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ELLERMAN HOUSE ART

The Ellerman House art collection takes visitors to this fine hotel on a journey that explores the huge social and cultural shift that South African art has made from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. The art in this collection tells of the character of our land and the expression of our unique South African experience. From the time of the early pictorial historians of the mid-nineteenth century, such as Thomas Bowler, you acknowledge that this country has a flavour of its own – an essential nature that distinguishes it from other places.

Communities in South Africa were extremely physically and culturally isolated from international centres of artistic innovation in the early 20th Century - a time before instantaneous globalisation of today. The Ellerman House collection traces the progress of pioneering work done in the 1930s by a generation of artists, such as Gregoire Boonzaaier, Maggie Laubser and Irma Stern, who were members of The New Group.

Progressive identification by artists, such as Walter Battiss and Alexis Preller, with the essential nature of the land and its people- its Africanism, further reinforced the unique qualities of this land. The emergence of black pioneering artist like Gerard Sekoto and George Pemba began a process of cultural integration of the country's ethnic communities into a unified South African art.

In the Ellerman House Contemporary Gallery, an eclectic, outspoken and energetic generation of current artists, such as Wayne Barker, Phillemon Hlugwani, Louis Maqhubela and Angus Taylor are pushing the boundaries of the ordinary in order to create work that explores relevant issues in post-modern South African society.

The work of all these artists that can be seen in the Ellerman House collection, are an essential record of the spirit of the times in the development of a nation. The collection is extraordinary in that its over 1000 works are exhibited as part of the unique artistic experience that one enjoys at Ellerman House.