

GALLERY 101: WELL WORTH A VISIT

EIGHT artists are exhibiting their works at the Gallery 101, Rand Central Building, Jeppe Street. Of these, one, Barbara Greig, has ceramic panels, and another—Herman Wald—sculpture on view. As a whole, the exhibition is one which will not leave the visitor unsatisfied, thanks to several highlights and thanks to the competent hanging of a difficult collection.

Taking the artists in the order in which their names appear on the invitation, I will first deal with JAN BUYS.

When the gallery opened with works by Jan Buys, there was some doubt about the artist's intention. He had evidently taken a new road and was not very sure of his footing, it seemed. It was said that he was not very convincing and one could even find traces of Gordon Vorster's influence if one wished.

From two of his works on view—a landscape and a forest scene—it now appears that that exhibition was only a point of departure and a too-hasty judgment at the time would not have been fair.

Not only is Jan Buys too much of a craftsman and too clever an artist to copy blatantly, but his change of palette is seriously meant and since the first exhibition of his new trend, there is a strong and convincing development in the new direction and a surer knowledge of the ultimate aim.

HERBERT COETZEE is, as far as I know, a newcomer to Johannesburg exhibitions. He shows only two works on this exhibition, but it is quite clear that although he is still young in experience, he is full of promise. He has a good draughtsman's fist, can capture and interpret atmosphere well and his paint has quality.

I doubt whether there is much more to be added to the praises which BARBARA GREIG has already gathered for her first exhibition some weeks ago. The fact that she has been invited to send some of her work to an exhibition in Washington speaks clearly and well enough for her.

FRANK HARLING'S pastels—I feel inclined to all them Japanese epigrams—provide one of the highlights on this exhibition. Here is a fine example of how little is really needed to say quite a lot.

Nearly classic in their simplicity and spartan in their spareness they nevertheless are never rigid or give the feeling of strain, nor is there any sign of their being contrived.

They are vibrant not only of craftsmanship and artistry, but of a fine sensitivity for poetry and a serious acquaintance with philosophy.

Of OTTO KLAR, two works are exhibited, one of which I have seen before, but which nevertheless provides me with increasing pleasure, thanks to superb quality, its sensitive interpretation of textures, the harmony of its colours and strength of composition.

Is there a possibility that Klar has been overlooked lately? If the quality of Klar's other current works are all the same as this particular one, then the fault does not rest with Klar.

HERMAN WALD exhibits two sculptures—or are they ruptures, Mr. Wald. Surely, an artist of his experience and capability should know better than to exhibit like that in a public gallery—in some "fernes wald, vielleicht," but not in a modern city with intelligent people who have seen something of sculpture before.

JOHN HLATYWAYO has the small gallery all to himself and quite an impressive showing he makes there. A number of things stand out very clearly from this collection:

that the artist possesses talent, but that the talent is as yet uneven. Witness the fact that he made some portraits which are of a fine quality and which have a nearly medieval serenity in them, only to fall into depths of uncertainty in a number of others.

The numerous heads and busts give rise to the question whether he fights shy of other parts of the anatomy because he has not mastered the drawing of them yet. And yet, one cannot give an unqualified "yes" to this answer, because he has a fine sense of rhythm and is an accurate observer of action.

Last, but by no means least, there are the drawings by the young Portuguese artist, RUY BASTOS, who introduces not only a new sound but a new sight into Johannesburg art life. The sound is that of a strange wind sighing through old, mysterious trees—the sight described by a prophet of doom.

One could say of these drawings that they remind one of Dali and company, were it not for the deep religious well from which they apparently spring, the seriousness and the deep philosophy which one does not expect to find in so young an artist.

All in all this is an exhibition to which a visit—and disagreement with my criticism—is recommended.

LORENZ SCHULTZ.