

La Motte

a culture of excellence

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

Erasmus is op 27 November 1928 in Bethal gebore en woon en werk tans in Johannesburg. Sy het in 1950 die graad B.A. (Visuele Kunste) aan die Universiteit van die Witwatersrand verwerf en in 1952 die Nasionale Kunsonderwysersertifikaat aan die Witwatersrandse Tegnieiese Kollege. Verdere studies het onder die Tsjeggies-Duitse skilder Gina Berndtson gevolg; by die École Nationale des Beaux Arts en Académie Ranson in Parys, 1953 tot 1955, en weer by laasgenoemde in 1960 tot 1961. Van 1957 tot 1977 was Erasmus by die Johannesburgse Kunsmuseum werksaam, aanvanklik as Vakkundige Beampte, en gedurende die laaste dekade as Direkteur.

Sy ontvang die Helgaard Steyn Toekenning in 1991 vir Skilderkuns. Hoewel sy wegbeweeg van die uitbeelding van realisme in haar werke, beskou sy haar werke nie as abstrak nie. Sy meen iets van die filosofie van Vryheid van die Sestigters in die Afrikaanse Letterkunde is te bespeur in haar kuns. In dié tyd het skrywers soos Jan Rabie en Bartho Smit haar pad gekruis. Sedertdien wy sy haar lewe voltyds aan haar kuns.

Erasmus het sedert haar eerste solo-uitstalling in 1957 by die Lidchi-gallery in Johannesburg al meer as 30 ander in al die groot sentra van Suid-Afrika gehou. Die jongste, *Review; a retrospective exhibition*, was in 2011/2012 by die SMAC Kunstgalerie, Stellenbosch.

Vorige retrospektiewe uitstallings: 2000 – Sasol Kunsmuseum, Universiteit Stellenbosch; 1986 – Pretoriase Kunsmuseum; 1985 – Suid-Afrikaanse Nasionale Kunsmuseum, Kaapstad; Universiteit van die Vrystaat, Bloemfontein en die US Kunstgalerie, Stellenbosch.

Erasmus het tot op die hede aan 90 groeputstallings deelgeneem, waarvan die eerste in 1950 by die Kunstefees, Universiteit van die Witwatersrand was. Daarna, die tiende Salon des Realities Nouvelles, Musée d' Art Moderne, Parys in 1955; Vyftig Jaar van Abstrakte Kuns, Gallerie Creuze, Parys in 1957; Tweede Paryse Biennale, Musée d' Art Moderne in 1961; São Paulo Biennale, Brazil in 1965; die Republiekfees-uitstalling, Pretoria in 1966; 'n Eeu van Suid-Afrikaanse Kuns, Johannesburg in 1969 en, in 1978/79, Art in South Africa, 'n rondreisende uitstalling in die VSA. Erasmus se mees onlangse deelname was aan Collection 17, wat in 2012 deur die SMAC Kunstgalerie by die Aardklop Nasionale Kunstefees, Potchefstroom aangebied is.

Erasmus was born in Bethal on 27 November 1928 and currently lives and works in Johannesburg. She obtained her B.A. degree (Fine Arts) in 1950 from the University of the Witwatersrand and, in 1952, the National Art Teacher's Certificate from the Witwatersrand Technical College. Further studies followed under the Czech German painter, Gina Berndtson, at the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts and Académie Ranson, Paris, France from 1953 to 1955, and the Académie Ranson, Paris, France from 1960 to 1961. From 1957 to 1977 Erasmus worked at the Johannesburg Art Gallery, initially as a Professional Officer and during the last decade as Director.

Since then she has become a full-time artist and awarded the Helgaard Steyn Award for Painting in 1991. Even though the portrayals in her work move away from realism, she does not see her work as abstract. She mentions something of the philosophy of the Freedom of the Sixties found in the Afrikaans literature that can be detected in her art. At this stage, authors such as Jan Rabie and Bartho Smit crossed her path.

Erasmus has held more than 30 solo exhibitions in all the major centres in South Africa, from the first, in 1957, at the Lidchi Gallery, Johannesburg, until the most recent, in 2012: *Review; a retrospective exhibition*, SMAC Art Gallery, Stellenbosch.

Previous retrospective exhibitions, include: 2000, in the Sasol Art Museum, Stellenbosch University; 1986, at the Pretoria Art Museum; 1985, at the Iziko South African National Art Gallery, Cape Town; the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein and the US Art Gallery, Stellenbosch.

Erasmus took part in 90 group exhibitions, the first in 1950 at the Arts Festival (Council of Cultural Societies), University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg; the *10th Salon des Realites Nouvelles*, Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris, France in 1955; *Fifty Years of Abstract Painting*, Gallery Creuze, Paris, France in 1957; Second Biennale of Paris, Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris, France in 1961; Sao Paulo Biennale, Brazil in 1965; Republic Festival Exhibition, Pretoria in 1966; *A Century of South African Art*, Johannesburg, 1969, and in 1978/79, *Art in South Africa*, touring the United States of America. The latest exhibition was in 2012: *Collection 17* (SMAC), at the Aardklop National Arts Festival, Potchefstroom.

“ In a way, painting and drawing for me,
is one long process of liberation.
Having known darkness - utter darkness as to what painting may be
about, and what life is about...I had a starting point.
From that confusion towards a little
more light. ”

Bronne / Sources:
Nel Erasmus website. 2015. *Nel Erasmus*. Available: www.nelerasmus.com
Helgaard Steyn Awards 1987 – 2013 Catalogue. 2014. *Nel Erasmus*. La Motte Museum: Franschoek: p9-10.
Photo: Nel Erasmus in her studio, Melville, Johannesburg in 1970. Courtesy of SMAC Art Gallery, Stellenbosch. Copyright Nel Erasmus



Erasmus, Nel (1928 -)
Lamps, 1964
Olieverf op bord / Oil on board

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