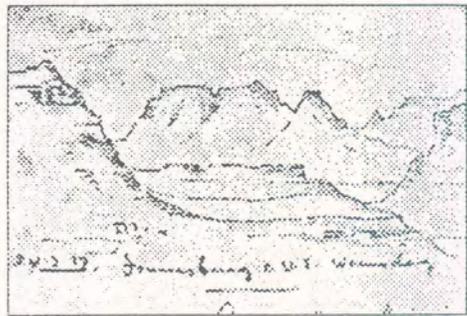


65/33

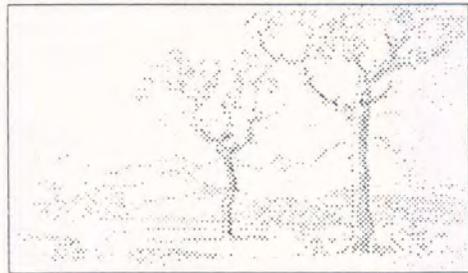
127. **Landscape Sketch**  
**Landskap Skets**  
Pencil 9 X 135 in pencilled frame  
Below bottom left Pretoria, Vrydag. -



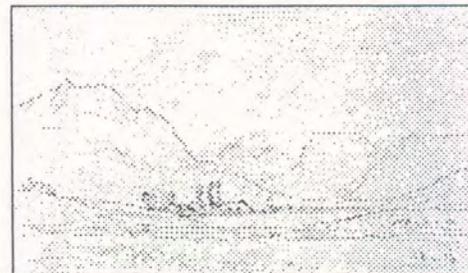
128. **Fouriesburg O.V.S. Woensdag**  
Dated 24. 3. 37. at bottom left  
Pencil 85 X 124  
Inscription and date below drawing



129. **Two trees in Landscape**  
**Twee bome in Landskap**  
Potlood 88 X 149  
No date or inscription



130. **Mountain Landscape with Farmhouse**  
**Berglandskap met Plaashuis**  
Pencil 75 X 124  
Dated at bottom right 28. 4. 36.

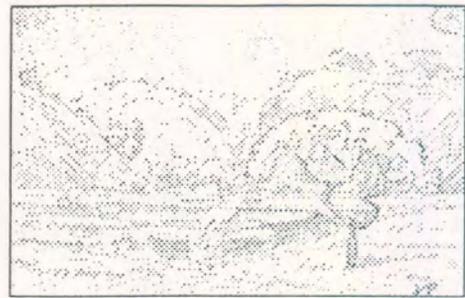


**131. Mountain Landscape with Tree in right foreground**  
**Berglandskap met Boom regs in die voorgrond**

Pencil 110 X 175

Initialed JHP at bottom right

Dated 1937 in top righthand corner

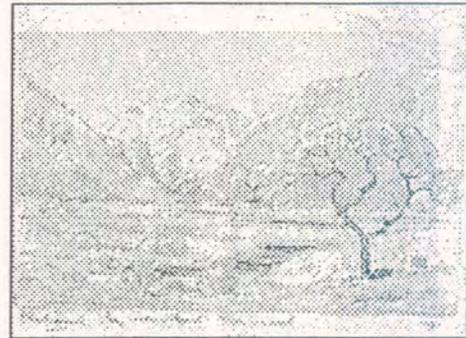


**132. Platrevier by Warmbad. Transvaal**

Pencil 175 X 226 (size of sheet)

Inscription below drawing at bottom left

Date 1937 at bottom right



**133. Townscape - Street with gardens in foreground, house at top right**  
**Doorpstoneel - Straat met tuin in voorgrond, huis bo reg**

Pencil 207 X 270

Initialed JHP at bottom right

Dated 26. 5. 37. at bottom left



## ETCHINGS

### 134 Tree Study Boomstudie

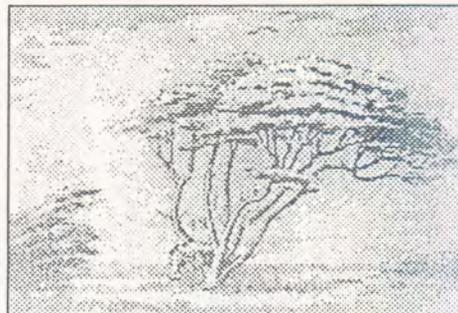
156 X 237

Signed and inscribed from bottom left

J. H. Pierneef impr.

Prof. Louwerijs Pretoria 19 Mei 1920

Bought from Mr L Raavé 18/06/68



68/82

### 135 Treetrunks Boomstamme

67 X 97

Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef impr.

Dated 1920 bottom right

Donation Mrs C J Grosskopf June 1968



68/80

### 136 Evening Mood (Willows, Heidelberg) Aandstemming (Wilgebome, Heidelberg)

Etching 156 X 236 on plate line

Signed and inscribed below print, bottom left

J. H. Pierneef impr.

Donation



68/79

### 137 Evening Springbokflats Aand Springbokvlakte

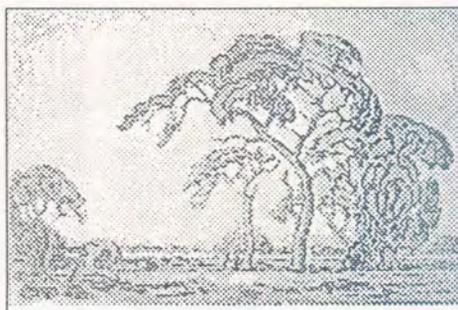
9 X 13 on plate line

Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef impr.

Dated bottom right 1928

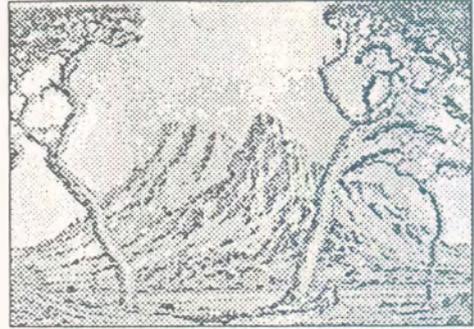
Inscribed below this: Aand. Springbokvlakte

Legacy Dr. Kessel



78/12

- 138 Mountain Landscape, Okahandja  
Berglandskap, Okahandja  
205 X 270 Numbered 83/100  
Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef, undated  
Series number at bottom right  
Freeborn Legacy 05/11/91<sup>28</sup>



P1511

- 139 Okahandja  
210 X 273 on plate mark, numbered 22/100  
Title written below print bottom right  
Dated 1920 below print bottom right  
Bought from Mrs Cloete<sup>29</sup>



00/175

28 *Washed and de-acified after acquisition, Sandra Markgraaf*  
29 *Washed and de-acified after acquisition, Sandra Markgraaf*

## Linocuts/Woodcuts

Most of the black and white prints marked as a donation in this list were donated to the museum by Mr. J L van Schaik in 1965. According to the reports of the donation there should be 122 items (Pretoria News 8 September 1965).

Before putting together this catalogue it was attempted to physically control the information by locating and identifying each work. Two of the works could, however, not be located although they are illustrated in Nilant (1974 : 151, 153).

The series of prints was commissioned from the artist by Mr. van Schaik in 1950. He realised that a full series executed by the artist himself, would have particular value to a serious collector.

The series was printed between 1950 and 1952 and donated to the museum by Mr. van Schaik in 1965. There were 122 in all. Most of the museum prints are, therefore, part of the "van Schaik Collection". Where other such prints were acquired by the museum, either by purchase or donation, this is indicated in the catalogue.

It should be noted that the artist himself always referred to these black and white prints as "houtsneë" although most of them had been printed from a linoleum block. The art of the woodblock print had undergone a renaissance in the early years of the twentieth century and owed a great deal to the importation of Japanese prints to the West, often as packaging material. The STUDIO, published in England since 1893, had articles on Japanese art in practically every one of its early issues and also published a good deal on the art of the woodcut.

Most of Pierneef's black and white prints were made during the thirties, after which he abandoned this art form in favour of painting. The earliest dated print in the museum collection is signed by the artist and dated 1919 (Cat 209).

For the purpose of this catalogue it has been found feasible to follow the pattern set by F E G Nilant in "Pierneef Linosneë" as this supplies a very complete and well-organised record of the artist's black and white oeuvre. The categories are well-defined as follows:

- A. Cape Architecture, town scenes and mountains
- B. Houses in Pretoria and the Transvaal
- C. Landscapes in the Orange Free State and the Transvaal
- D. Trees
- E. South West Africa (Namibia)
- F. Portraits
- G. Cultural Subjects
- H. Book Titles, Magazine Illustrations and Ex Libri

- 140 **Chicken Run, Meerlust**  
**Hoenderhok, Meerlust**  
273 X 262  
N p 33



56/87

- 141 **Farmhouse at Prince Albert**  
**Plaashuis by Prins Albert**  
456 X 460  
Signed P in block  
N p 34



65/117

- 142 **Fishing Harbour, Hermanus**  
**Viissershawe, Hermanus**  
194 X 252  
N p 35



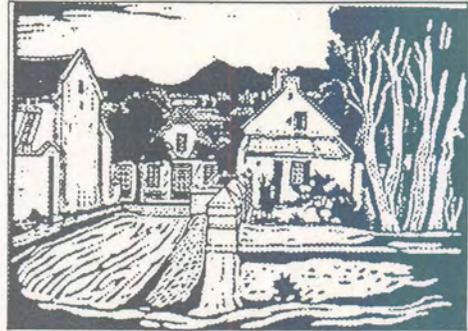
65/138

- 143 **Cruciform Church, Tulbagh**  
**Kruiskerk, Tulbagh**  
290 X 350  
N p 37



65/98

- 144 Street in Tulbagh  
Straat in Tulbagh  
292 X 353  
N p 38



64/42

- 145 Street in Tulbagh  
Straat in Tulbagh  
289 X 345  
N p 39



65/135

- 146 Group of Houses, Tulbagh  
Groep Huise, Tulbagh  
127 X 175  
N p 40 Groep Huise, Tulbagh



65/133

- 147 Tulbagh, C P  
Tulbagh, K P  
196 X 255  
N p 41 Huis en Berge



65/134

- 148 On the Braak, Stellenbosch  
Op die Braak, Stellenbosch  
197 X 142  
N p 43



65/60

- 149 Old Gateway, Stellenbosch  
Ou Poortjie, Stellenbosch  
194 X 147  
N p 44



65/113

- 150 Krommerivier, Stellenbosch  
224 X 389  
N p 45



64/44

- 151 Krommerivier, Stellenbosch  
224 X 389  
Bought Adler Fielding Gallery 1964  
Catalogue entry - Kaaps Hollandse  
huis  
N p 45



64/44

- 152 Cape Farm, Krommerivier  
Bolandse Plaas, Krommerivier  
138 X 195  
N p 46



65/96

- 153 Wine Cellar, Herte Street  
Wynkelder, Hertestraat  
100 X 126  
N p 47 Gewel, Stellenbosch



65/155

- 154 Gable, Stellenbosch  
Gewel, Stellenbosch  
196 X 146  
N p 48 Gewel Hertestraat, Stellenbosch



65/82

- 155 Krommerivier, Stellenbosch, C P  
Krommerivier, Stellenbosch, K P  
132 X 210  
N p 49 Tweelingpieke, Stellenbosch



65/95

- 156 The Twins, Stellenbosch  
Die Tweelinge, Stellenbosch  
191 X 127  
N p 50 Die Tweelinge, Stellenbosch



65/131

- 157 Caledon, C P  
Caledon K P  
128 X 176  
N p 51 Zandfontein, K P



65/58

- 158 "Groot Constantia"  
130 X 210  
N p 52



65/80

- 159 "Groot Constantia"  
138 X 210  
N p 52



65/81

- 160 Rustenburg, C P  
Rustenburg, K P  
110 X 159  
N p 53 Plaashuis, Kaap



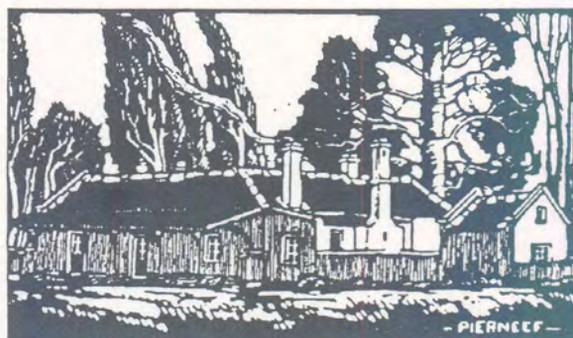
65/124

- 161 Pretoria from the Donkey Camp  
Pretoria vanaf Donkieskamp  
102 X 159  
N p 54 Dorp met Kerk



65/122

- 162 House Corner of Skinner and  
Market Sts  
Huis Hoek van Skinner en  
Markstraat  
146 X 265  
N p 55  
Huis van Braspidade de Pereira  
Pretoria



65/86

- 163 House, corner Market and Proes Street  
Huis, Hoek van Proes en Markstraat  
148 X 218  
N p 56 Dr Jorissen se Huis, Pretoria



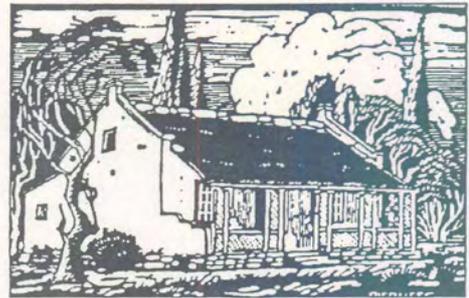
65/85

- 164 House Church and Skinner Streets  
Huis Kerk en Skinnerstrate  
147 X 223  
N p 57 "Buccaneer's Club", Pretoria



65/84

- 165 Prinsloo Street, Pretoria  
Prinsloostraat, Pretoria  
147 X 217  
N p 58 Vrymesselaarsaal, Oud Pretoria



65/121

- 166 House of Genl. Smit,  
c/o Pretorius and Church Street  
Huis Genl. Smit, h/v Pretorius en  
Kerkstraat  
137 X 261  
N p 59 Huis van Genl. Smit, Pretoria



65/78

- 167 Stables, House of Bishop  
Bousfield, Pretoria  
Stalle, Huis van Biskop  
Bousfield, Pretoria  
147 X 258  
N p 63



64/49

- 168 Corner of Du Toit and Church  
Street  
Hoek van du Toit en Kerkstraat  
146 X 265  
N p 65 Preller se Huis, Pretoria



65/83

- 169 Church Square, Pretoria  
Kerkplein, Pretoria  
101 X 115  
N p 65 Ou Kerk, Kerkplein, Pretoria



65/94

- 170 Union Buildings, 1951  
Uniegebou 1951  
149 X 221  
N p 67 Uniegebou en Doringboom



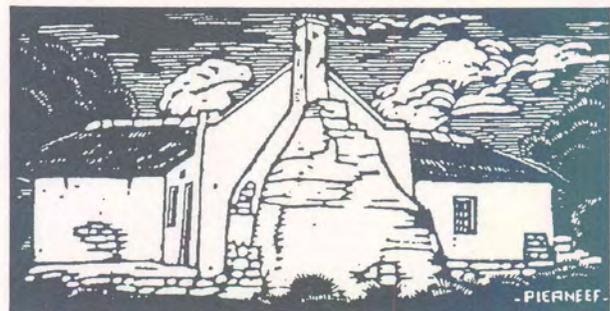
65/137

- 171 Union Buildings, Pretoria  
Uniegebou, Pretoria  
79 X 124  
N p 68



65/136

- 172 House in Silverton  
Huis by Silverton  
136 X 261  
N p 70



65/129

- 173 Silverton  
Silverton  
110 X 145  
N p 72 Ou huisie, Silverton



65/128

- 174 House Genl Erasmus,  
 Wonderboom North  
 Huis Genl. Erasmus,  
 Wonderboom-Noord**  
 145 X 217  
 N p 76 Wonderboom-Noord, Pretoria



65/77

- 175 House Genl. Erasmus  
 Huis Genl. Erasmus**  
 60 X 124  
 N p 77 Plaasgeboue



65/88

- 176 Onderstepoort, Tvl  
 Onderstepoort, Tvl**  
 111 X 150  
 N p 78 Plaashuis, Onderstepoort



65/109

- 177 Farm Dwelling, Tvl  
 Boerehuis, Tvl**  
 50 X 79  
 N p 79 Huis met Bome, Derdeport



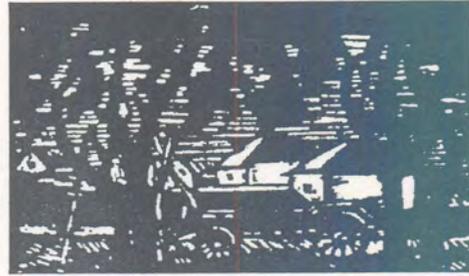
65/40

- 178 Rustenburg, Tvl  
 Rustenburg, Tvl**  
 142 X 221  
 N p 80 Huis in Rustenburg



65/125

- 179 **Betanie, Rustenburg**  
**Betanie, Rustenburg**  
63 X 146  
N p 81 Plaas Betani



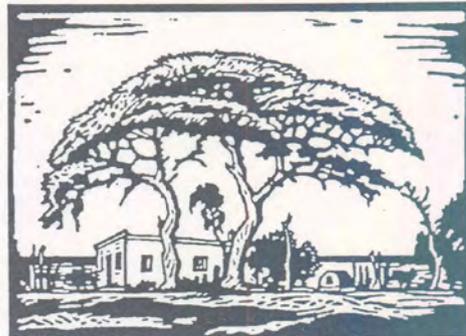
65/37

- 180 **Farm Dwelling, Rustenburg, Transvaal**  
**Boerehuis, Rustenburg, Transvaal**  
99 X 126  
N p 82 Plaashuis, Rustenburg



65/39

- 181 **Voortrekker House, Naboomspruit**  
**Voortrekkerhuis, Naboomspruit**  
161 X 208  
N p 83



65/140

- 182 **House, Lydenburg**  
**Huis, Lydenburg**  
62 X 88  
N p 85



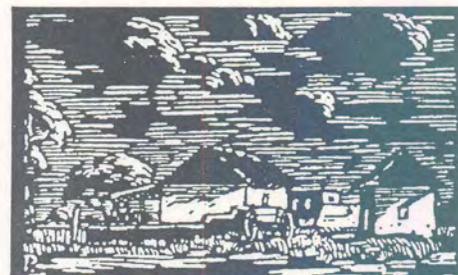
65/89

- 183 **Farmhouse, Lichtenburg**  
**Plaashuis, Lichtenburg**  
61 X 124  
N p 86 Plaasgeboue



65/118

- 184 Moonlight, N. Tvl.  
Maanlig, N. Tvl.  
77 X 125  
N p 87 Bewolkte Lug (Maanlig)



65/102

- 185 Farm, Tvl.  
Boereplaas, Tvl.  
104 X 129  
N p 88 Huis in Aand



65/41

- 186 "Paardekraal, Krugersdorp"  
138 X 107  
N p 89 Kranskop met Wolke



65/114

- 187 "The Timbers" Sussex, England  
"The Timbers" Sussex, England  
145 X 265  
Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef impr.  
Inscribed bottom right Sussex, The Timbers,  
Engeland  
N p 91 Huis in Johannesburg



65/132

- 188 Brandfort, OFS  
Brandfort, OVS  
130 X 206  
N p 92 Plaas in Vrystaat, Brandfort



65/51

- 189 At Fouriesburg  
By Fouriesburg  
103 X 130  
N p 93 Die Sfinks, Fouriesburg



65/53

- 190 Dam and Woods, Silverton  
Dam en Bos, Silverton  
111 X 173  
N p 94 Dam en Bos



65/60

- 191 Springbokflats  
Springbokvlakte  
100 X 128  
N p 95 Stormwolke, Springbokvlakte



65/130

- 192 Thortree, N. Tvl.  
Doringboom, N. Tvl.  
104 X 129  
N p 96 Doringboom, Warmbad



65/69

- 193 Bushveld, Tvl.  
Bosveld, Tvl.  
131 X 208  
N p 97 Doringboom, Potgietersrust



65/46

- 194 At Pietersburg, N. Tvl.  
By Pietersburg, N. Tvl.  
102 X 130  
N p 98 Potgietersrust, Berge



65/54

- 195 At Pietersburg, N. Tvl.  
By Pietersburg, N. Tvl.  
205 X 253  
N p Matlala, Pietersburg



65/56

- 196 At Pietersburg, N. Tvl.  
By Pietersburg, N. Tvl.  
96 X 159  
Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef L.L.P.  
Title inscribed at bottom right  
N p 100 Berg en Wolke



65/55

- 197 "Zoutpansberg, N. Tvl."  
202 X 254  
N p 101 Bome en Berge, Soutpansberg



65/157

- 198 "Zoutpansberg, N. Tvl."  
200 X 304  
N p 102 Landskap, Soutpansberg



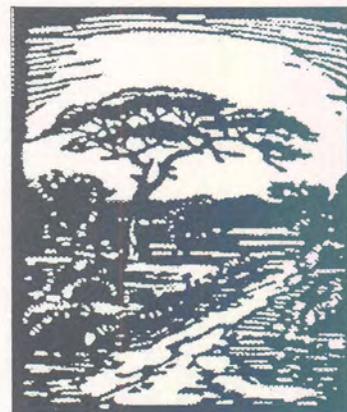
65/158

- 199 "Waterval-onder"  
138 X 196  
N p 103



65/141

- 200 The Road, N. Tvl.  
Die Pad, N. Tvl.  
130 X 104  
N p 104 Die Eensame Pad



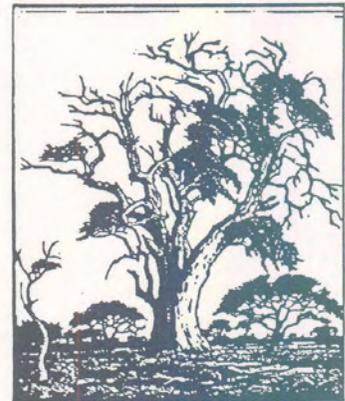
65/64

- 201 Matala, N. Tvl.  
87 X 126  
N p 106 Landskap met Koppies



65/105

- 202 Leadwoodtree, Tvl.  
Hardekoolboom, Tvl.  
355 X 283  
Bought from Mrs. T. Hugo  
N p 109



71/10

- 203 Tree trunk, Tvl.  
Boomstam, Tvl.  
280 X 185  
N p 110 Boomstam en Denneboom



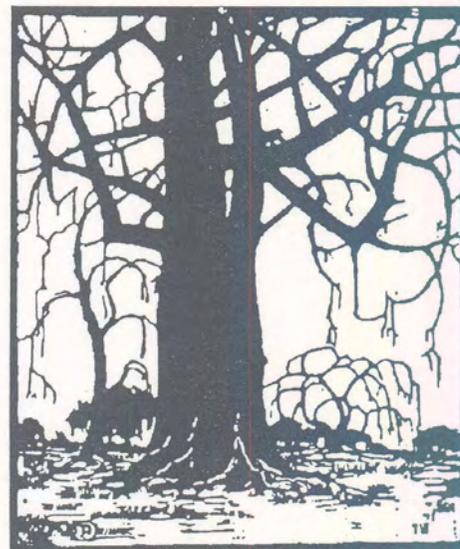
65/42

204 Bluegums  
Bloekombome  
315 X 199  
N p 112



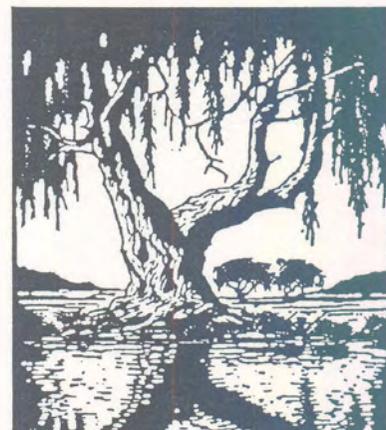
65/38

205 Willowtree in the Winter  
Wilgerboom in die Winter  
380 X 290  
N p 113



65/144

206 Willowtrees  
Wilgerbome  
372 X 304  
N p 114 Wilgerboom in die Somer



65/151

- 207 Willows <sup>30</sup>  
Wilgers (Wilkerbome)  
74 X 128  
N p 115 Wilgerboomstamme



65/150

- 208 Willows <sup>31</sup>  
Wilgerbome (Wilkerbome)  
72 X 124  
N 117 Boomstamme



65/147

- 209 Landscape with Trees <sup>32</sup>  
Landskap met Bome  
73 X 124  
Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef  
impr.  
Dated 1919  
Gift of Mrs. C. J. Grosskopf  
June 1968



68/81

30 Wrongly indicated as 65/151 by Nilant - Museum record indicates 65/150

31 Correctly numbered in Nilant as 65/147

32 This print donated in 1968 simply bears the artist's signature and the date. The block was, therefore, made at an early date and reprinted for Mr van Schaik many years later. -No 208 (65/147)

- 210 Willows <sup>33</sup>  
Wilkerbome  
72 X 122  
N p 116 Wilgerbome



65/149

- 211 Willows, Tvl. <sup>34</sup>  
Wilkerbome, Tvl.  
74 X 126  
N p 118 Boomstamme



65/148

- 212 Willowtrees  
Wilgerbome  
177 X 285  
N p 119 Wilgerboom, Fonteine, Pretoria



65/152

- 213 Drakensberg, O. Tvl. <sup>35</sup>  
Drakensberge, O. Tvl.  
197 X 304  
N p Boomstamme en Berge



65/72

33 *Incorrect in Nilant, should be 65/149*

34 *Incorrect in Nilant, should be 65/148*

35 *Museum record reads "Drakensberge, O. Tvl." Nilant has N. Tvl.*

- 214 Willowtree, Pretoria <sup>36</sup>  
Wilgerboom (Wilkerboom), Pretoria  
214 X 262  
N p 121 Wilgerboom en Stroom



65/145

- 215 Willowtree  
Wilgerboom  
68 X 101  
N p 122



65/153

- 216 Camelthorn, S. W. A.  
Kameeldoring, S. W. A.  
304 X 201  
N p 123 Groot boom en Landskap



65/93

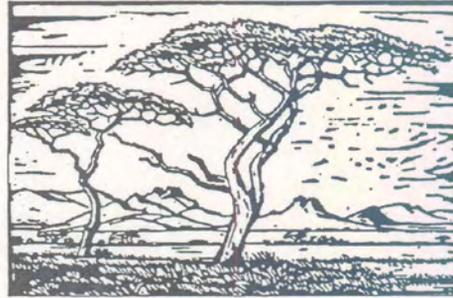
- 217 Thorntree, Springbokflats, N. Tvl.  
Doringboom, Springbokvlakte, N. Tvl.  
203 X 253  
N p 124 Doringboom in Landskap



65/70

36. *Wrongly numbered in Nilant. Museum record (yellow catalogue card) reads 65/145*

- 218 Wild Syringas, Tvl.  
Wilde Seringebome, Tvl.  
205 X 306  
N p 125 Doringboom, Rustenburg, Tvl.



65/143

- 219 Bosveld, N. Tvl.  
Bosveld, N. Tvl.  
151 X 199  
N p 126 Doringbome, Pietersburg



65/47

- 220 Thorntree N. Tvl.  
Doringboom N. Tvl.  
148 X 195  
N p 128 Doringboom in Veld



65/68

- 221 Camelthorns, Springbokflats  
Kameeldorings, Springbokvlakte  
249 X 315  
N p 130



65/92

- 222 Wild Syringa  
Wildesering  
106 X 148  
N p 131 Doringboom in Veld



65/142

- 223 Trees, S.W.A  
Bome, S.W.A,  
280 X 185  
N p 137 Wilde Sering, Tvl.



65/123

- 224 Thorntree, N. Tvl.  
Doringboom, N. Tvl.  
115 X 145  
N p 133 Doringboom, Rustenburg, Tvl.



65/47

- 225 Mimosa, N. Tvl.  
104 X 131  
N p 134



65/79

- 226 At Daspoort  
By Daspoort  
69 X 52  
N p 135 Bome



65/52

- 227 Treetrunks  
Boomstamme  
202 X 178  
N p 136



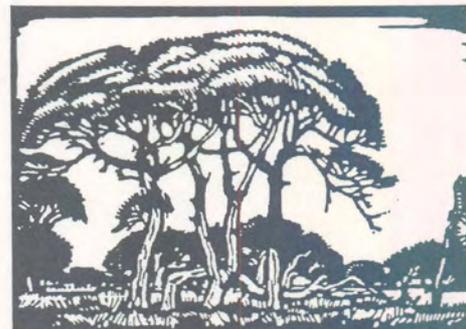
65/43

- 228 Red Bush-willow  
Rooibosboom  
280 X 185  
N p 137 Rooibosboom



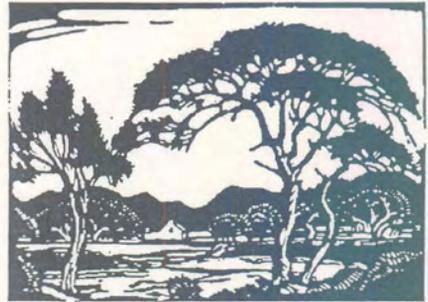
65/123

- 229 Bushveld N. Tv.  
Bosveld N Tvl.  
130 X 178  
N p 139 Mimosa S.W.A.



65/45

- 230 "Swartkoprivier", S.W.A.  
132 X 180  
N p 140



65/116

- 231 Granite rocks  
Granietrotse  
153 X 203  
N p 141 Amatako



65/79

- 232 Pump and Drinking Trough  
Amatako, S. W. A.  
Pomp en drinjbak,  
Amatako, S. W. A.  
278 X 365  
N p Waterpomp, Amatako, S, W, A,



65/119

- 233 Marienthal, S.W.A.  
153 X 201  
N p 145

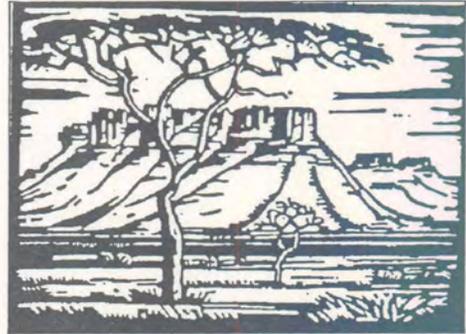


65/103

234 Marienthal, S. W. A.  
153 X 204

N p 146 Doringbome en Berge

\* This print in the museum collection is a reverse image



65/104

235 Nakop, S. W. A.  
100 X 128  
N p 147



65/107

236 Termite Nests, S. W. A.  
Miershope, S. W. A.  
Woodcut Print 196 X 137  
Numbered 46/100  
N p 148



65/106

237 Termite Nest, S. W. A.  
Miershoop, S. W. A.  
205 X 260  
N p 150



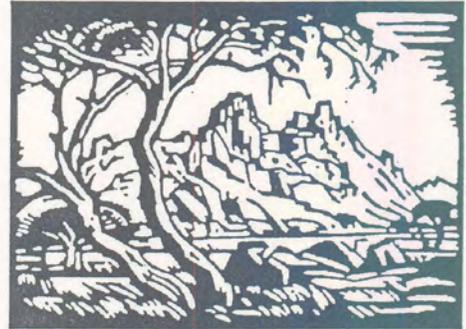
65/48

238 "Ausberg", Windhoek 37  
113 X 195  
N p 151



65/154

239 Okahandja, S.W.A.  
151 X 202  
N p 152



65/108

240 Near Windhoek, S. W. A. 38  
By Windhoek, S. W. A.  
100 X 127  
N p 153 Berglandskap, S. W. A.



65/57

241 Old Trees, S.W.A.  
Ou Bome, S.W.A.  
113 X 144  
N p 154 Verwaaide Doringbome, S.W.A.



65/112

242 Paul Kruger  
352 X 250  
N p 155



65/100

243 Paul Kruger  
175 X 92  
N p 157



65/99

244 Self Portrait  
Selfportret  
178 X 170  
N p 159



65/127

245 General de la Rey  
Generaal de la Rey  
205 X 154  
N p 161



65/76

246 "Piet Jakkals"  
156 X 100  
N p 162      Kop van 'n Boer



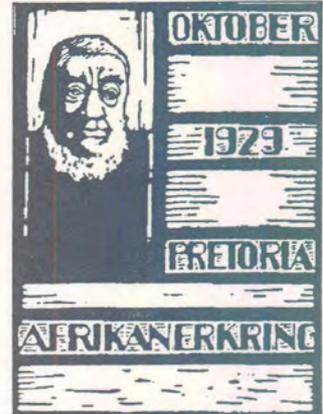
65/115

- 247 **Sammy**  
114 X 90  
N p 163



65/126

- 248 **"Pretoria Afrikanerkring, Oktober 1929"**  
270 X 190  
N p 164



65/120

- 249 **"Afrikaanse Kuns en Kultuurdag"**  
150 X 102  
Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef impr.  
At bottom right, Ontwerp.  
Beneath Afrikaanse Kuns en Kultuur-  
dag. Bloemfontein O. V. S.  
N p 165



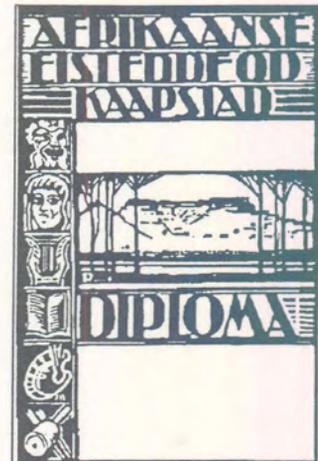
65/111

- 250 **Design**  
**Ontwerp**  
Same image as 249  
Signed bottom left J. H. Pierneef  
Dated bottom right 1929  
150 X 102  
Bought from Mrs Cronjé  
N p 165



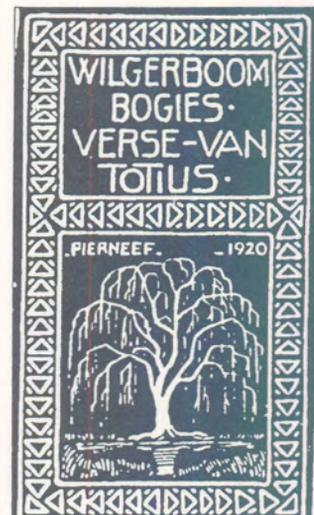
90/20

- 251 "Diploma Afrikaanse Eisteddfod,  
Kaapstad"  
320 X 210  
N p 166



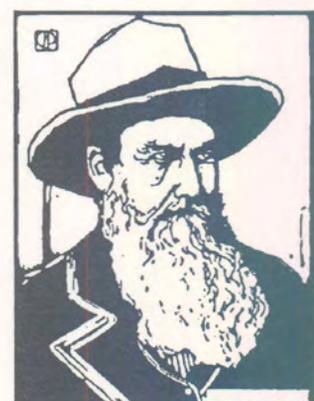
65/66

- 252 "Wilgerboombogies, Verse van Totius"  
189 X 110  
N p 169



65/146

- 253 Portrait of a Voortrekker  
Portret van 'n Voortrekker  
258 X 188  
N p 171



65/139

- 254 "Lig en Skaduwee - gedigte van D. J. Potgieter  
190 X 120  
N p 172



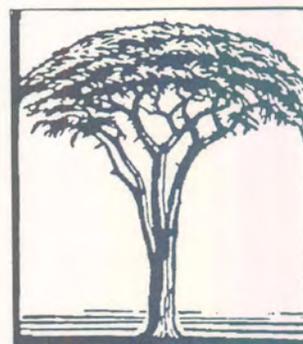
65/101

- 255 Light and Shadow  
Lig en Skadu  
74 X 120  
This is the design for 254 without the  
lettering. It has not been documented.



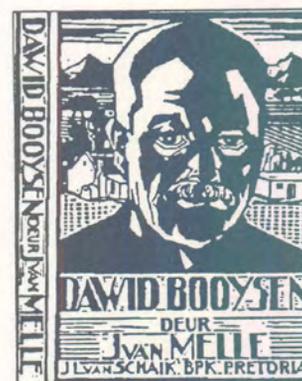
74/14

- 256 Camelthorntree  
Kameeldoringboom  
240 X 200  
N p 174



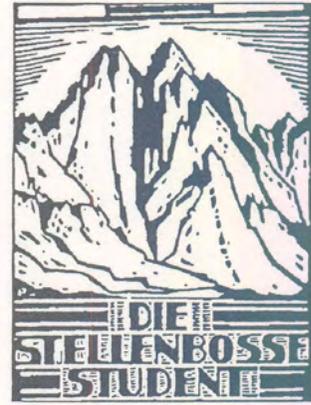
65/91

- 257 "Dawid Booyesen - deur J. van Melle"  
354 X 270  
Unsigned, Undated  
N p 175  
Donated by D. de V du Buisson. 5 March 1974



74/13

- 258 "Die Stellenbosse Student"  
258 X 182  
N p 176



65/65

- 259 Boer on Horse - Design  
Boer op Perd - Ontwerp  
50 X 47  
N p 177



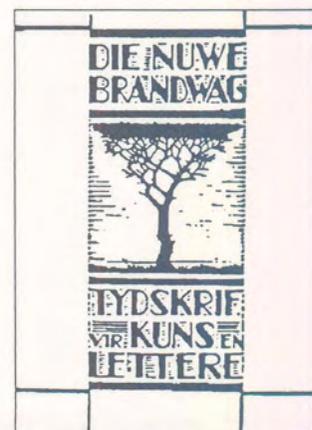
65/110

- 260 "Die Brandwag - Dubbelnummer,  
10 Desember 1916"  
278 X 227  
N p 179



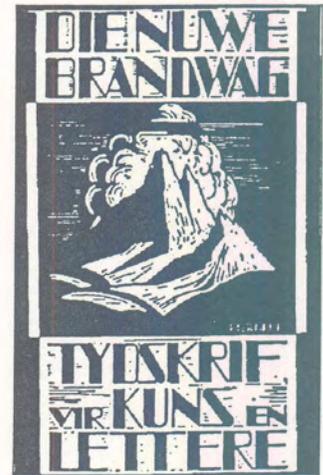
65/61

- 261 "Die Nuwe Brandwag"  
380 X 260  
N p 180



65/62

- 262 Design for "Die Nuwe Brandwag"  
Ontwerp vir "Die Nuwe Brandwag"  
311 X 392  
Design in Indian ink. Included in section on  
Drawings No 124



65/62

- 263 "Die Nuwe Brandwag"  
210 X 135  
N p 182



65/63

- 264 "Sebra"  
115 X 130  
N p 185



65/156

- 265 Ex Libris, G. C. Nel  
117 X 90  
N p 190



65/73

- 266 Ex Libris, May Oppenheimer  
140 X 110  
N p 191



65/74

- 267 Ex Libris, H. C. Swift  
210 X 160  
N p 192



65/75

- 268 Catalogue of Pictures - J. H. Pierneef  
135 X 90  
N p 195 Katalogus van prente



65/59

- 269 1933 - House Pierneef  
1933 - Huis Pierneef  
130 X 200  
N p 196



65/90

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### ***Unpublished Material***

#### ***Pretoria Art Museum Documentation - List of Documents***

1. Old Ledger together with the old acquisitions registers housed in the strongroom at the Pretoria Art Museum.
2. Anonymous. Dokumentasie en Katalogisering in die Pretoriase Kunsmuseum. Presumably written by A. J. Werth 1965.
3. Harmsen, F. 1987. Donations and Bequests of Value to the Art Historian. Paper prepared for the SA Association of Art

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**Letters, Reports and Cuttings on File**

4. Van Graan, R. 1957. Pierneef and the Veld. notes to accompany an exhibition : 2.

5. Executive Committee Resolution approved 16/07/96

i) That the practice of the placing of works of art from the permanent collection in offices and boardrooms of top management and heads of departments/directorates, be terminated.

ii) The establishment of a corporate art collection for the City Council of Pretoria

04/07/27 - To Mr. Nicholson , Town Clerk, signed by Pierneef.

03/08/27 - Payments sanctioned. 50 pounds to Mr. Pierneef for the purchase of a picture by him.

18/08/36 - To City Council from Amshewitz to announce the arrival of himself and his wife in Johannesburg.

13/10/36 - Amshewitz requests dimensions of panel, has to order canvas from England.

28/10/36 - Reply to Amshewitz from the Town Clerk's office.

23/02/37 - *Pretoria News* report : Two Pictures by Amshewitz bought by the Council : 6.

21/01/38 - *Pretoria News* report : Amshewitz panel presented to the City Council by Mr. Haskell of Johannesburg.

16/03/38 - From Mrs. Amshewitz re damage to painting. Herbert Evans repair bill - 15 pounds.

13/04/38 - To Mr. M. G. Nicholson, Town Clerk from Jan Juta about

his panels for the Council Chamber.

1938 - 1939 - 2 page report :

1. Valuations : various paintings - J. Juta, Amshewitz.

Pencil note circled at top of page: Mr. Drabbe

2. Payment by Council for pictures : Portrait of Smuts,  
Portrait of Hertzog.

Attached to these two sheets a list of prices in a fine copperplate hand (Mr. Drabbe).

06/05/41 - Enquiry from the South African Association of Museums.  
Answers required to questions.

17/06/41 - Letter to the Honourable Secretary of the South African Museums Association from the Curator, Pretoria Municipality Art Gallery in reply to above letter. Mr. Drabbe replied to the questions :

"There really is no portion in our City Hall exclusively available for our art collection. The 854 paintings, pictures, etchings and photos are distributed in six rooms and seven corridors and foyers...I am the only European person employed."

25/10/43 - Letter from the Deputy Town Clerk, A. J. O. O'Reilly re the mural paintings for the Pretorius Hall. The late Mr. J. J. Kirkness and the late Mr. Charles Maggs had donated 2000 pounds for the embellishment of the City Hall. Mr. P. A. Hendriks was commissioned to execute 6 panels representing the Muses of Art after the murals in the Council Chamber had been paid for.

?/12/48 - H. Preiss, Town Clerk orders payment for "Fishing Harbour, Arniston" painted the same year by Pierneef.

04/08/49 - Letter from Town Clerk to Pierneef thanking him for:

"die bykomstige skilderye en dertig sketse van 'Oud Pretoria' wat hy geskenk het."

24/11/49 - Letter from B. J. Versfeld, Secretary/Treasurer of the South African Association of Arts. Points out that since the renovated gallery in the City Hall was opened on 21/04/49 only two public exhibitions had been held. The committee on behalf of the Association of Arts (Northern Transvaal request the following:

- a) more frequent changes of exhibits
- b) Oerder exhibition
- c) exhibitions of the Felstead and Michaelis collections be arranged.
- d) steps be taken to exhibit the Beit collection.

09/12/49 - *Resolved at a meeting of the General Purposes and Estates Committee:*

- a) That the question of the future procedure to be adopted in regard to the exhibition of the art collection, restoration work necessary and the duties of the Curator, be referred to the Town Clerk for consideration and report at the February meeting of the Committee.
- b) That arrangements be made for the holding of an exhibition of paintings by Frans Oerder in the exhibition room during February 1950.

19/02/1958 - Letter from H. P. H. Behrens, Public Relations Officer of the City Council to the Editor of the International

Directory of Arts:

"There is at present no municipal art gallery in Pretoria apart from an art collection housed in various rooms and offices in the City Hall and other buildings. The City Council has, however, decided to build an art gallery..."

11/05/62 - Letter H. P. H. Behrens:

"A beginning has recently been made with the building of an art gallery in Pretoria..."

06/02/63 - Letter from the Town Clerk: the Curator of the Art Museum will assume duty on the 1st April.

19/03/64 - Agenda for the meeting of the Board of Trustees. Item 6 the opening function of the new museum. Report of the Curator reads as follows:

"Daar is tans amptelik besluit om die opening van die Kunsmuseum op Woensdag 20 Mei om 4.30 nm. te laat plaasvind. By hierdie geleentheid sal 'n pamflet waarin die opsetdoelstellings en algemene beleid van die Kunsmuseum uiteengesit word, beskikbaar wees."

31/07/65 - Letter from Mrs. Pierneef - "Klapperkopfort" watercolour, and pencil drawing "Aalwyne en Bome" for sale.

15/09/66 - Letter from A. J. Werth to the Director of Cultural Affairs. A list of portraits in the collection as well as the number of works in various media by Oerder, Pierneef and Wenning supplied:

Oerder - 35

Pierneef - 229

Wenning - 102

09/12/66 - Die Transvaler reports radical change in the

management of the Art Museum. The Director of Cultural Affairs, H. P. H. Behrens, announced that the Board of Trustees would be replaced by a Museums Management Committee. The decision to launch the Friends of the Art Museum was also taken.

16/07/96 - Executive Committee Resolution : That the practice of the placing of works of art from the permanent collection in offices and boardrooms of top management and heads of departments/directorates, be terminated.

***University of Pretoria Art Archive : Erich Mayer File :***

***Letters from Pierneef to Erich Mayer:***

04/09/1915 - Is sending him books - two parcels.

30/05/16 - Pierneef tells of the Potchefstroom lecture which he had to postpone because he was ill. Reports on his study of the indigenous arts, says of the Bushman studies:

"Dit is al amper twee jaar laat ek daarmee besig was. Op die gebied het ek veel ontdek, en is nog besig om meer na te vors. U mis ek veel, om oor kuns te praat, daar Wenning nogal uit is, en nou weer naar die Kaap vir ses weke..."

28/11/16 - From the library. Mentions article which appeared in the "Noord Rotterdammer" and also in Hamburg:

"Jammer laat hul nie se dat mij moeder nog van die voortrekker geslag is, sy is puur Afrikaans en ek glo dat

ek mij meest idee van haar het."

30/10/16 - Mentions on second page that he would like to discuss the basis for "'n suivere Afrikaanse kuns". The fourth page consists of a drawing of his house next to the zoo in de Waal street with the studio visible to the left next to a "wilkerboom". The front room is set aside for etching.

"Bij die eerste en beste geleendheid hoop ik breedvoeriger te skryf oor die aanpassing van kaffer-kuns. Nie alleen op dekoratief gebied nie , maar ook op die gebied van skilder-kuns."

05/07/17 - Letter addressed to No. 2033 Camp 2 c - 7 P M. Burg.  
Tells of working on "Martjie" for Jan Celliers:

"Pragtige onderwerp om te versier. Die meeste dekorasie is gebaseer op die Boesman en Bantoe-kuns. Gedurig ontdek ek nuwe motiewe.

Hoe langer hoe meer voel ik dat Hodler s'n dekorasie pragtig aanpas by die Boesmans, en dit een idiale grondslag kan wees vir Zuid-Afrikaanse kuns. Op die gebied sal ons die Voortrekkers wees hoop ik, daarom verlang ik na uw tegenwoordigheid om elkander te kritiseer.

05/09/17 - Mentions that he is painting:

"... 'n paar olieverfstudies, wat ik probeer om uit te werk op die stippelmetode."

**Also on Erich Mayer File**

11/05/33 - Modern art exhibition in Johannesburg. *The Star*.  
After 1930 Undated. A South African National Art. *The Star*.

**Letters of Willem van Konijnenburg to Pierneef (Pierneef Documentation) :**

09/03/29 - Written from "den Haag" with drawing on first page "Vrij naar Pierneef". On the third and fourth pages he mentions that it gives him pleasure to know that Pierneef has acquired his new book for his library. He mentions that this was published by van Es Wassenaar and that the publisher had taken great care with the production. This is very likely the same book which appears in the bibliography of this study and may be the van Konijnenburg mentioned in the auctioneer's booklist of 1957.

16/11/29 - Written from the same address as the previous letter. The discussion of rhythm and colour, also line of which the end result has to be "zuivere rust" is fascinating. He finds these qualities in Pierneef's work. This is the letter quoted by S. P. E. Boshoff when he argues that far from van Konijnenburg influencing Pierneef their meeting was that of two minds thinking alike. (In "Skone Kunste in Suid-Afrika" :169.)

**Photographic documentation**

The Pretoria University Art Archive is rich in photographic Documentation, much of the material being derived from the T. C. A. D. - The photographic material illustrating the artists working methods and the evolvement of a scene to its decorative essentials were derived from this source.

Cuttings from newspapers - Pretoria News reports on "Old

Pretoria" commission (See Appendix)

04/07/63 - Summarised report of an Interview with Mrs. Pierneef. Prof. H. M. van der Westhuizen and Prof. F. G. E. Nilant met Mrs Pierneef at the Aviva Hotel.

**Transvaal Central Archive Deposit (T. C. A. D.) - Pierneef drawings and Sketches - Letters :**

02/03/21 - from Gordon Leith to Pierneef expressing admiration for his work.

09/05/21 - from P. Bruchhausen : would like to introduce Pierneef to his friend Maack :

"Hy is 'n Boesman-entoesiast en wil graag jou kuns en jou opinies op Boesmangebied leer ken."

14/08/21 - Gordon Leith suggests a camping holiday.

17/12/21 - Gordon Leith indicates that Pierneef accepted the invitation.

28/01/22 - from Mrs. K. van den Heever asking for a painting to illustrate the cover for a song she is composing : "Rooi Dagbreek".

01/06/22 - from C. P. Newberry of the farm "Wonderkop", Twee Spruit. O. F. S. He has heard of the Bushman panels in Ficksburg and invites Pierneef to his farm.

01/06/22 - Second letter from "Wonderkop".

18/09/22 - from Pearse, University of the Witwatersrand - agrees with Gordon Leith and others on art teaching in South African

Schools. Would like to exchange ideas on the subject with Pierneef.

12/08/23 - Nancy Courtney-Acutt writes from Naboomspruit:

"The country is now what we call Pierneef's colour - the golden yellow of ripe corn or the South Coast sands..."

30/06/23 - Dora Price of 49 Brooks street, Brooklyn refers to an article in "The Studio". Reports lack of success in the selling of woodcuts.

30/06/25 - Norman Price wrote a letter of recommendation to a London friend:

"Mr. Pierneef is a recognised authority on Bushman art and is thinking of having an exhibition in London or Paris."

He calls Pierneef "South Africa's leading artist".

13/08/25 - Pierneef's evidently in London. Letter of invitation from R. Smith.

18/11/25 - from Emil Schweickerdt expressing pleasure at the critical appreciation and good reception accorded Pierneef's exhibition in Amsterdam:

"...aangesien dat die Hollanders so streng kritiseer".

23/05/27 - Jenny Leech to Pierneef "My dear Henry".

#### ***National Cultural History Museum Records***

11/07/19 - Letter to Pierneef from R. J. van Reenen. Sends him the plan of the Ficksburg school hall. 8 panels envisaged. Would like an estimate of the likely cost. (See Appendix)

**Johannesburg Art Gallery : PF M33**

**24/08/1933 - Letter J.H. Pierneef to T. M. Steele**

**03/01/1934 - Letter J.H. Pierneef to T. M. Steele**

Appendix 1 - Documentation - "Old Pretoria" commission.

Resolution - Council meeting 31/01/1949

Newspaper report 05/08/49

Pretoria News Series on "Pretoria: Yesterday and

Today : August 1 1949

August 2 1949

August 3 1949

August 5 1949

August 6 1949

August 9 1949

Undated cutting

Undated cutting

University of Pretoria Art Art Archives.

Town Clerk's Department,  
PRETORIA.  
4th February; 1949.

TO : CURATOR, ART GALLERY  
CITY TREASURER (3)  
MR. BALSON  
FILE (3)

The following resolution was passed at the meeting of the  
COUNCIL (G.2)  
held on the 31st January, 1949.

*S.P.C. 13.1.49.*

PIERNEEF PAINTINGS OF "OLD PRETORIA".

Report of Curator, Art Gallery :-

"As members of the Pretoria City Council are aware, Mr. J.H. Pierneef has in his possession a series of sketches of "Old Pretoria" amongst which are interesting views of buildings and places now no longer in existence or vastly changed. Councillors will remember that Mr. Pierneef recently indicated his intention to paint a selection of these on a larger scale with a view to their forming a uniform collection of views of earlier Pretoria and that the matter of the City Council's possible purchase of a selection of these has from time to time been informally discussed.

I have taken the liberty of asking Mr. Pierneef what he would want for a series of fifteen oil paintings of a minimum size of 22" x 25" and he has indicated his willingness to execute such a series for a total of £900, which would be a reasonable figure for the undertaking. In view of the comparative scarcity of Pierneef paintings in our civic collection and in view of the immense historical interest as well as aesthetic significance of such a group of pictures, I recommend that consideration be given to commissioning Mr. Pierneef to carry out a series of fifteen pictures on the lines indicated, with the proviso that the City Council be given the first refusal of any additional ones which the artist may feel like painting."

RESOLVED :

That Mr. J.H. Pierneef be commissioned to carry out a series of 15 paintings of views of "Old Pretoria" at a total price of £900, subject to the condition that the Council shall be given the first refusal to any additional similar paintings which Mr. Pierneef may undertake.



# Skilderye Oorbandig Tydens<sup>5-8-49</sup> Onthaal

**D**IE amptelike oorhandiging van skilderye en sketse van ou Pretoria deur J. H. Pierneef aan die stadsraad het Woensdagmiddag in die kunsgalery van die stadsraad plaasgevind. Die stadsraad het die skilderye van Pierneef bestel as deel van die munisipale kunsversameling en die burgemeester, mnr. J. C. Fourie, het die skilderye namens die stadsraad ontvang.

'n Aantal van die skilderye is deur die skilder geskenk. Foto's (deur mnr. C. H. van Tilburg) van die plekke soos hulle daar tans uitsien het onder die skilderye en sketse gehang en dit was besonder interessant om te sien hoe Pretoria verander het sedert die tyd toe mnr. Pierneef die sketse gemaak het. Hy het die vroegstes in 1910 al geroen.

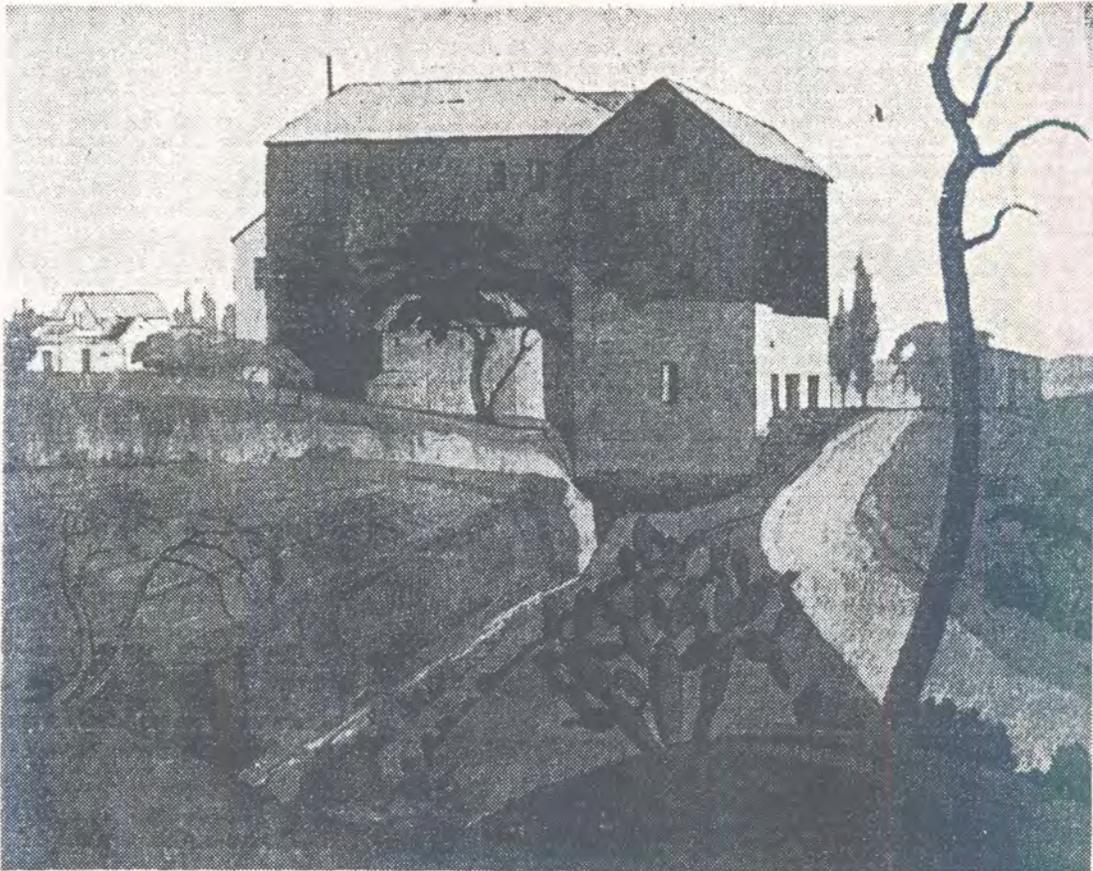
Mev. Pierneef het haar eggenoot vergesel. Ook aanwesig was die kurator van die kunsgalery, mnr. Le Roux Smith le Roux wat net die vorige middag vanuit Europa teruggekeer het. Mev. Le Roux het aantreklik vertoon in 'n swart enkellengte-tabberd waarby sy 'n klein ronde hoedjie met 'n tulesluis gedra het. Die kurator van Johannesburg se kunsgalery, mnr. Anton Hendriks, was ook teenwoordig.

Ons het mnr. Walter Batiss, wat so pas uit Italië teruggekeer het, daar opgemerk, asook prof. A. M. Meiring. Oud-Pretorianers wat gekom het om kykies in die verlede te kry, was mev. Kenne Malherbe, mev. W. Zwaan en mev. M. Greenlees. Mnr. en mev. J. Downie was ander bekende Pretorianers.

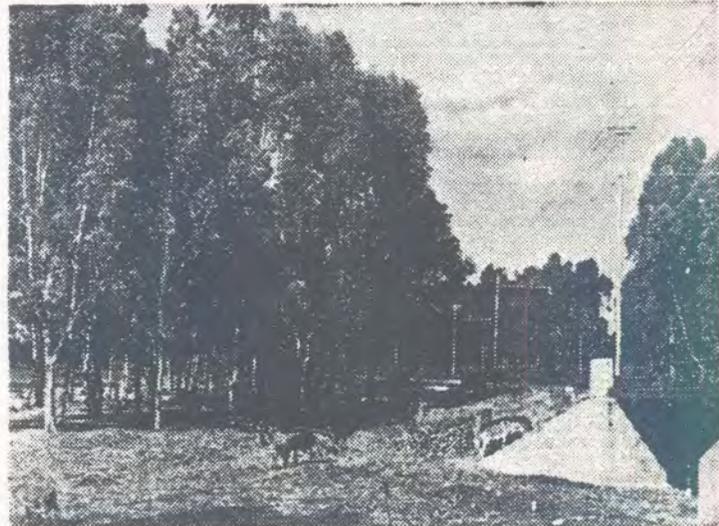
Die hoofmagistraat van die hoofstad, mnr. W. Ross, en mev. Ross het ook die funksie bygewoon. Mev. Ross se swart hoedjie, versier met rose en tule was opvallend. Die burgemeestersvrou, mev. Fourie, het sjarmant vertoon in 'n grys uitrusting waarby sy 'n rooi hoed gedra het.

Raadslede wat aanwesig was, is mnr. D. P. van Heerden, L.V., mnr. Frank le Roux en mnr. P. van der Merwe. Mnr. Norman Eaton, bekende argitek, was ook teenwoordig, asook dr. en mev. J. F. le Grange.

## PRETORIA: YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

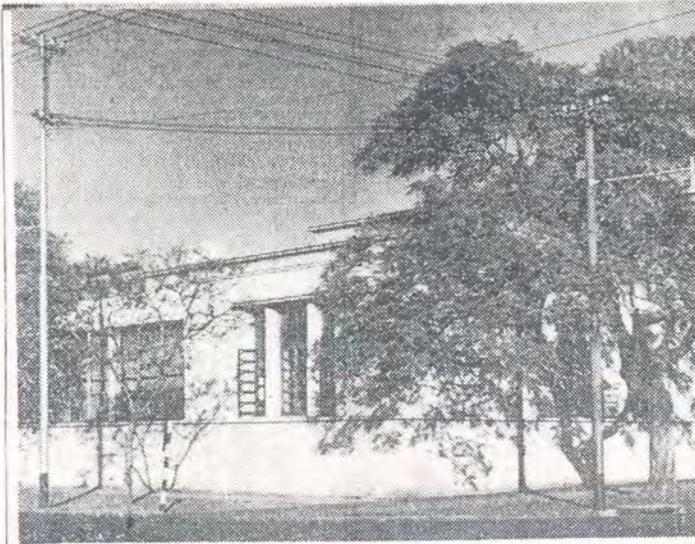


THEN — The Old Mill at Daspoort, painted by Pierneef from a sketch made by the artist nearly 40 years ago. This is one of the pictures of old Pretoria which have been acquired by the City Council.

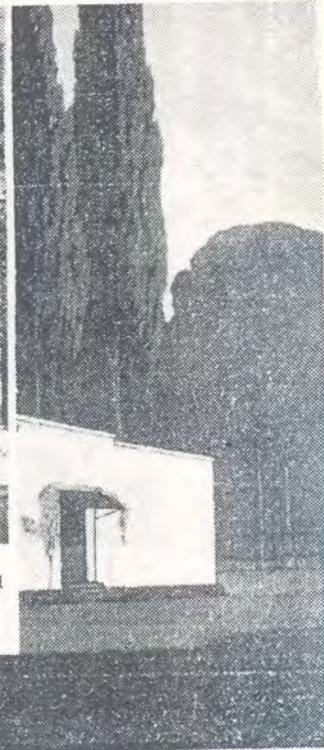


NOW — This photograph shows the present-day appearance of the site on which once stood the Old Mill at Daspoort.  
Photos by C. A. van Tilburc

## PRETORIA: YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY



NOW — The same site to-day at the corner of Paul Kruger and Proes Streets. This building once housed the German Club. (Photo by C. A. van Tilburg.)



THEN — A house in Pretoria at the corner of Market (now Paul Kruger) and Proes Streets, as it was about 40 years ago. This is one of the paintings of old Pretoria by Pierneef acquired by the City Council

### Pierneef Trying to Trace Old City Families

THE Pretoria artist, M. J. H. Pierneef, is trying to trace, through old documents at the Deeds Office, the names of the original owners of the city's old houses. With the disappearance of the houses themselves, many of the links with the old families of Pretoria have been lost, he told the "News" in an interview to-day.

Mr. Pierneef is hopeful, however, that when the series of paintings he has just completed for the City Council are handed over to-morrow, that further details may be discovered, for some of the members of Pretoria's oldest families have been invited to attend the ceremony.

The sketches of the old houses in the city, which Mr. Pierneef used as a basis for the pictures he has just completed for the Council, were begun nearly 40 years ago in 1910.

"My idea at the time was to preserve for the citizens of this city, a record of the old Pretoria which was soon to disappear," he

said to-day. "Knowing that these old houses would be condemned by the Municipality because of their thatched roofs, and mud floors, I made sketches of them with the intention of presenting them to the Municipality at a later date."

From the original 30 sketches, Mr. Pierneef has now completed 17 paintings, 15 of which were bought by the Municipality, and three of which he presented to the city. In addition, Mr. Pierneef has presented a water-colour of President Kruger's first house, which stood on the site of the present Native Commissioner's Offices, next to the Kruger Museum.

#### HANDING OVER

The pictures are now hanging in the Art Gallery of the City Hall, and will be officially handed over at a cocktail party to be held at the Art Gallery to-morrow afternoon.

Mr. Pierneef hopes in the future to paint pictures from the remaining 12 sketches. All the sketches are also to be handed over to the city.

### Paintings of Old Pretoria Given to Council

Thirty-one "Views of Old Pretoria" by the Pretoria artist J. H. Pierneef were officially handed over to the Pretoria municipality at the opening of an exhibition in the City Hall Art Gallery yesterday evening.

Knowing that the old houses would eventually be condemned, Mr. Pierneef made his first sketches from which the paintings have been made, in 1910.

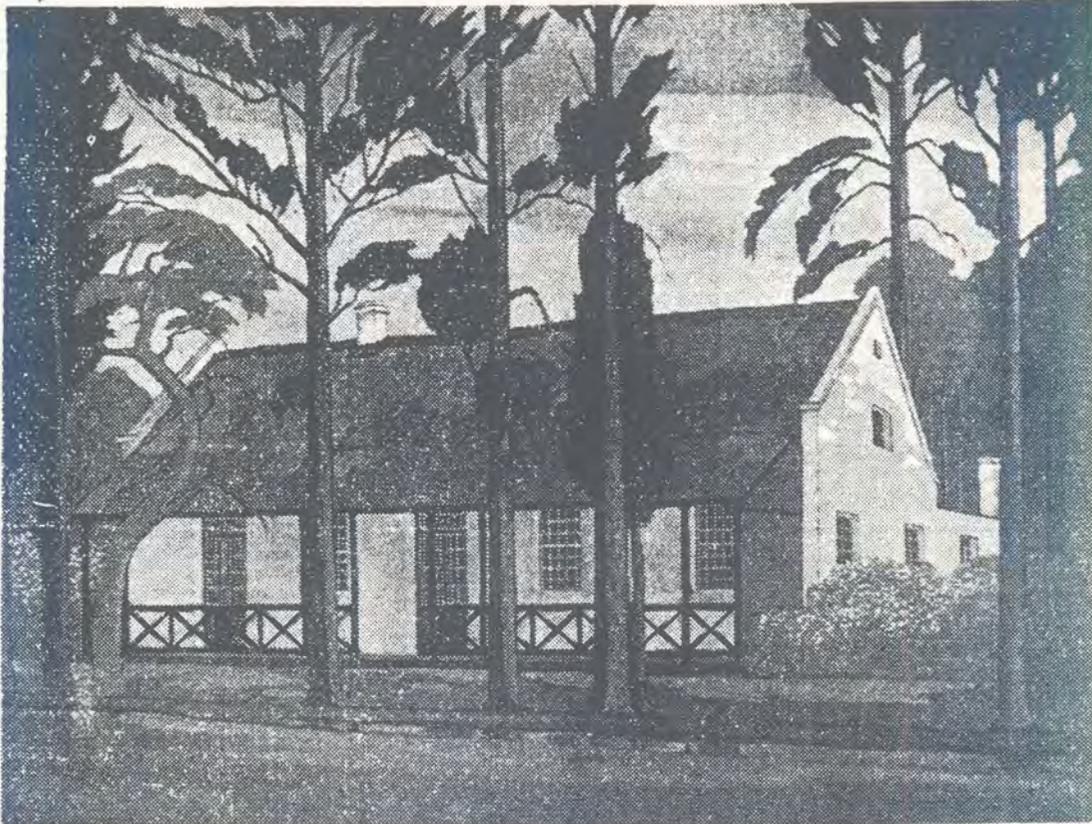
The Mayor of Pretoria, Mr. J. C. Fourie, said: "These paintings and the original sketches made 40 years ago, are the most important acquisition the Pretoria Art Gallery could hope to have, and a worthy successor in the City Hall to the Pieter Wenning Collection."

Mr. Le Roux Smith le Roux, Director of the Pretoria Art Centre, said that the interest shown in these views of old and fast-disappearing Pretoria indicated that in future no Pretoriana would again be lost to the city.

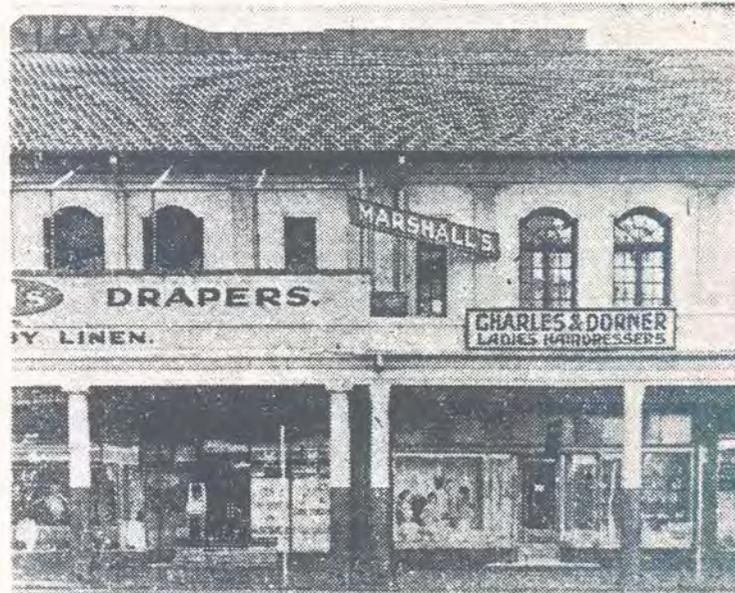
Among those who attended the opening and the cocktail party that followed, were: The Mayoress of Pretoria, Mrs. J. C. Fourie, Mr. Anton Hendriks, Curator of the Johannesburg Art Gallery, and Mrs. Hendriks, Mr. Walter Battis, Dr. F. C. L. Bosman, Mrs. Myles Bourke, Mrs. Le Roux Smith le Roux, Mr. Peter Marais, and members of the City Council and their wives.

PRETORIA NEWS, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 3, 1949

*Pretoria — Old and New*



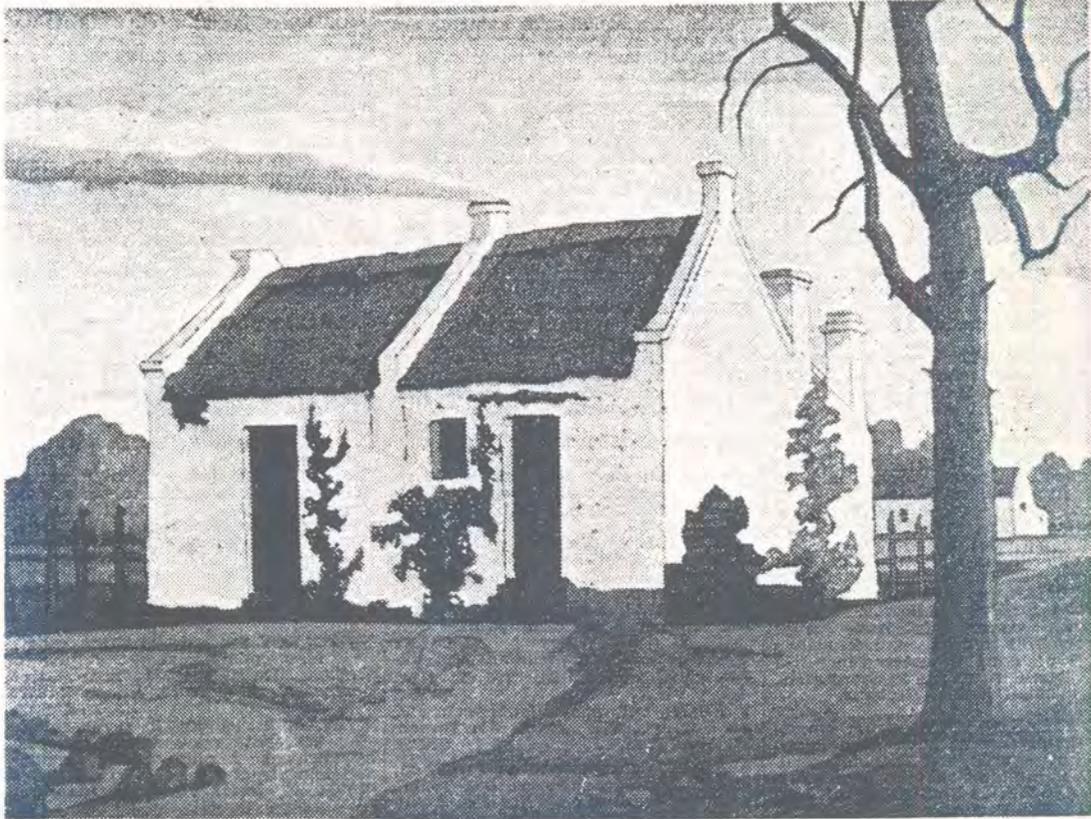
THEN.—About 40 years ago this old house stood at the corner of Pretorius and Andries Streets, when it was sketched by Pierneef. The painting from the sketch is one of the old Pretoria set of pictures recently acquired by the City Council.



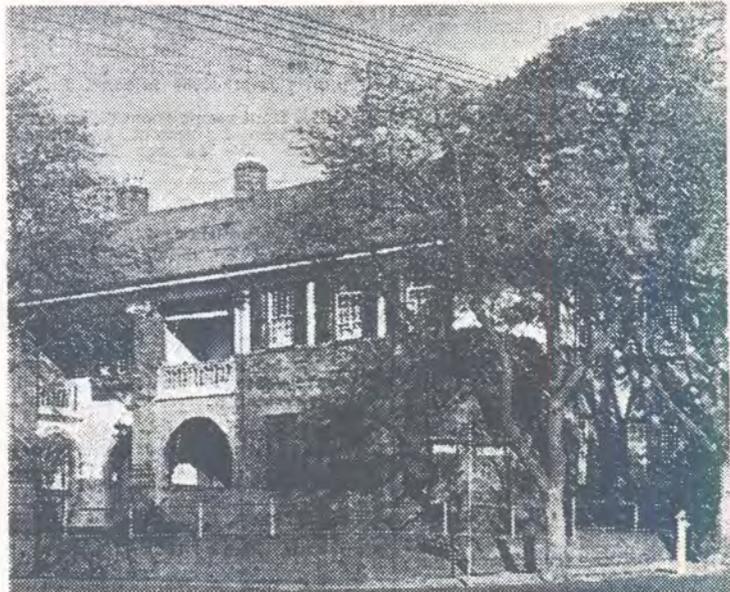
NOW.—This is the present-day site of the house above (Photos by C. A. van Tilburg).

PRETORIA NEWS, FRIDAY, AUGUST 5, 1949

*Pretoria: Yesterday and To-day*



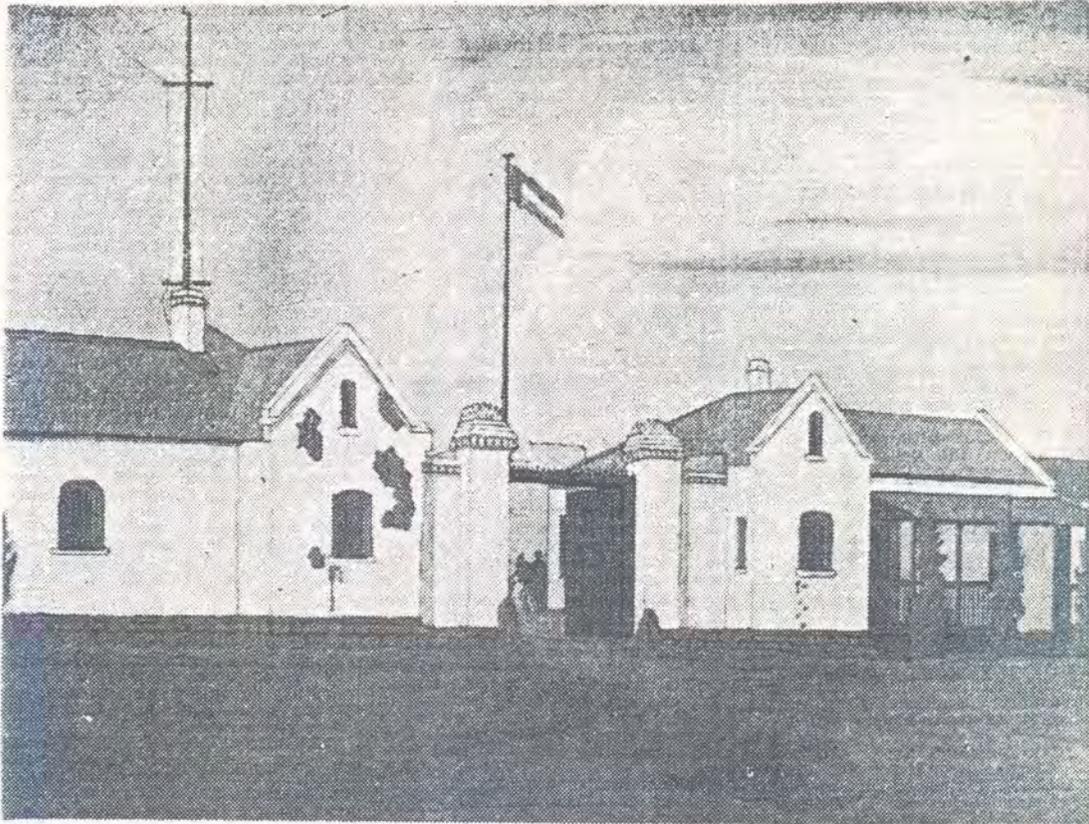
THEN — The old Buccaneers' Club at the corner of Bosman and Schoeman Streets. This is another of the Pierneef paintings of Old Pretoria acquired by the City Council.



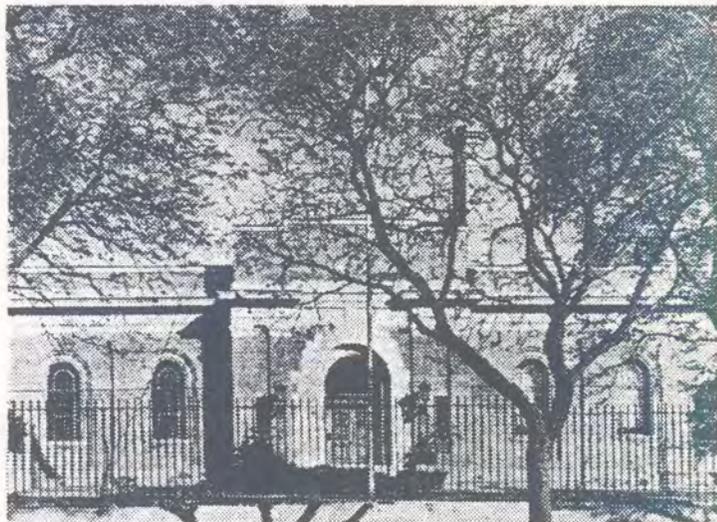
NOW — A present-day block of flats on the site of the old Buccaneers' Club (Photo's by C. A. van Tilburg.)

PRETORIA NEWS, SATURDAY, AUGUST 6, 1949

## PRETORIA: YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY



THEN — The old Republican Gaol. A painting by Pierneef from a sketch made by the artist nearly 40 years ago. This is one of the pictures of old Pretoria recently acquired by the City Council.



NOW — The present-day site of the old Republican Gaol. The Mint stands there now. (Photo's by C. A. van-Tilburg.)

PRETORIA NEWS, TUESDAY, AUGUST 9, 1949

## PRETORIA: YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

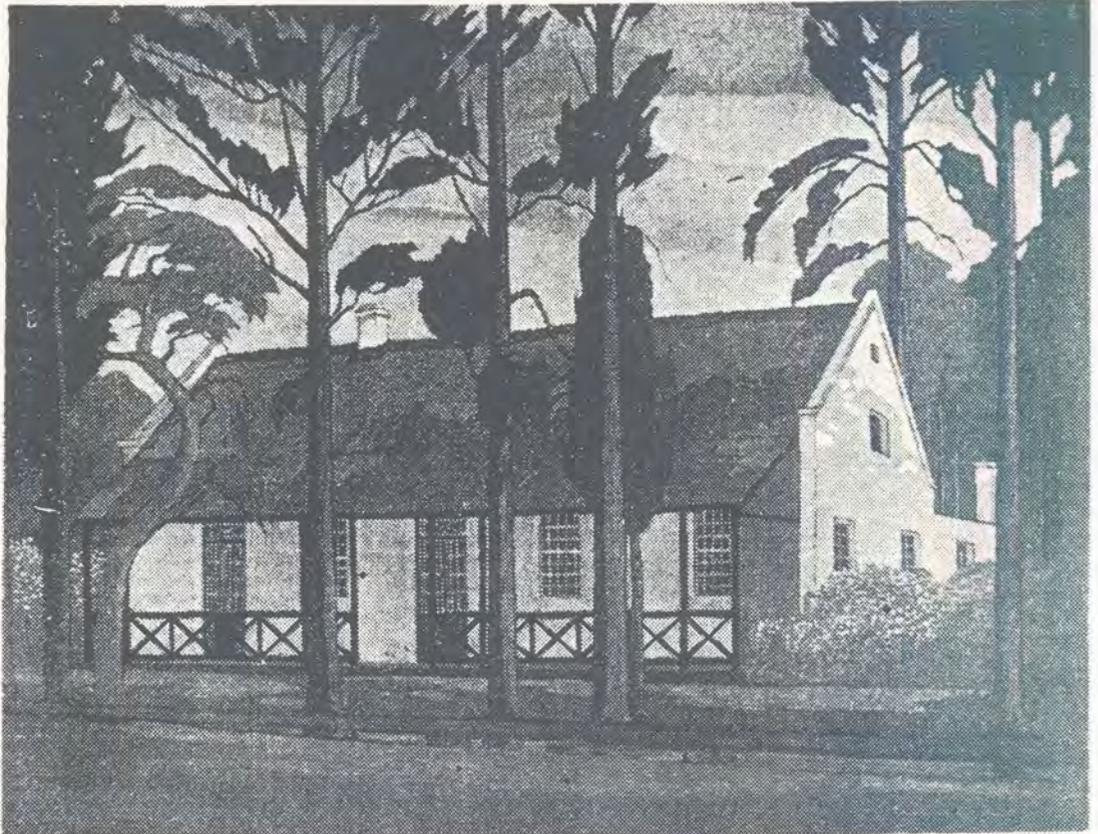


THEN — Jess' Cottage, a painting by 'Pierneef from a sketch he made about 40 years ago. This is one of the collection of old Pretoria pictures purchased by the City Council.



NOW — This house now stands on what is believed to be the site of Jess' Cottage. (Photos by C. A. van Tilburg.)

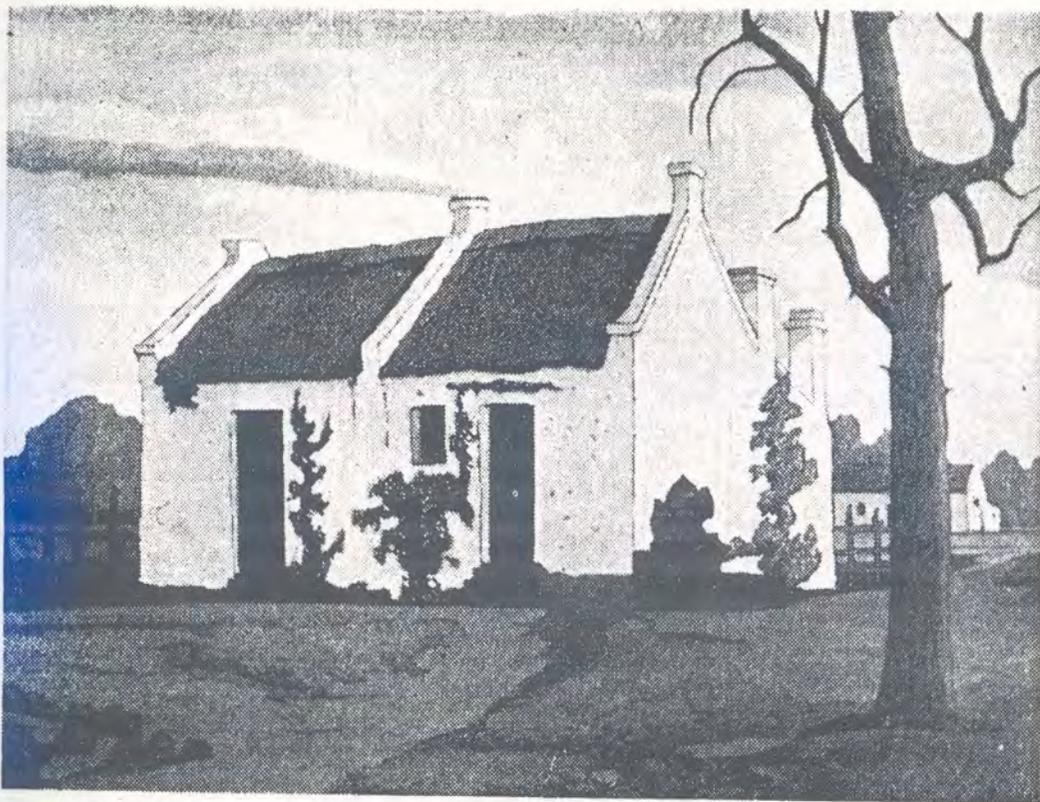
## Pretoria — Old and New



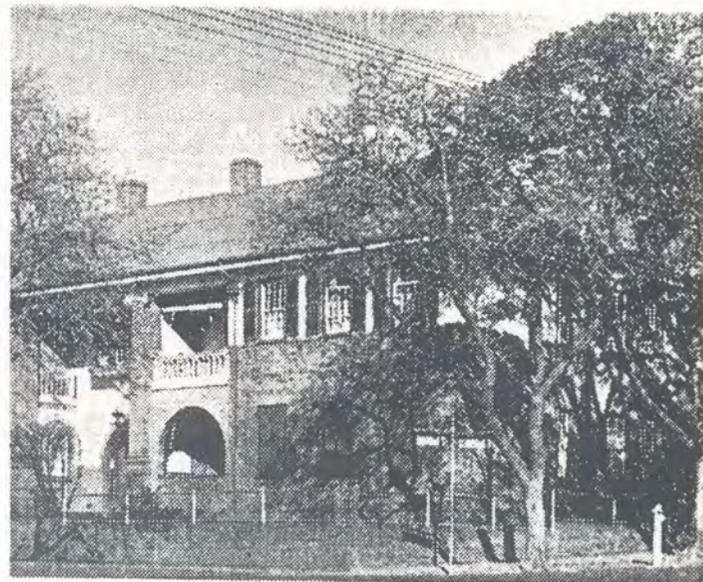
THEN.—About 40 years ago this old house stood at the corner of Pretorius and Andries Streets, when it was sketched by Pierneef. The painting from the sketch is one of the old Pretoria set of pictures recently acquired by the City Council.



NOW.—This is the present-day site of the house above (Photos by C. A. van Tilburg).



THEN — The old Buccaneers' Club at the corner of Bosman and Schoeman Streets. This is another of the Pierneef paintings of Old Pretoria acquired by the City Council.



NOW — A present-day block of flats on the site of the old Buccaneers' Club (Photo's by C. A. van Tilburg.)

Appendix 2 - Extract from a letter from M. Henry Preiss,  
former Town Clerk of Pretoria, to Dr Werth, dated  
05/04/86. The reference is to "Reflections" by  
Oerder in the Pretoria Art Museum Collection.  
Pretoria Art Museum Archive.

Wittachael uit 'n brief van mr. Henry Prins, voormalige  
Stadsheer van Pretoria, aan Dr. Wirth, gedateer 5-4-86  
Dit verwys na "Refleksie" in die P.K.M. Versameling.

2

in 'n pragtige gebaar uit te druk.  
Maar barebare denkie, hoor!  
Hannes het my 'n bietjie vertel  
verstaan. Daardie skildery van  
Derder was nooit in my besit. Maar  
ek was nou betrokke by die  
daarstelling van die mooi skilderstuk.  
Derder het my daardie koper-  
pot (my ma se fampot - vir baie  
jare) asook die geelkoper Koffie-  
ketel met komvoor, gesien. Albei  
is ~~bei~~ meer as 'n honderd jaar in  
die familie se besit. Hy het  
dadelik gese' hy wou die goeie  
skilder. Ek het die voorwerpe  
toe na sy tydelike atelier daar  
bo in die Stadsentrum gebring  
en hom verder gehelp om die  
toneel te skep. Die skildery was  
gou gereed. Ek het ~~me~~ merens  
gevoel dat die Stadsraad dit  
moet aanskaf. Ek dink die  
prys was vyf en sesig pond. Ek  
kon dit self goedkoper self gekoop  
het maar daardie soort geld  
was nie altyd gereedlik beskikbaar.

Appendix 3 - Two documents recording the acquisition of a painting by Pierneef by the city Council of Pretoria. Pretoria Art Museum Archive.

- a) Letter from Pierneef to Mr. Nicholson, Town Clerk 04/07/27.
- b) Purchase of picture from Mr. Pierneef 02/08/27.

Pretoria  
July 4<sup>th</sup> 1927.



G. E. Schweicherdt.  
ART. DEALER.

My dear Mr. Nicholson,

I do hope you like the pictures and that you'll find them typical.

The price of them each is £50:--. When you have chosen will you please let me know at the above address. —

With kindest regards

ever yours

J. H. P. [Signature]

Vouchers passed  
for £50.  
3/8/27.

File

144  
2 Pierneef

144

3rd August, 1927.

THE TOWN TREASURER.  
----

COUNCIL

2nd August, 1927.

PURCHASE OF PICTURE FROM MR. PIERNEEF.

RESOLVED:

That a sum of £50 be paid to Mr. Pierneef in respect of the purchase from him, of a picture to be selected by the Council. (Vote No. 13).

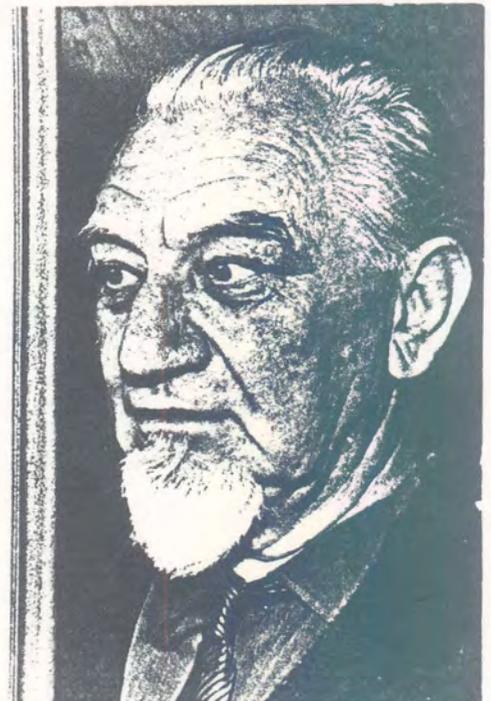
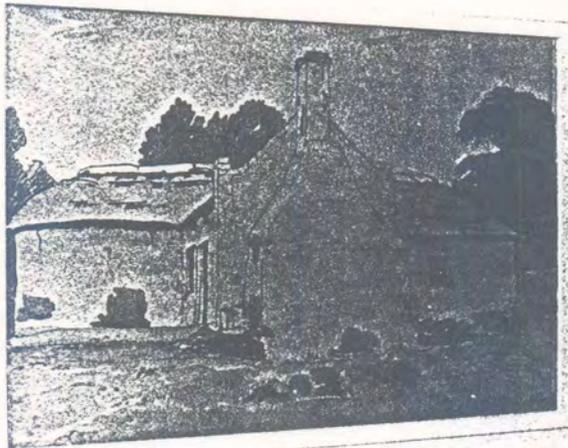


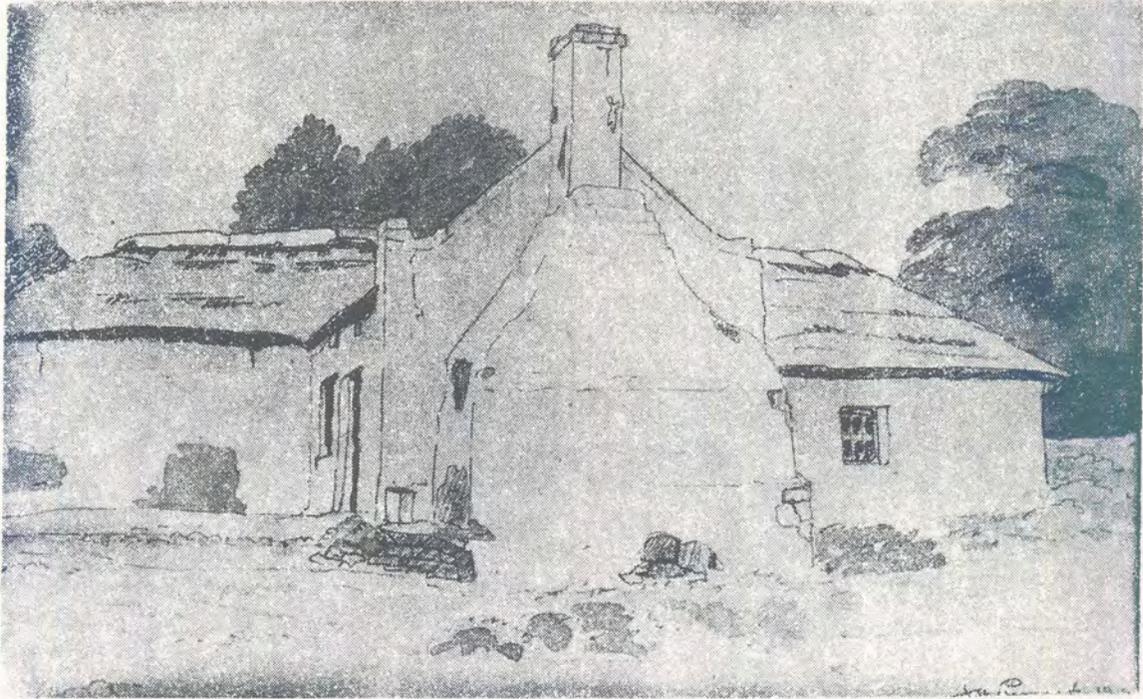
DEPUTY TOWN CLERK.

Appendix 4 - Battiss buys painting of Silverton House Cat. no.94

Report in Pretoria News 23/02/70

" Prof. Walter Battiss with the water colour by J.H.Pierneef which he bought for R250 from an antique dealer in Durban two years ago. Prof. Battiss, who is head of the Dept. of Fine Arts at the University of South Africa, has offered the water colour for the same price to the City Council of Pretoria."





Cat. 94

## Appendix 6

### LIST OF DOCUMENTS IN PAM FILES REFERRED TO IN CHAPTER 1

- 4 July 1927 - to Mr. Nicolson, Town Clerk, signed by Pierneef.
- 3 August 1927 - Payment sanctioned: 50 pounds to Mr. Pierneef for the purchase of a picture by him.
- 18 August 1936 - Letter from Amshewitz announcing his arrival, together with his wife, in Johannesburg.
- 13 October 1936 - Amshewitz requests dimensions of panel, has to order canvas from England.
- 28 October 1936 - Reply from the Town Clerk's office.
- A certain A. A. Menkin Esq. was in charge of the arrangements for unveiling the panel in 1938 as the donor Mr. M. Haskel, was overseas. It was Mr. Haskel's contribution to the Voortrekker centenary and the painting was a pictorial representation of South African history. The painting was unveiled by Mr. J.H. Hofmeyr on 20 January 1938.
- 28 October 1936 - Letter re measurements of panel in foyer of City Hall to Amshewitz.
- 23 February 1937 - Pretoria News p.6 :2 pictures by Amshewitz bought.
- 21 January 1938 - Pretoria News report.
- 21 January 1938 - Amshewitz panel presented to the City Council by Mr. M. Haskell of Johannesburg ( Pretoria News: )
- 16 March 1938 - Letter from Mrs. Amshewitz, damage to the painting repaired by Herbert Evans firm - bill 15 pounds.
- 13 April 1938 - Letter to Mr. M. G. Nicolson, Town Clerk from Jan Juta about his panels for the Council Chamber.

1938 - 1939 page 1: Valuations: various paintings - J. Juta, Amschwitz.

page 2: The Council paid for pictures: Portait of Smuts: Portrait of Hertzog.

Pencil note circled at top of page 1, Mr. Drabbe.

Attached to these two sheets a list with prices in a fine copperplate hand - probably by Mr. Drabbe.

6 May 1941 - Enquiry from the South African Association of Museums, answers required to questions.

17 June 1941 - Letter to the Hon. Secretary of the S.A. Museums Association from the Curator, Pretoria Municipality Art Gallery in reply to their letter of 13 June 1941: marked for the attention of Mr. Drabbe who replied: " There really is no portion in our City Hall exclusively available for our art collection. The 854 paintings, pictures, etchings and photos are distributed in six rooms and seven corridors and foyers... I am the only European person employed.

The papers relating to the decorations for the new City Hall mainly date from 1938 to 1955. They relate to the artists engaged and to the various donations made by individuals.

25 October 1943 - Letter from the deputy Town Clerk, A. J. O. O'Reilly - refers to the mural paintings for the Pretorius Hall. The late Mr. J. J. Kirkness and the late Mr. Charles Maggs had donated 2000 pounds for the embellishment of the City Hall. Mr. P. A. Hendriks was commissioned to execute 6 panels representing the Muses of Art after the murals in the Council Chamber (by Jan Juta) had been paid for.

December 1948 - H. Preiss, Town Clerk orders payment for "Fishing Harbour, Arniston" painted the same year by Pierneef.

24 November 1949 - Letter from B. J. Versfeld, Secretary \ Treasurer of the South African Association of Arts - pointed out that since the renovated gallery in the City Hall was opened on the 21st April, 1949, only two public exhibitions have been held. The Committee on behalf of the Association of Arts ( Northern Transvaal) requested the following:

- a) more frequent changes of exhibits
- b) Oerder exhibition
- c) exhibitions of the Felstead and Michaelis collections be arranged.
- d) steps be taken to exhibit the Beit collection.

9 December 1949 - resolved at a meeting of the General Purpose and Estates Committee:

(a) That the question of the future procedure to be adopted in regard to the exhibition of the art collection, restoration work necessary and the duties of the Curator, be referred to the Town Clerk for consideration and report at the February meeting of the Committee.

(b) That arrangements be made for the holding of an exhibition of paintings by Frans Oerder in the exhibition room during February 1950.

6 February 1958 - Purchase of "Bank Lane after a Hailstorm" approved by Council.

19 February 1958 - Letter from H. P. H. Behrens, Public Relations Officer of the City Council to the Editor of the International Directory of Arts: " There is at present no municipal art gallery in Pretoria apart from an art

collection housed in various rooms and offices in the City Hall and other buildings. The City Council has, however, decided to build an art gallery...

11 May 1962 - Letter H. P. H. Behrens: "A beginning has recently been made with the building of an art gallery in Pretoria..."

19 October 1964 - Report from the Selection Committee: the acquisition of "Jakkalsjag" by A. M. Luyt recommended.

11 June 1965 - Bought by decision of Management Committee.

31 July 1965 - Letter from Mrs. Pierneef - "Klapperkopfort" watercolour and pencil drawing, "Aalwyne en Bome" for sale.

15 September 1966 - Letter from A. J. Werth to the Director of Cultural Affairs. A list of portraits in the collection as well as the number of works in various media by Oerder, Pierneef and Wenning:

Oerder - 35

Pierneef - 229

Wenning - 102

9 December 1966 - "Die Transvaler" reports radical change in the management of the Art Museum. The Director of Cultural Affairs, H. P. H. Behrens, announced that the Board of Trustees was to be replaced by a Museums Management Committee. The decision to launch the Friends of the Art Museum was also taken.

4 April 1967 - "Rooiplaat" bought.

4 July 1967 - Watercolour drawing of "McGregor" bought.

12 August 1968 - Art Museum Management Committee Agenda no.8. Three Pierneef graphic works offered as donation: accepted with thanks:

"Boomstamme" etching - 1920

"Wilgerbome" linocut - 1919

"Wilgerbome, Heidelberg, Transvaal" ("Aandstemming")  
etching

1 October 1968 - "Amajuba" bought.

8 August 1969 - For attention of the Selection Committee, the possible acquisition of Pierneef watercolour "Prinsloostraat" and a pastel and pencil drawing, backview of the "Old Pretoria Club".

7 April 1970 - General Financial Voucher: payment for " Kloof tussen Twee Rante".

1 September 1970 - General Financial Voucher: payment for "Lanzerac".

14 July 1971 - On approval from Schweickerdt, pastel drawing by Pierneef, "Silverton, Pretoria".

11 February 1974 - Proposed acquisition, linocut "Twee Bergpieke en Wolke".

27 March 1974 - General Fund Voucher for payment.

7 March 1975 - Payment slip for Lot 182: unspecified Pierneef.

11 April 1975 - Payment slip for Lot 180: unspecified painting: determined from acquisitions register that this was for "Die Soutpansberg".

4 November 1975 - Selection Committee recommendation for the acquisition of Pierneef pencil and watercolour drawing "Landskap met Boom".

28 November 1975 - Letter from Prof. Lategan: Pierneef linocut offered for sale, "Wilde Seringbome". 7/50 ( bought)

10 June 1977 - General Fund Voucher: payment for charcoal drawing design for decorative panel " Landskap met Berge" and

squared up charcoal working drawing "Louis Trichardt?".

**NOTES TO CHAPTER 1.**

4. This old ledger together with the old acquisitions registers and the present acquisition register are housed in the strongroom at the Pretoria Art Museum. The fine copperplate hand in which the entries in the ledger were made, was probably that of Jacques Drabbe, curator of the collection up to at least 1946. Cutting from an unidentified newspaper - interview with Eric Rosenthal.
5. 1938 - 1939: Three pages PAM files, see list above.
6. Dokumentasie en katalogisering in die Pretoriase Kunsmuseum: paragraaf i.
7. DOKUMENTASIE EN KATALOGISERINGIN DIE PRETORIASE KUNSMUSEUM - geen outeur of datum. Die waarskynlike outeur is egter die Kurator, A.J. Werth. Dit is waarskynlik geskryf kort nadat hy sy nuwe pos aanvaar het, dus ongeveer 1965.
8. Pretoria News 6 March 1954 - Works available for Art Gallery will not make much of a Show. no page number.
9. Letter from Henry Preiss to Dr. Werth.
10. Pretoria News 6 March 1954 - "Mrs. Gerda Oerder, a Pretoria artist who has been acting curator of the Art Gallery for the past four and a half years..."

**Appendix 7 - Page from old handwritten catalogue or register -  
Pretoria Art Museum.**

# S. African Painters

p104

J. H. Pierneef born at Pretoria

Dorpvoort native place

Cape country home panel Mayor's Suite

northern Transvaal oil on canvas

in the Mountains

Blue horizon

veld afternoon sunset

? street scene in Cape Col. \*

Hugo Naudé

✓ Trees in blossom

✓ Head of an Hottentot

Cape Mountains

✓ Brandweg idem.

D. Koenig.

✓ Still Life oil on canvas.

Head of a boy charcoal

Head of a woman idem.

Theodor Goedorp

Still Life

{ columns etching Old Boer.

{ G. Smithard

{ Knyona Forrest

Old Register p 100  
Schroeder 1927 Cape Fisherman - watercolours presented by the E. F. Bourla

Appendix 8 - Page 2 from the opening speech by J. H. Pierneef  
at the opening of an exhibition of South African  
art in the MacFadyen Hall. 29/06/1935.  
T.C.A.D. AA941 19, Pierneef File.

APPENDIX 2: OPENING SPEECH BY J H PIERNEEF, 29 JUNE 1935.

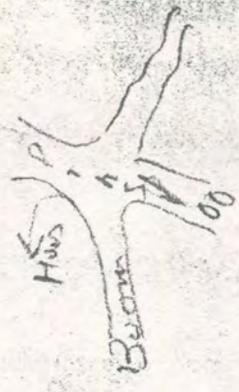
Dis dan ook die hoogste gastes-  
goedere van 'n volk wat deur  
die eeue heen bewaar word  
en as ons dink aan die groot  
versameling op die Kontinent  
waar die volke meer dan  
trots op is, hoop ik namens  
nog ander, dat die dag naby  
is dat ons hier in Pretoria  
ook 'n Kunstgallerij sal besit  
waar alleen die beste gastes-  
goedere mag pronk.

Dis nie die Koue geld nie  
maar die gloedvolle vertolking  
van waaragtige Kuns wat  
in nasie<sup>de</sup> karakter vorm.

Daarom is die Kunstenaar  
daar om 'n volk voor te lig  
en die oë te open vir die  
verheue skoonheid van  
sy land. ~~Die n<sup>de</sup> waaragtige~~  
~~Kunstenaar is daar die~~

Appendix 9 - Note written by Willem Punt and accompanied by a sketch showing the exact place where Prinsloo's house once stood. See Cat. no.93.

Van Hent Perry's gekey. The lettering shows the same  
my own pencil. The lines are as the letter from the  
Boonstra's gekey het. M. P. P. P.



9364  
12714

**Appendix 10 - Documents and maaterial relaating to Pierneef and Bushman art.**

a) Letter from Reenen J. van Reenen to Pierneef in which he gives him the particulars of the wall paintings envisioned for the hall of the Fcksburg High School.

Pierneef Museum (National Cultural History Museum)

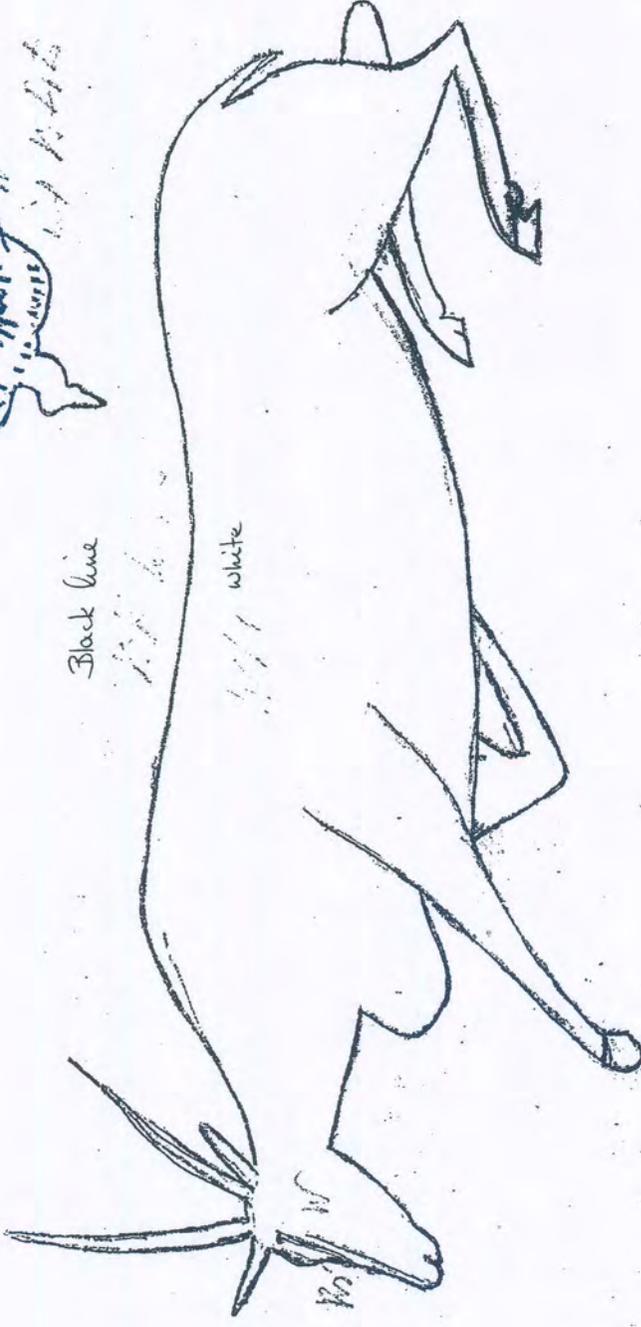
b) Photocopy of Stow drawing of the Martindale eland. South African Museum, Cape town.

c) Adam and Eve in Paradise. Pierneef panel presumed to be in the collection of Marita Bailey-Pierneef. Homage to Pierneef. Die Transvaler 13/08/86.



Stone drawing - V. verticillata

w. with black dots



Black line

white

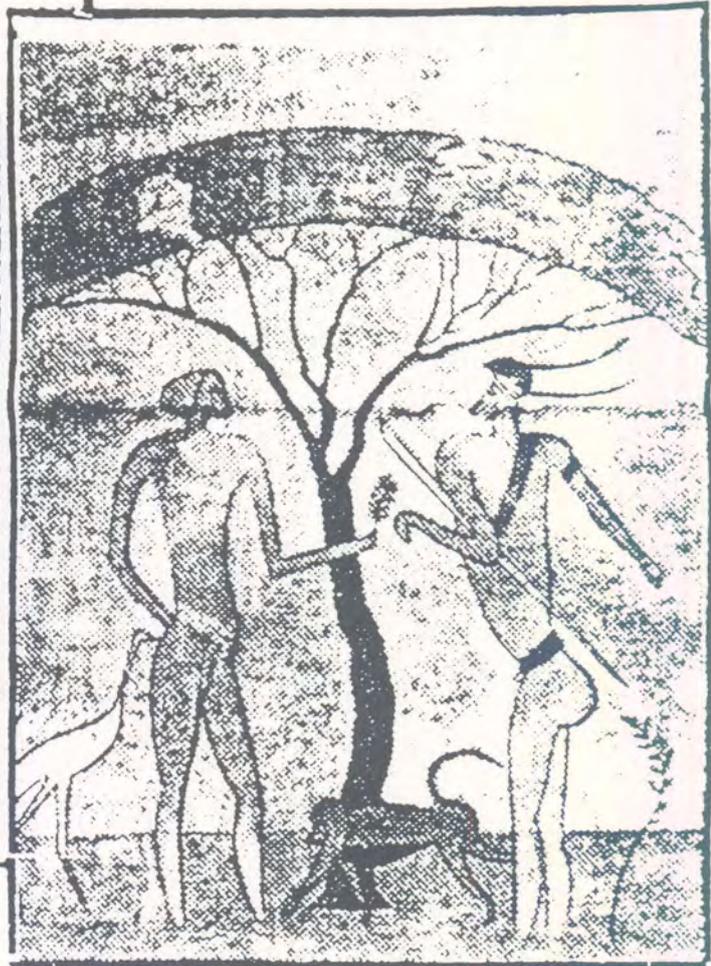
W

Caricature of great Gley near  
in great Glen near  
Brunner's Amertal  
near Berlin's Spirit  
Wittbergen  
Wittebergen



## Γαλαυζ

Pierneef se skildery Adam en Eva in die Paradys, Skilderye van hom word gereeld gevind. Hy het talle verniet weggegee.



# ester

DIE TRANSVALER 13 Augustus 1986.

en omdat hy  
'n lewe kon  
k in De Jager

Frans Oerder en George Smithard  
het daartoe bygedra dat Pierneef sy  
aandag aan die landskapkuns gewy  
het en die vereenvoudiging daarvan

Appendix 11 - Undated Newspaper cutting - Pretoria Art Museum  
Archive. The Tate Gallery Affair.

# Book brands Le Roux Smith le Roux criminal

SUNDAY TIMES CORRESPONDENT

LONDON, Saturday.

**M**R. LE ROUX SMITH LE ROUX, South African art personality and former deputy Keeper of the Tate Gallery in London, who died in 1963, has been branded as a "criminal" and "half monster, half buffoon" in a book published on Thursday.

Almost a third of a 380-page autobiography of Sir John Rothenstein, retired Keeper of the Tate, is devoted to heaping abuse on the head of Mr. Le Roux under protection of the law that says a dead man cannot be libelled.

The accusations made by Sir John in "Brave Day, Hideous Night" have startled the art world. The whole "muck heap" of the "Tate Gallery Affair," which rocked the British art world as never before in the 1950s is being raked over again.

He also makes vicious accusations about Mr. Le Roux's career after leaving the Tate. He writes that after getting Mr. Le Roux a job at the Gallery, Mr. Le Roux plotted to usurp his position and take over the gallery himself.

This was done by manufacturing scandals, spreading discontent among the staff and unfairly influencing the Board of Trustees.

The whole course of the clash between the two men is



SIR JOHN ROTHENSTEIN

chronicled in detail—from Sir John's viewpoint.

However, the allegations are not to go unchallenged. At least one prominent member of the art world has rallied to Mr. Le Roux's defence, and the antagonism and underlying acri-

mony which split the art world during the "Tate Gallery Affair" seems likely to erupt again.

The affair itself began in 1953, and before it was over, with the forced resignation of Mr. Le Roux, questions were asked in both Houses of Parliament, inquiries were held into the running of the Tate, and newspapers had a field day airing the gallery's "dirty washing."

All this, writes Sir John, was the result of a sustained "campaign" by Mr. Le Roux to have him discredited and to gain control of the gallery.

Sir John met Mr. Le Roux when he went to advise the South African Government in 1948 on the selection of pictures for a touring exhibition. Mr. Le Roux was then director of the Pretoria Art Centre.

## A friendship

They struck up a friendship, and after Sir John's return to London, Mr. Le Roux wrote to him saying that he was encountering difficulties from the newly elected Nationalist Government.

In September, 1949, he wrote saying he was "throwing in his hand" and going to London. Sir John arranged a job for him at the Tate.

Even while protesting his friendship, Le Roux was fermenting trouble among Sir John's staff, he writes.

"He succeeded in inflicting on me more harm and more distress than I have suffered from all others together who have wished me ill in life."

Sir John admits he made mistakes in running the Gallery, but says that everything was blown out of proportion by Mr. Le Roux. An inquiry exonerated Sir John, and ultimately Mr. Le Roux was asked to leave.

Mr. Le Roux was then appointed by Lord Beaverbrook to acquire pictures for a new gallery in Canada.

## Pocketed money

"It gradually emerged," writes Sir John, "that by means of a variety of cunning manipulations and manoeuvres he had been pocketing considerable sums of money while buying pictures for Lord Beaverbrook."

"The biggest swine I've ever met—I repeat, the biggest swine," Lord Beaverbrook is alleged to have said about Le Roux.

Later, says Sir John, Mr. Le Roux was dismissed from an art firm on grounds of misconduct, and "was found dead immediately he had received his notice of dismissal."

## ART MAN: ATTACK IS IN BAD TASTE

SUNDAY TIMES CORRESPONDENT

LONDON, Saturday.

**M**R. HUMPHREY BROOKE, secretary of the Royal Academy of Arts and an influential figure in the British art world, has labelled Sir John Rothenstein's book as being "in the height of bad taste." He came to the defence of Mr. Le Roux Smith Le Roux in a letter sent to the editors of London newspapers.

He writes: "It will be unfortunate if Sir John's luridly imaginative account of the 'Tate Gallery Affair' is swallowed as authoritative by reviewers. I myself have declined the task of raking over this old muck heap."

He goes on: "Many people who did not even know the late Mr. Le Roux Smith Le Roux, deputy Keeper of the Tate from 1950-54, will be appalled by Sir John's highly coloured account of the character and activities of this former colleague whom he himself invited to England from South Africa, and even made executor of his will."

"He now refers to him inter alia, as a 'criminal and half monster, half buffoon'."

Mr. Brooke says that an "irresponsible imputation" in the book—that Mr. Le Roux committed

suicide—has been retracted after correspondence in a newspaper.

"The book is in fact full of equally inaccurate statements about a person who becomes, in effect, the bogey man villain of a work of fiction."

"To write this way about a deceased man who has children living is surely in the height of bad taste."

"In order to lend credence to his representation of the facts, Sir John quotes the present director of the Tate, Mr. Norman Reid, as saying: 'Troubles? There's been only one trouble at the Tate, ever, and as soon as you removed him they were all at an end.'"

"I have correspondence from Mr. Reid which proves this alleged quotation to be false."

anonymous because he John. after clashes with Sir

Appendix 12 - Two letters written to Pierneef by Willem van  
Konijnenburg a) 09/03/29

b) 16/10/29

University of Pretoria Art Archive.

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uitgesproken door van Es waaraan.  
De heer van Es heeft van de  
uitgave veel zorg besteed.  
Hier is o.a. veel op  
kennetrekking veel beweging veel  
vrijing van ideeën. Gelyk is  
de politiek. In de natuurs  
velden, noodwendigheid en godswil  
namen dat zal in het kunstleer  
ook veel van op, is de (ij)  
bestaat ook namen, mijn  
vrouw. U en Mevrouw Pieneef  
vare karolische groetes

Met de meeste  
hoopwachten, en  
verbod.

H. K. van der Merwe



Weg naar Pieneef

do. Hoog,  
9 maart  
1924

nr. 110 best. 20

Stuy Geachte Hoog,  
Pieneef

Veel dank, U en Mevrouw Pieneef,  
voor de aardige, warme en  
karolische, gelievenheid van het  
jaar 1924. Een persoonlijk kienje  
van een alleloof. meezen, met



e. Mye het minnige jare voor  
 me l'op doordigtly in alle  
 opreke goed was, ook van  
 hare onder, moeder en vader,  
 en zee zake van der kindere  
 Pienoo en dat in die jare  
 minne waker mojer ontloos.  
 e. In dene d'wyl, een vrese  
 konninkryk, de belangryke  
 vreeslikste, die te my beroyd  
 heeft, en defoto's van vrese  
 skildere, die te mye laas  
 gaf, minne grote verpente,  
 veridotes en vrese dwelb vrese  
 minne koninkryk, dat is  
 oandry dat de een berucht  
 gerodes heeft, en weet men  
 dat het met te veel goet,

en de die  
 foto's van minne waker besmet.  
 want het is belangrykend es,  
 koninkryk, die vrede, en de o. o. o.  
 en vrede, koninkryk, vrede, vrede, vrede,  
 heder, leeft de volger in, 'yn' arbeid.  
 en te vore laas 'yn' weg, en vrede,  
 dat vrede, dit konge, diep es,  
 koninkryk dat vrede, vrede.  
 e. In dene waker die in dene foto's  
 van te kon vrede, vrede, vrede,  
 leucht en vrede, vrede, vrede,  
 belangryke grote koninkryk,  
 Hoe in thans minne vrede, en  
 heeft en koninkryk, vrede.  
 e. In dene het vrede, vrede, vrede,  
 vrede, vrede, vrede, vrede, vrede,  
 en vrede, vrede, vrede, vrede,  
 boek van vrede, vrede, vrede,  
 e. In vrede, vrede, vrede, vrede, vrede,

16 nov.  
1929

Hollant  
der Kaas  
vrij. Peckham 20

## Lear Geacht Kunstenaar Piernee -

Gestadig is de tyd door arbeid beset. En die jaar op een wyse zo zeer aangesloten dat ik nu eerst in staat ben den kunstenaar Piernee te skrywen en hem te danken voor al die zeer mooie dinge, die hy my gestuurd heeft. My hartelike skrywen dat ook de foto's, de houtsnede en het maandblad "Die Nieuwe Brandweg" versende is gedastekend met 23 april. nu is het een zeer maanden verder 15 nov: maar elukkig is kunst niet gemaakt voor een dag, man moet ze de vrucht hebben elke dag meer nieuw te zyn; twee mooie houtsneden en de foto's naar mine werke, die op de tafel rond om my uitgespreid zyn, maken eerheid in der tyd, maken het verleden tot het heden, hebben de eigindegen nieuw te zyn elke dag. Het levende in de kunst, het is het rythme; - het rythme van kleur, van lys van ton, van expressie, en zoval ik my skryf

is van dat juist nu streekt immer M  
zeft ... dat he nu idee is van met strakke  
lynes, zo eenvoudig mogelijk weer te  
geven he rhythme van lyn en kleur en  
daardoor een gevoel te laten ontstaan van  
zuivere rust. Dit streven spreekt volop  
uit onze werken, en geeft ons een wezen he  
levende; van dat zal in nu land een ons  
gevoeld worden. Maar ook elke kunstenaar is  
een persoonlijkheid verbonden, en he publiek heeft  
tyd nodig om zich met een persoonlijkheid te  
verschakelen, gemiddeld wordt daarvoor  
gerekend een twintig à vyftientig jaar.  
In he algemeen verzet he publiek zich tegen  
elke verandering, en he is juist dit verzet  
dat doet intromen of de kunstenaar  
voldoende volharding heeft. En de volharding  
vindt zyn grond in de diepe liefde  
die de kunstenaar heeft voor de natuur.

En goede verdeling van zwart en wit is  
lewendig geslottedede motienes, 275 en  
onveranderd kenmerk van de goed hoesamighen  
dezes werkes. Watvong van daarvoor mis-  
begronden dank. Ja kon dat voor U  
en Mevrouw Pieneij en de jeugd dit jaar  
goed is geseest - over eenige dares besint  
het meene jaar. En goede wenske van het  
jaar 1930. Mooge dat jaar is elk opriete  
voor U en Mevrouw Pieneij en de jeugd  
goed wesen, dat is de wenske waerme  
in dit skrywes belint. My kenner  
van de toekomst niet veel regges, maar  
de ervaring leest ons en de natuur  
laet het elke dag sien, dat er-niet  
en geseonde pit en nuon wucht groeit.  
en zwals de landman, de jouge  
wickete, aededeijte tegeer de aanwalke,

en dat is het me juist dat mij zo aangenaam  
sandaet, dat ik bij u, bij de schitterende  
Pierney die liefde zo in volle maat aanwesig  
voel. Die liefde is uw schone kroon, de bron  
van kracht en de verzekering der overwinning.

Met genoege moeite ik kenni met  
het maandblad „die Nieuwe Brandweg“. De omslag  
kan voortreffelijk genoemd worden, goed gecomponeerd,  
goed van stijl. In het geheel genomen een goede  
en goed verzorgde uitgave. Met belangstelling heb ik  
het artikel over uw kunst gelezen, en het is stellen  
aangenaam voor een kunstenaar op zulk een  
warme en kundige wijze bij het publiek te  
worden ingeleid; En uw kunst verdient dat  
te veel !!

In het artikel ~~komt~~ <sup>lees ik</sup> voor. Die olie- en schilderkunst is  
veelsmeer kunst... ziet dat woord veelsmeer kunst -  
het is geen bevestigende foute aanduiding, maar ik  
heb er toch wel iets op te zeggen. Maar reukend  
wordt het in de volgende zinnetjes goed toe-  
gelicht, en komen we weder op een goede steunpunt

En dan „ of de schilderkunst, n.l. de schilder-kunst  
wel of niet een onderwerp moet hebben. Algemeen wordt  
thans toch wel aangenomen dat de ~~te~~ arbeid van  
Mondriaan wel beuigt dat de schilder-kunst wel  
een onderwerp moet hebben. Wanneer Mondriaan ooit  
meer schilderijen gaat maken zal een bestemming  
van vlakken van bepaalde eelendommen van  
de schilder minstens een bevestiging zijn geweest.  
Dat is niet onverwacht. Maar ik kan het  
artikel van de Heer P. A. Hendrick zeer waardeeren, al  
blijft ik ~~te~~ enkele kleinigheden even overdenken.  
De reproducties zijn goed, wel verheugt het mij  
dat de foto's ze vergezellen. Het schilderij  
vreesstemming is een grootsche compositie -  
Ruimte! Ruimte! het levert op de aarde en  
boven de aarde, het golven der elementen,  
dat is wel het hoofkenmerk van onze  
Kunst. En dan heeft u mij gezonden  
vrij mooi houtsneden - Geeltes voorzeggen  
gevalles van historische plekken, mooie  
huisjes, samen verreed met hun omgeving -

van insectes, zoo beschermt de wyre (ziel)  
mensch, de wyre kunstenaar zyn. Doet  
zyn idealen zuiver te houden, en doe  
slechte stemmings te ontgaan. Welke, en  
kunstenaar als Pieney i. zulk een  
wyse mag, en ook het jaar 1930 zal u  
schone vruchten brengen. Met  
beste grates ook van Mevrouw met  
de meest hoopvolke  
Tat

~~T. J. Koning~~

N.B.

Aan de heer Tas, heb ik eenige maanden geleden  
opdragen aan u ter gedenken te geven de  
reproductie van een myne teekening, getiteld "Levenswijze"

**CONDENSED BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF J. H. PIERNEEF**

Reduced from : Biography of Jacob Hendrik Pierneef by Estelle Pretorius ("Pierneef His life and his work" Nel ed. 1990)

**13 August 1886** : Birth of Jacob Hendrik Pierneef

Attended Staatsmodelskool - drawing master

Hondius - Friends Fanie Eloff, Gordon Leith.

**4 June 1900** : British occupy Pretoria - "undesirable" people

deported. Choice between internment and return to

Holland at own expense for Gerrit Pierneef.

**1 June 1900** : Family registered as citizens of Hilversum

Architectural drawing lessons.

Part-time work in Cornelis de Nooy's paint shop.

**15 April 1902** : Move to Rotterdam - registered there as

citizens. Evening classes at Academia Erasmiana.

**End of 1903** : Travelled to London and thence down the west

coast of Africa to South Africa. Back to Pretoria.

**10 February 1904** : Pierneef senior entered into partnership

with Lodewijk J.M. de Jager, tobacconist.

**1906** : Painting lessons with Frans Oerder.

**1907** : Employed by Wulfse and Sievers.

**1908** : Spends a year working for his father and De Jager.

Financial disaster, Pierneef senior ruined.

**1 November 1908** : Takes up appointment of library assistant

at the State Library, Pretoria.

**14 August 1908** : Takes part in exhibition, Pretoria Savage

Club and the Pretoria Art Society.

**16 February 1910** : Marries Agatha Delen.

**1911** : Submits two etchings to first exhibitin of tthe Guild of South African Artists, Johannesburg.

**1911 and 1912** : Exhibited in two exhibitions by the Individualists.

**3 October 1913** : First one-man exhibition - de Bussy.

**1915** : Second exhibition at de Bussy.

**28 April 1916** : First lecture - Afrikaanse Debat en Kultuurvereniging, Reformed Church, Potchefstroom. Subject "Art in South Africa" - Bushman art and other indigenous art forms.

**1917** : Sympathetic article by J. F. W. Grosskopf published in "Die Huisgenoot.

**17 August 1917** : Lecture in his studio - 30 women "Afrikaans and Hollandse Readers Union" - examples of indigenous art decorated the walls. Also spoke earlier to same group in April of the same year.

**14 September 1917** : Report in "Die Volksblad" : Lecture, Pierneef oor Afrikaanse kuns - Bloemfontein. Stayed with Reenen J. van Reenen, friend of Grosskopf.

**24 December 1919** : "Die Brandwag" - Van Reenen acknowledges his debt to Pierneef as regards the inspiration of Bushman art.

**28 September 1917** : Offer of teaching post Heidelberg Normal College. Resigns from State Library.

**October 1917** : Holds joint exhibition with Fanie Eloff.

**7 February 1918 - 30 June 1919** in employ of the  
Transvaal Education Department. From 1 March 1918 also  
Pretoria Normal College.

**July 1918** : Visits the Cape.

**November 1918** : Exhibition with Major C. E. Fitzroy in  
Pretoria.

Joins Broederbond (Resigns May 1946).

**1919** : Resigns Normal College posts. Becomes full-time artist.

**March 1919** : Delivers lecture on art in Heidelberg at the  
Annual General Meeting of the Afrikaanse Kultuur-en  
Toneelvereniging. Followed by an exhibition organised by  
the Afrikaanse Studentebond of the Heidelberg Normal  
College. A.G. Visser opened the exhibition.

**8 - 10 November 1919** : Important exhibition in  
Bloemfontein, stays with van Reenen. While in Bloemfontein  
gave a lecture to the members of Onze Taal, once more  
stresses the advantages of the indigenous art forms. His  
views aroused angry opposition in some quarters.

**1919 - 1920** : A great deal of illustration work - mostly for  
poems by Jan F.E.Celliens, Louis Leipoldt and Eugène  
Marais.

**April 1920** : Decor and designs for "Die Koerantskrywers", a  
play by Grosskopf. Always very involved with the promotion  
of Afrikaans theatre.

- 15 June 1920** : Exhibition Potchefstroom Town Hall.
- 18 June 1920** : Lecture "What is true South African Art?"
- 2 December 1920** : Big exhibition, T.W. Becket, Pretoria.
- 9 - 13 April 1921** : Exhibition Stellenbosch. Lecture to the Afrikaanse Vereniging on South African art.
- October 1921** : Stays with Grosskopf in Stellenbosch. Later in same month exhibition in Ashbey Hall, Long Street.
- 20 March 1922** : By train to Ficksburg on invitation of Dr. S.H. Pellisier. Paints Bushman panels in the hall of the High School.
- 1 - 9 May 1922** : Takes part in the third exhibition of the South African Academy in Johannesburg.
- 4 September 1922** : Talks to St. Andrew's Guild.
- 25 November - 9 December 1922** : Exhibition in Pretoria with Marcelle Piltan.
- 22 April 1923** : Arrives in S.W.A. (Namibia).
- 20 June 1923** : Exhibition in Windhoek.
- 25 February 1924** : Leaves his wife Agatha.
- 16 May 1924** : Meets Mariane Frances Schoep (May).
- 18 November 1924** : Marries May Schoep.
- 4 May 1925** : First major exhibition in Johannesburg. Lezard. Exhibition arranged in the home of Dora Price. Sellout.
- 20 July 1925** : Leave for Europe. Stay in Amsterdam with Anton Hendriks. Meets Willem van Konijnenburg.
- 10 October 1925** : First exhibition in Europe.

- 12 January 1926** : Sail for home along the East Coast of Africa.
- 26 April 1926** : Exhibition at Pretoria High School for Girls.
- May 1926** : Exhibition in Johannesburg.
- November 1926** : Exhibition with 22 other artists at the Dutch firm Scheltema and Holtema's Boekhandel. (woodcuts)
- May 1927** : Johannesburg exhibition not a success.
- 14 November 1927** : Successful exhibition at T.W.Beckett
- 1928** : an important year; Lack of success with first major exhibition after return from overseas visit.
- 13 - 24 November** : Study in Blue - financial disaster.
- Early 1929** : Exhibits with Fanie Eloff in Johannesburg.
- July 1929** : Report in DIE VOLKSTEM - awarded the commission to paint 28 panels of natural scenes and four smaller studies of trees for the new Johannesburg station.
- October 1930** : Exhibition in Pretoria of 47 paintings.
- 1931** : Elected vice-president of the newly founded Afrikaanse Kunsvereniging.
- 1932** : Completion of the station panels.  
Elected to the newly established National Academy of Arts (South Africa). Academy, however, shortlived.
- January 1932** : Again exhibits some work in the Netherlands
- 16 - 26 November 1932** : Exhibition in Pretoria.  
Exhibition at Herbert Evans.
- 27 June 1933** ; Leaves for London with his family - Second

national commission - murals for South Africa House.

Designs for PASSIEBLOMME by Totius.

Xmas exhibition in the Netherlands - Lecture in Rotterdam.-

AFRICA AS SEEN THROUGH A PAINTER'S EYES.

Completes murals in 1934.

Provides 5 further paintings for the dining room in South Africa House.

**June 1934** : Sails for home from Southampton.

**25 September** : Exhibition in Cape Town.

**1935** : Patron ONS TEATERTJIE TONEELGROEP.

Honorary president Afrikaanse Kunsvereniging

Two major exhibitions in 1935 - One in Pretoria one in the Cape - organised by Prof.M.L.du TOIT - 20 South African artists - Macfadyen Hall in Pretoria - Pierneef to open the exhibition

**November 1935** : Writes from Stellenbosch where he is exhibiting.

**16 March 1936** : DIE VOLKSBLAD reports on the exhibition in Bloemfontein.

**26 August 1936** : Receives the medal of honour for painting from the Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Taal, Lettere en Kuns.

**27 August 1936** : Adjudicated at the Empire Exhibition held in Johannesburg.

**September 1937** : Exhibition in Johannesburg.

Takes part in an exhibition of South African artists in the Martin Melck House, Cape Town.

**1938** : Commission from City Council of Pretoria for two paintings of Pretoria to be presented to the Union Castle Line. Eventually one large painting of the Union Buildings was painted. After various vicissitudes the painting was eventually returned to the Council in 1975 and now hangs in Munitoria.

**October 1938** : Lecture to Vroueklub , Pretoria.

**June 1938** : KONING OEDIPUS presented in the Pretoria City Hall  
Pierneef designed the decor and programme cover.

**October 1938** : Major exhibition in the new City HALL,  
Pretoria.

**November 1938** : Takes part in the second exhibition of the New  
Group.

**1939** : Builds his new home, Elangeni.

**28 November - 7 December 1941** : Holds huge exhibition in  
his studio. Fanie Eloff exhibits some of his sculpture.

**1938** : Department of Public Works commission, two paintings for  
for the new magistrate,s court in Johannesburg. Paintings  
completed in July 1941.

**1941** : Exhibition of the South African Academy and a lecture on  
art.

**August 1942** : Exhibition Lidchi Art Gallery, Johannesburg.

**April 1943** : Lecture on landscape to the Fine Arts Club,  
Johannesburg.

Has his first heart attack.

**December 1943** : Exhibition Schweickerdts.

**October 1944** : Lecture on South African art - Pretoriase  
Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniging.

**April 1945** : Chairman of committee for the South African  
Reserve Bank - new banknote designs.

**1945** : Exhibition Schweickerdts.

**April 1945** : Sends two works to Cape Town for the 43rd  
exhibition of South African contemporary art.

**1947** : Exhibition Cape Town.

**August 1947** : Exhibits 42 paintings in the Transvaler  
Bookshop, Johannesburg.

**1948** : Work included in a national exhibition of South African  
art in London's Tate Gallery.

Shown in The Hague in 1949.

**1949** : Painting of the Voortrekker Monument.

**October 1949** : Major exhibition in Johannesburg of the work of  
43 painters, sculptors and architects.

**8 - 17 May 1950** : Retrospective exhibition in the Pieter  
Wenning Gallery, Johannesburg.

**August 1950** : Exhibition Pietermaritzburg.

**November 1950** : Exhibition Cape Town.

**1951** - Receives an honorary doctorate from the University of  
Natal.

**19 September 1951** : Major exhibition Schweickerdt,s.

**17 - 22 September 1951** : Exhibition O.F.S. Society of Arts  
and Crafts, Bloemfontein City Hall.

- 16 - 21 March 1953** : Retrospective exhibition Ferdinand Postma Library of the University of Potchefstroom.
- August - November 1954** : Visit to the Seychelles.
- 1955** : Painting of Pretoria commissioned by the City Council completed.
- 1955** : Featured with 4 other artists in a film made by Satour - SOUTH AFRICA - A portrait in colour.
- 8 - 25 November 1955** : Retrospective South African Association of Arts (Transvaal Branch) to coincide with the Pretoria centenary celebrations.  
Exhibition in the Maria van Riebeeck Art Gallery, Pretoria.  
Awarded honorary membership of the Suid Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns.  
Awarded honorary doctorate by the University of Pretoria.
- 4 October 1957** : Dies in Pretoria.