

Editorial staff/Redaksie

Miss/Mej. A. Monnig
(Editor/Redaktrise)
Dr C.M. Engelbrecht
Dr C.D. Lynch
Mr./Mnr. J. Haasbroek
Mr./Mnr. E. Botha
(Artist/Kunstenaar)
Mrs./Mev. H. de Villiers
(Typesetting/Setwerk)

FRONT COVER/VOORBLAD —
Florissbadman en trawante
by deur: Charl Marais

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EDITORIAL

For centuries museums have existed and will continue to exist as institutions where artifacts are collected and preserved. Man can learn from these artifacts which offer each new generation the opportunity for cultural, natural and educational enrichment.

However, it has become increasingly difficult to accomplish the traditional functions of museums, not in the least because of the financial crisis, but perhaps because of a priority crisis.

The museum is a distinct and unique institution, created by man, to fulfill a role, however, if the establishment needs and wants museums, it will have to accept that a museum *per se* is as important and as essential, if not more so, as for instance a new and beautiful (if not costly) rugby stadium and opera house. After all, as D.F. Cameron, Director of the Brooklyn Museum, states: "A museum provides opportunity for reaffirmation of the faith; it is a place for private and intimate experience, although it is shared with many others, it is, in concept, the temple of the *muse* where today's personal experience of life can be viewed in the context of the works of God through all the ages, the arts of man through all the years." (Inscription at the entrance to the Royal Ontario Museum, Canada).

Very philosophical, one might say, but there is also a realistic need for museums. Modern technology has an ever-increasing impact on mankind and on museums. New labour-saving machinery, industrial reorganisation, the computer, and the relocation of people are factors conducive to more leisure time now and, even more so, in the future. Many more people will have the choice of working at night instead of during the day; there will be many millions of people with much more time on their hands, and there will consequently be longer vacations. As W.A. Burns, Director of the San Diego Natural History Museum, says: For selffulfillment these people will be searching for outlets, for hobbies, for avocations which may become more meaningful to them than their employment.

Museums can satisfy many of these people's needs in terms of the "goods" they have to offer, namely artifacts and highly qualified personnel. Alas! there is invariably insufficient room in which to establish, curate and accommodate these. Time has come for the establishment to take another look at its priority list and to realize the value and the contributions of museums. Like universities, museums are educational and research institutions which are essential in the life of any society that purports civilisation.

C.D. LYNCH