

# OLIEWENHUIS —

## AN ART MUSEUM FOR BLOEMFONTEIN

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For many years the art loving community in Bloemfontein felt a desperate need for a National Art Museum. At last this is becoming a reality.



*Clement Seneque, landscape, charcoal and pencil on paper.*

In the past, numerous attempts were made to establish an Art Museum in Bloemfontein. Unfortunately these efforts did not meet with much success. As early as 1959, Mrs. Anna Enslin, Member of the Provincial Council for Bloemfontein initiated the idea of erecting a Municipal Art Gallery, which as part of a cultural project for the city was to be incorporated into the Civic Centre. However, owing to financial difficulties the Municipality was compelled to postpone the incorporation of certain sections of the building, one of which was the art gallery. Mr A.C. White, former Mayor of Bloemfontein and art lover, donated the amount of £5.474 to cover the costs for the completion of the Gallery. The A.C. White Art Gallery was officially opened on 13 May 1976. Unfortunately the Gallery was recently closed due to a lack of support by the public.

Oliewenhuis, former residence to visiting Governors-General and State Presidents, was released to the National Museum on 19 June 1985 to be developed into an Art Museum. Although Oliewenhuis cannot officially be recognized as an Art Museum until aspects such as lighting, humidity, temperature control, security, etc. can qualify according to Museum standards, activities in the gallery are none the less in full force.

As in most other institutions, the Museum has acquired works of art by means of donations, bequests and acquisitions, for example the Scott-Trust and the Pieter de Waal Benefaction (1962). This year the Museum has acquired a sketch by Clement Seneque, a Maud Sumner watercolour, oil paintings by Pranas Domsaitis and Atherley Glossop, and a bronze bust donated by Laura Rautenbach.

Although the Museum can pride itself with a formidable art collection, the first priority will be to build up a comprehensive collection of representative South African art, and to pervade on any possible gaps that may exist in the collection. At the same time, the Museum shall strive towards expanding on contemporary South African art so as to acquire a collection that rightfully portrays the progression and standard of South African art.

It will be the objective of Oliewenhuis to strive towards the safekeeping and preservation of art, and the interpretation thereof through exhibition and research. Looking forward, Oliewenhuis can be viewed with confidence and with a reliance of great things to come.



**Architect plans for the renovation of Oliewenhuis have been finalized and construction of the new Art Museum will commence during the first quarter of 1988.**



*Latest acquisition: Maud Sumner, landscape, watercolour on paper.*



*Father Claerhout in conversation with Dr C.M. Engelbrecht, Director of the National Museum, during a Frans Claerhout sales exhibition at Oliewenhuis.*