Curriculum Vitae

Eben van der Merwe †

Personal Details

- Born in Bloemfontein, Orange Free State, South Africa on 12 July 1932
- Married to Marianette Elizabeth van der Merwe
- 2 Sons
- Deceased as widower on 26 September 2026 in Johannesburg, South Africa

Career as Commercial Artist

- Studied Literature and Philosophy at the University of the Orange Free State.
- Left before completing degree to concentrate on a career in Art.
- Became Designer, Lay-out Artist and Typographer, working for the Magazine section of Argus Publishing.
- Progressed to Hortors in Johannesburg to take up a position as Typographer-Designer.
- Also worked as Visualiser-Typographer in Advertising for two years.
- Returned to Argus Publishing after being offered the position of Art Director for the entire Magazine section.
- Pursued career in painting in spare time during this period.

Career as Lecturer

- Approached by Pretoria University in 1971 to take up a lectureship in Painting and Applied Design in the newly-formed Department of Fine Arts.
- Left after 5 years to become fulltime painter and designer.
- Invited regularly by various institutions to give illustrated lectures on Painting and related subjects.

Career as Painter

- Entirely self-taught as painter; started at the age of nine.
- Exhibited in group exhibitions from age fourteen.
- Founder member of the Bloemfontein Group in 1958.

Exhibitions (Shortened)

South Africa

1958 : Bloemfontein Group, Bloemfontein

1959 : Bloemfontein Group, Johannesburg

1960 : Bloemfontein Group, Kimberly

1963 : Modern Contemporaries, Pretoria

1964 : South African Quadrenniale

1965 : Art South Africa Today

1966 : Republic Festival, Pretoria

1970 : National Gallery, Bulawayo

1970 : Transvaal Academy exhibition, Arts Association Herbert Evans Exhibition, Johannesburg

1971 : South African Arts, Republic Festival Exhibition, Cape Town

1972 : Transvaal Academy

1974 : Transvaal Art Association, Johannesburg

Exhibitions continued into 1980's and 1990's, with solo exhibitions in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Pretoria.

Overseas Exhibitions

Selected to represent South Africa at the following Biennales :

1963 : Sao Paolo Biennale and New Orleans

1964 : Venice Biennale

1965 : Sao Paolo Biennale

1968 : Venice Biennale; Featured South African Painter with Cecil Skotnes (Graphics) and Lucas Sithole (Sculpture)

Paintings in Collections (status may have changed, as updates have not been actively pursued)

- Rembrandt Collection
- Sasol Collection
- ABSA Collection
- Pretoria Municipal Gallery
- Hester Rupert Collection
- William Humphreys Museum
- Oliewenhuis Museum Bloemfontein
- Cape Town National Gallery
- Private Collections in South Africa, Europe, USA and Japan.

Career as Designer & Builder of Coloured Glass Windows

- Won competition for the design of a large Coloured Glass (Dalle-de-Verre) window for the Provincial Administration Building in Bloemfontein. At the time, it was the largest facade of coloured glass ever built.
- Subsequently designed and built works in this medium for a number of windows throughout South Africa.

Painting Commissions

Completed a number of commissions for institutions and private individuals. Amongst others:

- Landscapes for the Delville Wood Memorial Museum (SA), France
- Landscapes for the War Museum, Bloemfontein
- Landscapes for the firm CFG, Ceres
- Seven portraits of South African Composers for SAMRO
- Portrait of the Chairman of the Council, University of the OFS
- Landscapes and Portraits for private Collections

Undertook two study tours to Europe and UK in 1966 and 1976.

Until death at age 94, fulltime artist in home studio in Randburg, painting a wide selection of Landscapes, Portraits and Abstracts. After death of Eben's wife, Christine le Roux became a wonderful and dedicated companion until Eben's death in 2026.