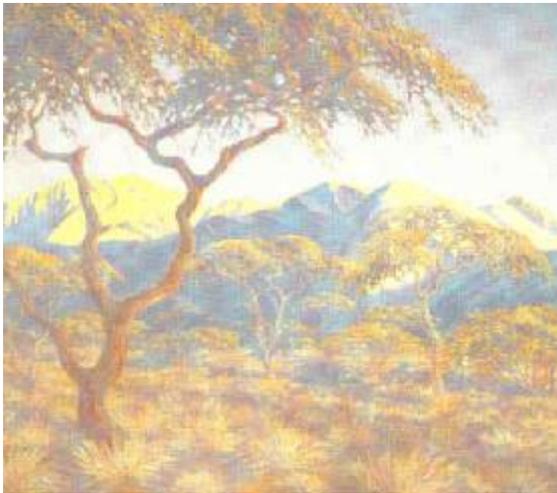


# Landscape and Wildlife Artists

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The tradition of Namibian landscape painting began early in the 20th century with European artists who came to live in the country. They discovered the ever changing beauty of nature in the sparsely populated territory and artists like Hans Anton Aschenborn, Carl Ossmann, Axel Eriksson and Paul Nüchterlein established a mode of painting which still has an enthusiastic following today. It encompasses large, panoramic views with many kilometres of grassland extending into illusions of depth, clusters of bush and picturesque mountain-ranges on the horizon. Small, confined sections of the landscape were painted less frequently, because the unusual colour gradations and impressions of great distance reveal themselves effectively only in large, overall concepts. Carl Ossmann influenced many landscape painters with his skillful treatment of the changing light in the early morning and evening hours.



*Although Khomashochland (Carl Ossmann, 1924) is a realistic painting in essence, it includes allusions to impressionism and art nouveau*



*The small and exquisite landscape, "Südwester Landschaft", (Axel Eriksson, 1923) demonstrates Eriksson's ability to express mood through the medium of finely graded tones of colour, obviously executed during the rainy season*

Axel Eriksson, Johannes Blatt and contemporary artists Dieter Aschenborn and Carola Krohnsbein-Goldbeck integrate peacefully grazing animals into their interpretations of nature in order to suggest a primordial paradise. Fritz Krampe, an eminent wildlife artist, had a different approach to painting. He was passionate about African wildlife but not interested in its habitat. He confined himself to merely suggesting a landscape in order to provide a setting for the animals he depicted in action. Adolph Jentsch and Otto Schröder introduced their own unique concepts of landscape painting. Adolph Jentsch transposed bushes, rocks and grasses of the Namibian farmland into rhythmically moving textures. His technique has been imitated by many artists, but none have succeeded in recapturing this spiritual process which was Jentsch's primary objective.



*Charging Buffaloes (Fritz Krampe, undated) The ruthlessly severe wildlife scene awakens a longing for primordial Africa, for that primal existence which preceded the romanticizing of Africa by foreigners.*



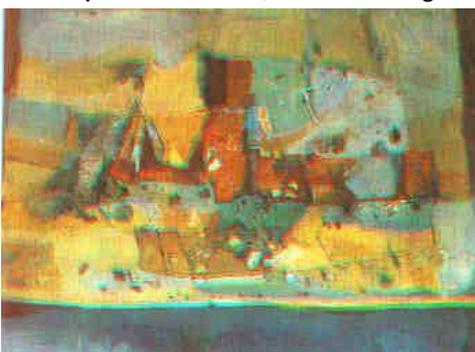
*Waterhole at Farm Kowas (Adolph Jentsch, 1958)*



*Swakop Landschaft (Joachim Voigts, 1969)*

The appeal of Otto Schröder's pastels, especially his portrayals of the desert, was created by the reduction of all subject matter and colours to an absolute minimum in contrast to the omnipresent boundlessness of sky, land and ocean. Another artist who, even in his old age, always produced his watercolours *en plein air* was Joachim Voigts.

*Voigt's style was realistic. He recorded the actual, visible appearance of nature, the splendour of creation without subjective alienation.*



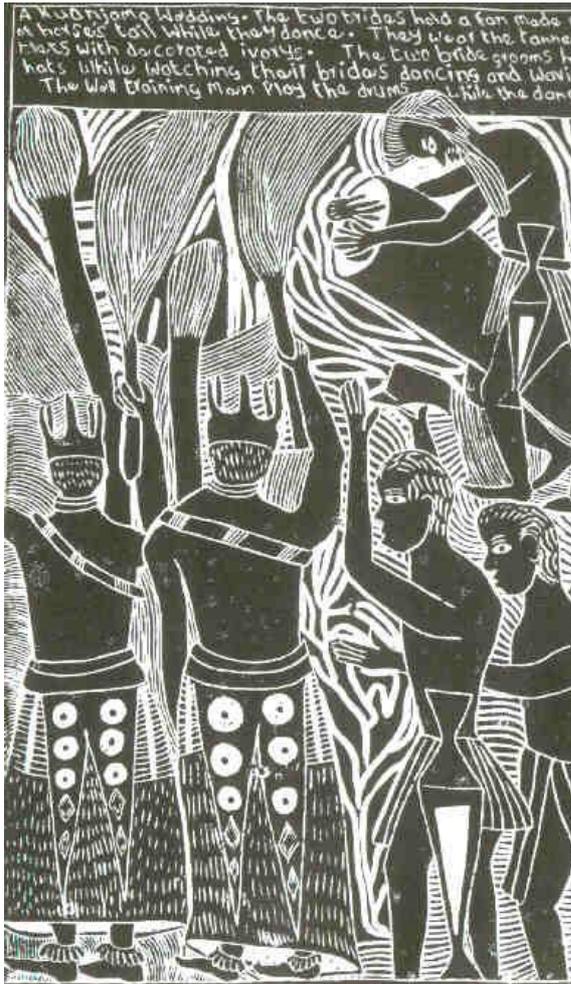
*Fantasy Rocks and Plants (Nico Roos, 1978) Nico Roos' paintings were regarded as modern interpretations of the barren Namibian landscape*

In the 1950s and 1960s, Namibian art exhibitions were dominated by the pastoral tradition and a considerable number of artists, other than those mentioned above, established themselves in this field. While abstract art achieved popularity in America and Europe, art in Namibia, except for a few deviations in the works of Nico Roos, Johannes and Arnfried Blatt and Heinz Pulon, remained loyal to descriptive depiction.

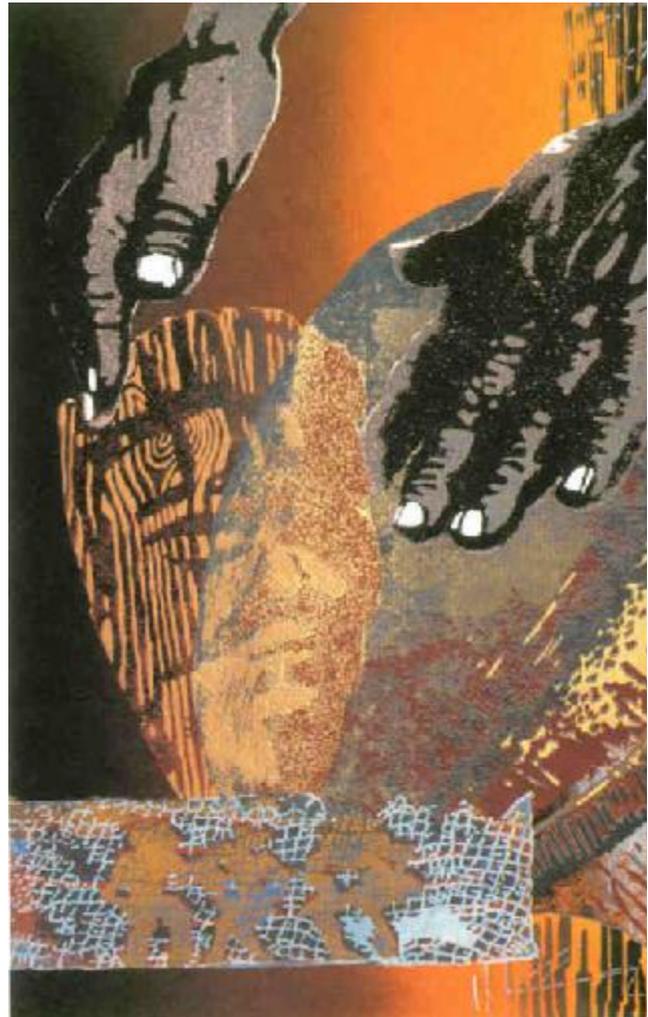


*The Leopard (Heinz Pulon, undated) is an example of the semi-abstract animal and human figures Pulon created during the 1960s. In this case the decorative lines emphasize the leopard's quick striding movements.*

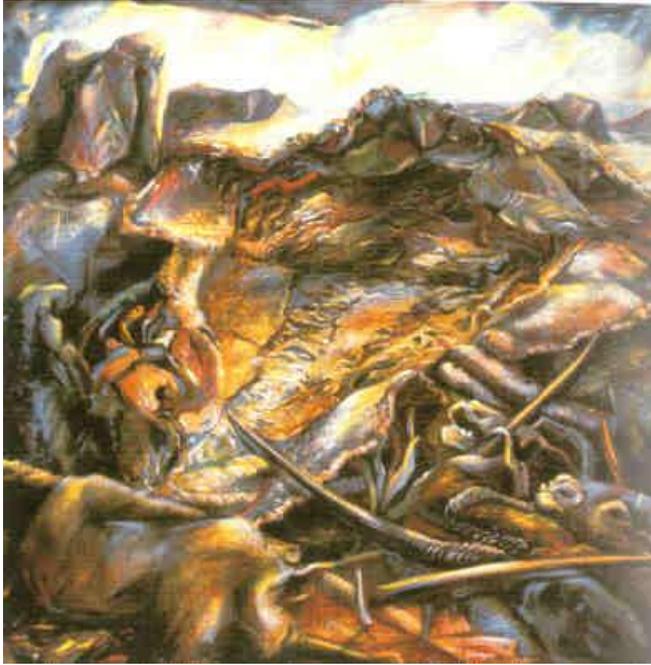
The political aspirations of the majority were harshly repressed by the administration of the South African government. Accustomed to their social status, European "South Westers" experienced Namibia as quiet and peaceful, an untamed wilderness they had the freedom to explore and cultivate. It was easy to ignore the conflicts of the liberation struggle and the suffering of the majority. Much of the visual arts of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s reflected this apolitical and sheltered context. Only in the latter 1970s, a watershed decade politically and artistically, did artists begin to define their personal reactions within the context of the country's rapidly changing social and political climate. Artists like John Muafangejo and Joseph Madisia and several others emerged. These artists began defining their personal feelings in the country's rapidly changing context.



*Kuanyama Wedding (John Muafangejo, 1972) depicts a traditional wedding, and belongs to a group of his work that deals with everyday life and culture of the Ovambo peoples. As in most of his linocuts, John Muafangejo combines minute descriptions with the atmosphere of a festive occasion.*



*African Rhythms (Joseph Madisia, 1985)*



*Die Bewaarder is die Toeskouer (Anita Steyn, 1986)*

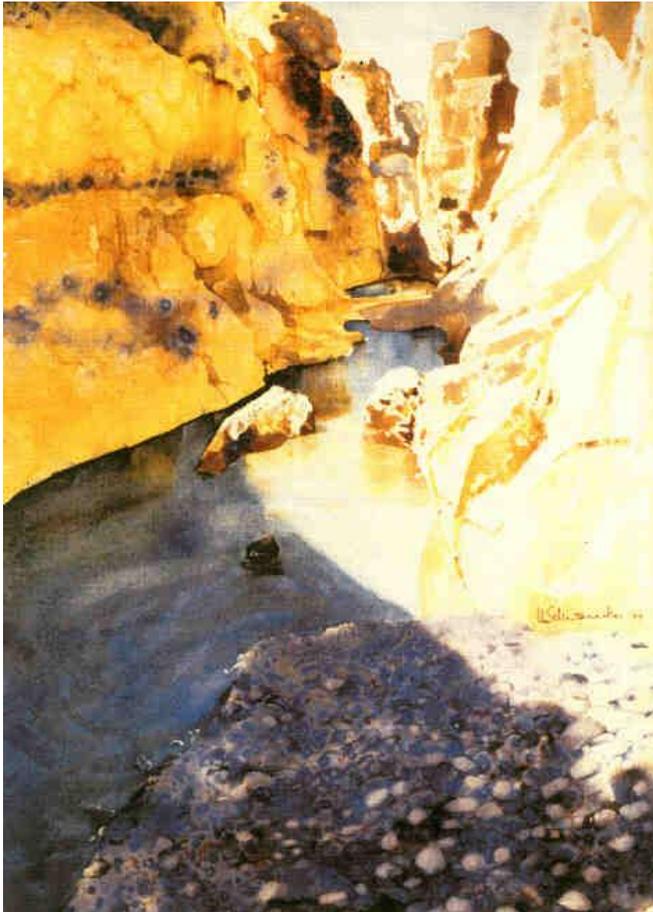
Anita Steyn is one of Namibia's leading contemporary landscape artists. However, in some of her major works existential peace and seclusion are not the primary objectives in the depiction of the natural world. She paints nature churning and partly destroyed, transposed into vivid colours and forms with disturbing restlessness.

*The theme of this painting, a panoramic landscape with its horizon placed high in the painting and with disintegrating forms and colours, is the plight of the indigenous habitat exploited by outsiders.*



*The "Window View (Francois de Necker, 1987) is from an interior to the outside. The solid quadrangles in the foreground become displaced and dissolve, growing lighter towards the open window.*

Francois de Necker has invented personal metaphors in abstract landscape compositions. A visionary way of seeing the Namibian landscape has been introduced with the surrealist paintings by the South African Keith Alexander. He derives his inspiration from the almost obliterated, sand blown ghost towns of Kolmanskop and Elizabeth Bay.



*Pools at Sesriem (Ulrich Schwanecke, 1977)*

Nevertheless, congenital landscape art has not ceased to exist and the undisturbed vistas of nature will continue to inspire. Excepting the subtle renderings by contemporary artists of the caliber of Joshua Nell and Ulrich Schwanecke, the tradition of landscape painting has largely degenerated into sketchy, small washes and sterile documentation of famous natural attractions.

*Schwanecke produces the textures of volcanic rocks, mountains, bushes and layers of earth with crinkled tissue paper dipped in wet pigment, with butter and crêpe paper.*



*Tony Pupkewitz combines documentation with artistic presentation. His sense for unusual colour shades and light is striking, as in "Texture of a Kokerboom"*