

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

Sash is in 1925 in Delmas, Mpumalanga gebore. Sy het haar skoolopleiding en vroeë tersiëre opleiding in Johannesburg en aan die Wits Tegnieke Kunsskool ontvang (1943 tot 1946), onder die leiding van Maurice van Essche, en 'n Nasionale Kunsonderwysersertifikaat verwerf.

Gedurende 1948 en 1949 het sy haar studies in Londen aan die Chelsea Polytechnic en Camberwell School onder die leiding van Victor Passmore voortgesit. In die vroeë vyftigerjare het sy deelyds vir die graad B.A. in Skone Kunste aan die Universiteit van die Witwatersrand gestudeer en gedurende 1953 opleiding in mosaïek- en muurskilder-ontwerp in Londen ontvang.

Sash het van 1952 tot 1958 kunsonderrig aan die Jeppe Girls High School in Johannesburg gegee – sy het opvoeders se aandag getrek met die oorspronklike en stimulerende effek van die metodes wat sy gebruik het. Gedurende hierdie jare het sy ook haar eerste muurskilder-opdragte begin ontvang.

In 1954 het sy haar eerste solo-uitstalling in die Whippman-gallery in Johannesburg gehou en, daarna, in die meeste groot sentra in Suid-Afrika. Gedurende die middel-vyftigerjare was sy 'n deelydse lektrese in Ontwerp aan die Universiteit van die Witwatersrand en sy is in 1960 as voltydse hoof van Ontwerp aangestel, met **Judith Mason** as een van haar studente. In dieselfde jaar het sy 'n amptelike lid van die **Amadlozi-groep\*** geword en aan die groep-uitstallings van 1963 in Suid-Afrika en Italië deelgeneem. Sy het haar aan die groep onttrek op grond van haar Europese studies met 'n Oppenheimer-toekenning wat beskikbaar gestel is vir 'n jaar se oorsese studies en navorsing t.o.v. kontemporêre kunsonderrig. Gedurende hierdie studiebesoek aan Europa en die V.S.A. is sy geïnteresseerd in die nuwe ontwikkeling van 'Op-art' en na haar terugkeer na Suid-Afrika, aan die einde van 1965, het haar werk 'n totaal nuwe fase betree. Sash het op die lineêre dubbelsinnighede wat met 'Op-art' geassosieer word gekonsentreer – in teenstelling met haar vroeë werke in helder maar beperkte kleure het die nuwe fase die klem geplaas op 'n vernuwe palet wat beperk is tot skakerings van oker, grys en pienk, met 'n kontrasterende gebruik van vier jaar en wit. Ook in hierdie tyd het Sash talle voëlstudies as onderwerpmateriaal gebruik – die voëls is ook getransformeer van natuurwesens tot meer abstrakte elemente wat simbolies gebruik is. As intellektuele kunstenaar en onderrigter ontleed die kunstenaar die formele en tegniese kwaliteite van haar werk, maar sy besit steeds die vermoë om simbolisme en die psigologie in 'n groot mate te gebruik om persoonlike emosie visueel oor te dra.

Die eerste belangrike opdrag vir 'n groot muurmosaïek, **Seekoeivlei**, is in 1963 vir die Transvaalse Provinsiale Administrasie-gebou in Pretoria voltooi. Nog 'n muurmosaïek vir 'n nuwe internasionale saal by die Jan Smuts-lughawe (nou die O.R. Tambo Internasionale Lughawe) is in 1968 voltooi.

Sash was een van die elf kunstenaars wat gekleur is om Suid-Afrika in 1965 in die Grosvenor Gallery in Londen te verteenwoordig. In die **Artists of Fame and Promise**-kompetisie, in 1966, is sy met die titel **Best Woman Artist** bekroon en, in 1968, by die Biennale SA Breweries Art Prize, met 'n bronsmedalje.

In 1972 het Sash die graad M.A. in die Skone Kunste deur die Universiteit van die Witwatersrand verwerf. In 1974 het sy besluit om na Engeland te verhuis, waar sy in Herefordshire gewoon het en vier jaar later aan haar eerste solo-uitstalling in die VK in Londen deelgeneem het. Tydens haar loopbaan het Sash met verskeie media geëksperimenteer, met inbegrip van die sogenaamde 'drip-and-dribble'-tegnieke met emaljeverf en formasies met vryelik aangewende pleister-grondverf. Sy het ook tapisserie-ontwerp gedoen. Die ses tapisserieë wat in 1980 vir die Suid-Afrikaanse Wolraad ontwerp is en die meeste van haar tapisserieë wat tot op die hede, is by Aubusson in Frankryk en in Suid-Afrika gemaak.

Sash woon nog in Engeland, maar in Suid-Afrika word sy steeds ewe goed onthou en vereer as kunstenaar (skilder en grafies) en onderrigter.

*\* Die Amadlozi-groep is oorspronklik om uitstalredes in die lewe geroep. Met die totstandkoming van die Egon Guenther-gallery in Johannesburg in 1957, het die eienaar, Egon Guenther, 'n immigrantejuwelier van Duitsland, sy mening uitgespreek dat kuns die tydperk en omgewing waarin dit geskep is, moet weerspieël. Deur die jare het Guenther verskeie plaaslike kunstenaars (skilders en beeldhouers) gekleur wat, soos hy gemeen het, die Afrika-gevoel ('Africanness') verbeeld – werke met Afrika-karaktertrekke en estetiese gehalte. Sy doel was om 'n reeks oorsese groep-uitstallings aan te bied om die individuele Suid-Afrikaanse kunstenaar as 'n geheel te vertoon – iets wat die kunstenaars, na sy mening, as individue nie kon vermag nie.*

*Die oorspronklike Amadlozi-groep is in 1963 in die lewe geroep, met Cecil Skotnes, Guiseppa Cattaneo, Cecily Sash (skilders) en Sydney Kumalo en Edoardo Villa (beeldhouers). Die lede het onafhanklik van mekaar gewerk en net tesame uitgestal, eers in Johannesburg, in 1963, gevolg deur 'n reisende uitstalling na Italië, in 1963 en 1964, wat in Rome, Florence, Milaan en Venesië opgestel is.*

Sash was born in Delmas, Mpumalanga in 1925. She received her schooling and early tertiary training in Johannesburg and at the Wits Technical Art School, from 1943 to 1946, under Maurice van Essche, and obtained a National Art Teacher's Certificate.

During 1948 and 1949 she continued her studies in London at Chelsea Polytechnic and Camberwell School under Victor Passmore. In the early 1950's she studied part-time for a B.A. degree in Fine Arts at the University of the Witwatersrand. She also received training in mosaic and mural design in London during 1953.

“ It was logical that Cecily Sash's teaching abilities should have been directed towards the basic discipline of Design, for the most consistent feature of her personal oeuvre has been her fluency in ordering the elements of pictorial composition. Her style itself has varied during several phases of development as she has continued to extend her experience and consolidate her investigations into the language of vision. ”

Esmé Berman (1970:263)

Sash was the art-mistress at the Jeppe Girls High School in Johannesburg from 1952 to 1958 – she attracted the interest of educationists with the original and stimulating effect of the methods she employed. During these years she also started receiving her first mural commissions.

In 1954 she held her first solo exhibition at the Whippman's Gallery in Johannesburg and, thereafter, exhibited in most major centres in South Africa. During the mid-1950's

she was a part-time lecturer in Design at Wits University and was appointed full-time and as head of Design in 1960, with **Judith Mason** as one of her students. During the same year she became an official member of the **Amadlozi Group\*** and participated in the 1963 group exhibitions in South Africa and Italy. She withdrew from the group due to her European studies with an Oppenheimer Grant made available for a year of overseas studying and research into contemporary art education. During this study visit to Europe and the USA she was stimulated by the new development of Op-art, and upon her return to South Africa, by the end of 1965, her work entered a completely new phase. Sash concentrated on the linear ambiguities associated with Op-art – in contrast to her earlier works in bright but limited colours, the new phase marked a transformed palette that was stripped down to tones of ochre, grey and pink, with a contrasting use of black and white. It was also by then that Sash used numerous bird studies as subject matter – the birds were also transformed from being creatures of nature to more abstract elements used symbolically. As an intellectual artist and teacher, the artist analyses the formal and technical qualities of her work, but has the ability to use symbolism and psychology to a great extent to convey personal emotion visually.

The first major commission for a large mosaic mural, **Seekoeivlei**, for the Transvaal Provincial Administration Building, Pretoria, was completed in 1963. Another mosaic mural for a new international concourse at Jan Smuts Airport (now the O.R. Tambo International Airport) was completed in 1968.

Sash was one of the eleven artists chosen to represent South Africa at the Grosvenor Gallery in London during 1965. She was awarded the title **Best Woman Artist** in the **Artists of Fame and Promise** competition in 1966, as well as a bronze medal at the Biennale SA Breweries Art Prize in 1968.

In 1972 Sash obtained a M.A. degree in Fine Arts through the University of the Witwatersrand. In 1974 she chose to move to England, where she lived in Herefordshire and had her first UK solo exhibition in London four years later.

Throughout her career Sash experimented in various media, including 'drip-and-dribble' techniques in enamel paints and formations in freely-applied plaster priming. She also acted as a tapestry designer. The six tapestries designed for the South African Wool Board in 1980, and most of the her tapestries designed to date, were woven at Aubusson in France and in South Africa.

Sash still lives in England today, but in South Africa she is equally remembered and celebrated as an artist (painting and graphic) and teacher.

*\* The Amadlozi Group was initially formed for exhibition purposes. With the establishment of the Egon Guenther Gallery in Johannesburg in 1957, its owner, Egon Guenther, an immigrant jeweller from Germany, expressed his belief that art must reflect the period and environment in which it is produced. Over the years Guenther selected several local artists (painters and sculptors) who, he felt, portrayed the 'Africanness' – works with African characteristics and aesthetic quality. His objective was to have a series of overseas group exhibitions to show individual South African art talent as a whole, as he thought the artists would not achieve this solely.*

*The original Amadlozi Group was formed in 1963, with Cecil Skotnes, Guiseppa Cattaneo, Cecily Sash (painters) and Sydney Kumalo and Edoardo Villa (sculptors). The members worked independently and only exhibited together, firstly in Johannesburg in 1963, followed in 1963 and 1964 by a travelling exhibition to Italy, set up in Rome, Florence, Milan and Venice.*

Bronne / Sources:  
Berman, E. 1970. *Art & Artists of South Africa*. AA Balkema: Cape Town.  
Harmsen, F. 1985. *Looking at South African Art*. Van Schaik: Pretoria.



Sash, Cecily (1925 - )  
*The Wounded sow*, 1964  
Olieverf op pleister-grondverf / Oil on plaster

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



Sash, Cecily (1925 - )  
*Concept No.2*, 1963  
Olieverf op pleister-grondverf / Oil on plaster

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