

La Motte

a culture of excellence

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

Prowse is in 1883 in Queenstown in die Oos-Kaap gebore – die dogter van Engelse immigrante. Haar kinderjare het sy op 'n plaas naby Duiwelspiek deurgebring en vanaf 1900 het sy onder G. Crosland Robinson opleiding aan die Kaapstadse Kunsskool ontvang. Van 1902 tot 1908 het sy oorsee gestudeer, onder meer aan Slade School, Londen, met 'n studiebeurs aan die Royal Academy School onder John Singer Sargent en, in Parys, by la Palette in die Latynse Kwartier.

Prowse het haar debuut as kunstenaar gemaak deur haar werke in 1902 by die eerste jaarlikse uitstalling van die Suid-Afrikaanse Kunsvereniging in Kaapstad te vertoon. In 1908 het sy as kunsonderwyseres na Kaapstad teruggekeer en die volgende jaar is sy tot lid van die Suid-Afrikaanse Kunsvereniging verkies. In 1912 het sy na Paarl verhuis. Van 1923 tot 1925 is Prowse vir 'n studiebesoek na Engeland en, in 1938, na Europa, spesifiek vir navorsing oor die bewaring van kuns en historiese geboue.

Sy was van 1928 tot 1956 Bewaarder van die Michaelis Versameling in die Ou Stadhuis. Gedurende hierdie tyd het sy uitblink met haar toewyding aan die restaurasie en bewaring van kuns, historiese geboue en die Kaapse erfenis. Van 1948 tot 1957 het sy as Trustee van die Suid-Afrikaanse Nasionale Kunstgalerie gedien en in 1959 is die Kaapse drie-eeuefees-stigting medalje vir haar bydrae tot die bewaring van historiese geboue aan haar toegeken. Sy het in die Royal Academy uitgestal en is, as stigterslid van die Nuwe Groep, in 1952 tot Voorsitter verkies. In 1965 is sy met 'n Eremedalje van die Suid-Afrikaanse Kunsvereniging (Kaapse tak) vereer vir haar diens aan die Suid-Afrikaanse Kuns en het sy 'n lewenslange lid van die Simon van der Stel Stigting geword.

Prowse het die meeste van haar tyd aan haar belangstelling in die bevordering en bewaring van Suid-Afrikaanse kuns bestee en dus minder tyd voor die esel deurgebring. 'n Oorsig van haar werke toon dat Prowse veral in die Kaapse impressionistiese styl uitgemunt het, soos te sien in straattonele, uitsigtonele van Kaapstad, die stad se mense en tonele van Maleier-feeste. Sy is ook deur die Karoo-landskap geïnspireer en het dit as onderwerp vir haar kuns gebruik.

Prowse is in 1967 oorlede. Haar huis, bekend as 'The Retreat', op die Roodebloem-landgoed in Woodstock, Kaapstad is vir die vestiging van 'n kuns-en-kultuursentrum nagelaat. In 1970 het die trustees die stig van die Ruth Prowse Kunssentrum, met Erik Laubscher as die eerste hoof, formeel goedgekeur. In 1980 is die Roodebloem-landgoed tot Nasionale Monument verklaar en dit is vandag steeds die tuiste van die Ruth Prowse Kunsskool.

Prowse was born in Queenstown, Eastern Cape in 1883 – the daughter of English immigrants. Her childhood years were spent on a farm near Devil's Peak and, from 1900, she attended Cape Town Art School under G. Crosland Robinson. From 1902 until 1908 she studied abroad at the Slade School, London, on scholarship at the Royal Academy School under John Singer Sargent and, in Paris, at la Palette in the Latin Quarter.

Prowse made her debut as an artist in 1902, exhibiting in the first annual exhibition of the South African Society of Arts, Cape Town. In 1908 she returned to South Africa to teach art in Cape Town and, in the year that followed, was elected as a member of the South African Society of Artists. She relocated to Paarl in 1912. From 1923 until 1925 she undertook a study visit to England, while, in 1938, she went on another study visit, this time to Europe, for research regarding the preservation of art and historic buildings.

She was appointed as Keeper of the Michaelis Collection in the Old Town House from 1928 until 1956. During these years she excelled in her dedication to the restoration and preservation of art, historic buildings and Cape heritage and was also appointed as Trustee of the South African National Gallery, from 1948 to 1957. For her work in preserving historic buildings she received the Cape Tercentenary Foundation Medal in 1959. She exhibited at the Royal Academy and, as a foundation member of the *New Group*, was elected as Chairperson in 1952. In 1965 she was awarded the South African Association of Arts (Cape branch) Medal of Honour for her service to South African art and also became a life member of the Simon van der Stel Foundation.

Prowse dedicated most of her time to her primary interest, the development and preservation of South African art, and less time was spent in front of the easel. An overview of her artistic work shows that Prowse is best known for the Cape impressionistic style portrayed through street-scenes, views of Cape Town, the city's people and festive Malay groups. Outside of Cape Town she was inspired by the Karoo landscape, also portrayed in her art.

Prowse died in 1967. Her home, known as 'The Retreat', on the Roodebloem Estate in Woodstock, Cape Town, was bequeathed for the establishment of an art and cultural centre. In 1970 the trustees formally approved the founding of the Ruth Prowse Art Centre, with Erik Laubscher as the first principal. In 1980 the Roodebloem Estate was declared a National Monument and, today, it is still home to the Ruth Prowse School of Art.

Bronne / Sources:

Ruth Prowse School of Art, [s.a]. Ruth Prowse, essay written by Lynette Bester, Head of Fine Art at Ruth Prowse School of Art.
Berman, E. 1983. *Art & Artist of South Africa*. AA Balkema: Cape Town.
Photo: Ruth Prowse. Courtesy of SANL (Cape Town) - PHA Collection: Portraits: Ruth Prowse.



Prowse, Ruth (1883 – 1967)
Malay Quarters, Cape Town [s.a.]
Olieverf op bord / Oil on board

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



Prowse, Ruth (1883 – 1967)
Durban Harbour, 1919
Olieverf op bord / Oil on board

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