

## Deurdagte Reis – 'n viering van vrouekunstenaars Thoughtful Journey – a celebration of female artists

Cilliers-Barnard is op 18 November 1914 in Rustenburg gebore en het in 1933 aan die Hoërskool Rustenburg gematrikuleer. Sy het haar eerste kunsklasse in 1935 by Grace Anderson ontvang en die Transvaalse Onderwysdiploma aan die Normaalkollege, Pretoria verwerf, gevolg deur die graad B.A. aan die Universiteit van Pretoria in 1937. Sy het aan die Innesdal Intermediêre skool onderrig gegee, was 'n kunslektise aan die Pretoriase Onderwysopleidingskollege en, deelyds, by die Pretoriase Kunssentrum. Sy is in 1942 met Carl Hancke Cilliers in die huwelik bevestig en het twee kinders gehad.

Verdere kunsstudies was onder die leiding van Phyllis Gardner en by die Pretoriase Kunssentrum, in 1944 onder Stradiot-Bounet in Pretoria, in 1948 aan die Hogerer Instituut voor Schone Kunsten in Antwerpen onder prof. Julien Creytens en Andre Lhote in Parys, en in 1956, 1964, 1971 en 1981 onder Atelier Jean-Paul Pons, ook in Parys. Dit was hierdie eksperimentele fases met grafiese tegnieke in die Paryse ateljees wat grootliks tot haar ontwikkeling bygedra het.

Van 1944 tot 1956 het sy beskrywend met formele waardes geskilder, teen 1957 oorgeskakel na nie-figuratiewe werk en, in 1965, met 'n styldeurbraak in haar grafiese werk na vore gekom. Vroeg in die sewentigerjare het haar werk na figuratiewe kuns terug gekeer, met 'n beskouing van die plek en geskiedenis van die mensdom in sy omgewing, 'n tematiese neiging ook onder kunstenaars soos **Judith Mason** en **Marianne Podlashuc**.

Terwyl sy in Pretoria aktief was, het Cilliers-Barnard ook grootliks tot die kulturele lewe bygedra en was sy 'n uitvoerende en erelid van die Suid-Afrikaanse Kunstenaarsvereniging. Sy het in 1946 haar eerste solo-uitstalling by die Buitemuurse Gebou, Universiteit van Pretoria gehou en, in die jare daarna, verskeie uitstallings in Suid-Afrika en Europa. Onder haar groep-uitstallings was die (eerste) Van Riebeeck Fees-uitstalling, in Kaapstad in 1952, die jaar daarna haar eerste internasionale uitstalling, die Rhodes Centenary Exhibition, Bulawayo, gevolg deur die Venice Biennale in 1956 (waar sy saam met **Eleanor Esmonde-White** uitgestal het) en 1964, die Sao Paulo Biennale (grafies) elke tweede jaar van 1957 tot 1963, en 'n groep-uitstalling saam met **Nel Erasmus**, in 1967, in die Mona Lisa-kunsgalery in Johannesburg, om net 'n paar te noem.

In 1960 het Cilliers-Barnard 'n vlugtige reis na Israel, België en Frankryk onderneem om navorsing oor die tapisseriekuns te doen. Tydens hierdie navorsing het sy die ateljees van Jean Lurçat en Picart le Doux in Parys besoek. In 1964 het sy nog 'n studiereis na Portugal, Spanje, België, Oostenryk en Frankryk onderneem – haar derde studietermyn. Gedurende die middeltagtigerjare het sy verskeie kort reise deur Europa, die VSA, Frankryk en China onderneem.

Van die 74 solo-uitstallings wat Cilliers-Barnard gehou het, was verskeie oorsig-uitstallings, die eerste in 1956 saam met Joan Clare in die Pretoriase Kunsmuseum. Dieselfde jaar het sy die Transvaalse Kamer van Mynwese se Goue Medalje vir Skilderkuns en die SA Brouerye Kunsprys, Johannesburg gewen. Cilliers-Barnard het in 1972 ook die *Vrou van die Jaar Toekenning* by die Pretoriase Vroueklub ontvang en in 1978 die Erepennig vir Skilderkuns van die Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns. Die Staatspresidentstoekenning vir Eervolle Diens in Suid-Afrika is in 1983 aan haar uitgelooft, sowel as die Laureate Toekenning van die Universiteit van Pretoria, gevolg deur drie eredoktorate in die Filosofie en Letterkunde, van die Noordwes Universiteit (1990), Rand Afrikaanse Universiteit (1999) en die Universiteit van Pretoria (2002). In 2000 het sy 'n spesiale toekenning vir die bevordering van kuns in Suid-Afrika sedert 1949 by die South African National Association for Visual Arts ontvang en in 2005 is sy in die *Hall of Fame* van die International Biographical Centre, Cambridge in Engeland gehuldig vir haar uitmuntende prestasie op die gebied van die skone kunste – skilderkuns.

Sy is op 15 September 2010 in haar huis in Pretoria oorlede. Vandag leef Bettie Cilliers-Barnard se nalatenskap t.o.v. haar bydrae op die gebied van Kuns in Suid-Afrika voort met die beurs vir Skonekunstudente aan die Universiteit van Pretoria.

Belangrike publieke opdragte sluit in:  
Tapisserie: *The woman* (1963), Transvaalse Provinsiale Administrasie in Pretoria; *Evolution* (1968), Schlesinger Organisasie in Johannesburg; *The fountain* (1969), Universiteit van Pretoria; *Guardian angel of the arts* (1984), Staatsteater in Pretoria.

Muurpaneel: *Development of the Orange Free State* (1969), Oranje-Vrystaat Provinsiale Administrasie in Bloemfontein; *Optics* (1972), Johannesburg Internasionale Lughawe, uitgestal saam met werke van **Cecily Sash**; *Mens sana in corpore* (1980), Departement van Gesondheid in Pretoria; *Growth and development* (1991), Syferfontein-myn in Secunda; *Vision* (1991), Pretoriase Ooginstituut.

Cilliers-Barnard was born in Rustenburg on 18 November 1914 and matriculated from Hoërskool Rustenburg in 1933. She received her first art classes from Grace Anderson in 1935 and obtained her Transvaal Education Diploma from Normaalkollege, Pretoria, followed by a B.A. degree from the University of Pretoria in 1937. She taught at Innesdal Intermediate School, lectured in art at Pretoria Teachers' Training College and, part-time, at the Pretoria Art Centre. She married Carl Hancke Cilliers in 1942 and had two children.

Further studies in art were under Phyllis Gardner and at the Pretoria Art Centre, in 1944 under Stradiot-Bounet in Pretoria, in 1948 at the Hogerer Instituut voor Schone Kunsten in Antwerp under Prof. Julien Creytens and Andre Lhote in Paris, and in 1956, 1964, 1971 and 1981 under Atelier Jean-Paul Pons, also in Paris. It was these experimental phases with graphic techniques in the Paris studios that contributed greatly to her development.

From 1944 to 1956 she painted descriptively with formal values, by 1957 switched to non-figurative and, in 1965, marked a stylistic breakthrough in her graphic work. By the early 1970's her work returned to figurative art that contemplated the place and history of humanity in its society, also a thematic trend amongst artists such as **Judith Mason** and **Marianne Podlashuc**.

While being active in Pretoria, Cilliers-Barnard contributed greatly to the cultural life and was an executive and honorary member of the South African Artists Association. She held her first solo exhibition at the Extramural Building, University of Pretoria during 1946 and, during the years that followed, several exhibitions in South Africa and Europe. Group exhibitions included the (first) Van Riebeeck Festival Exhibition, Cape Town in 1952, the year after, her first international exhibition, the Rhodes Centenary Exhibition, Bulawayo, followed by the Venice Biennale in 1956 (where she exhibited with **Eleanor Esmonde-White**) and 1964, the Sao Paulo Biennale (graphic) every second year from 1957 to 1963, and a group exhibition with **Nel Erasmus** in 1967 at the Mona Lisa Art Gallery in Johannesburg, to name a few.

In 1960 Cilliers-Barnard undertook a brief trip to Israel, Belgium and France to research tapestry art. While doing research she visited the studios of Jean Lurçat and Picart le Doux in Paris. In 1964 she undertook another study trip to Portugal, Spain, Belgium, Austria and France – her third period of study. During the mid 1980's various brief trips were undertaken through Europe, the USA, France and China.

Of the 74 solo exhibitions Cilliers-Barnard held, several were retrospective, the first in 1966, jointly with Joan Clare at the Pretoria Art Museum. The same year she was awarded the Transvaal Chamber of Mines Gold Medal for Painting and the SA Breweries Art Prize, Johannesburg. Cilliers-Barnard also received the *Woman of the Year Award* from the Pretoria Women's Club in 1972 and the Medal of Honour for Painting by the South African Academy for Science and Arts in 1978. The State President's Decoration for Laureate Award from the University of Pretoria, followed by three honorary doctorates in Philosophy and Literature from North-West University (1990), Rand Afrikaans University (1999) and University of Pretoria (2002). In 2000 she received a special award for promoting art in South Africa since 1949 from the South African National Association for Visual Arts and in 2005 she was inducted into the *Hall of Fame* of the International Biographical Centre, Cambridge in England for her outstanding achievement in the field of The Fine Arts – Painting.

She passed away at her home in Pretoria on 15 September 2010. Today the Bettie Cilliers-Barnard legacy of contributing to art in South Africa lives on in the bursary fund for Fine Arts students of the University of Pretoria.

Major public commissions include:  
Tapestry: *The woman* (1963), Transvaal Provincial Administration in Pretoria; *Evolution* (1968), Schlesinger Organisation in Johannesburg; *The fountain* (1969), University of Pretoria; *Guardian angel of the arts* (1984), State Theatre in Pretoria.

Wall panels: *Development of the Orange Free State* (1969), Orange Free State Provincial Administration in Bloemfontein; *Optics* (1972), Johannesburg International Airport, displayed with works by **Cecily Sash**; *Mens sana in corpore* (1980), Department of Health in Pretoria; *Growth and development* (1991), Syferfontein Mine in Secunda; *Vision* (1991), Pretoria Eye Institute.

*"I begin a painting without a definite aim in mind; before me lies only the adventure of something that will take shape from an inward impulse. The development begins as soon as the first line or touch of colour appears on the canvas. It grows very slowly, almost without inherent logical order... A sense of totality inside myself is therefore what is responsible for giving content to my work."*

Bettie Cilliers-Barnard (1914 - 2010)

Bronne / Sources:

Berman, E. 1983. *Art & Artists of South Africa*. AA Balkema: Cape Town.  
Ballot, M. 2006. *Bettie Cilliers-Barnard: Towards infinity*. UNISA Press: Pretoria.



Cilliers-Barnard, Bettie (1914 - 2010)  
*Rotation*, 1964  
Olieverf op doek / Oil on canvas

Versameling / Collection:  
Rupert Kunstigting / Rupert Art Foundation, Stellenbosch