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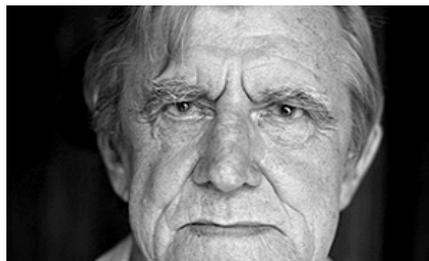
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BREAKING NEWS: Fred Schimmel passes away
2009-06-24

Veteran printmaker and painter, Fred Schimmel died yesterday in Melville at the age of eighty. Schimmel, who taught at the famous Polly Street art centre, was also well-known as the pioneering founder of the Graphics Club of South Africa, which aimed, he said, "to make good quality art available to middle-class and younger buyers who could not afford to purchase original artworks by well-known South African artists".



Born in 1928 in Amsterdam, Schimmel arrived in South Africa, as a young man of twenty. He had studied briefly at the Kunstnijverheidsschool in Amsterdam, but aside from that, possessed no formal art training. In South Africa, he worked as an assistant in a commercial lithography company, where he learnt all he needed to know about the complexities of various print-making processes.

He would later go on to impart this knowledge to artists such as Sidney Khumalo, Louis Maqhubela and Ephraim Ngatane as a voluntary teacher at the famed Polly Street art centre.

His own production was characterised by diversity; producing both meticulous screen-prints and expressive paintings. His paintings were known for their distinctive combinations of hard-edge graphic qualities with expressive impasto layers.

"There is something very satisfactory about Fred Schimmel's life, times and oeuvre," wrote Judith Mason, in a catalogue for Schimmel's November 2008 retrospective at SMAC gallery in Stellenbosch. The exhibition, which marked Schimmel's eightieth birthday, catalogued his prolific output over the past sixty years, including hard-edge landscapes, figurative works, silkscreen landscapes, calligraphic abstractions, handmade paper drawings as well new experimental 'carborundum' prints.

Schimmel is survived by his daughter, the writer Gail Schimmel. His wife, Sybil, passed away in 2008.