

DRAWINGS
BY

MAURICE
VAN ESSCHE

DURBAN ART GALLERY
9-30 JULY 1968

EXHIBITION OF DRAWINGS BY MAURICE VAN ESSCHE

This Exhibition was opened by Mrs. Z. Wisznicka-Kleczynska on Tuesday, 9th July, 1968, at 5.30 p.m.

Members of the public who wish to acquire works from this exhibition should contact the Curator for information.

INTRODUCTION

"Draughtsmanship", wrote Ingres, "is the probity of art line is drawing, it is everthing".

In the century and a half that has elapsed since that was written, much has happened that would appear to disprove it, yet it remains essentially true.

Certainly, it applies with force to the art of Maurice van Essche. For van Essche, drawing has always had a particular importance. Even though his reputation popularly rests on his great talent as a colourist, his paintings always have a firm structural basis. And to appreciate this properly one has to go to his drawings. Probably few major artists in this country devote as much time drawing to as he does.

The act of drawing for him is a compound of several purposes. In the first instance, it serves as a kind of internal discipline, a means of tempering co-ordination between hand and eye. Secondly, his drawings serve in the traditional sense as studies for further development as paintings. Thirdly, probably most importantly, they exist as things in themselves, complete and finite, the result of an encounter between a given factual situation, a lyrical artist's eye and a skilled and practised hand.

While his media varies - pen and ink, conte crayon, brush and ink, charcoal, pencil - he has a particular affection for one theme. And this is the classical subject of the female nude.

In this, van Essche perceives a universe of forms; a constant and inexhaustible field of study. His approach to it is relaxed and unforced. His line describes with ease and grace and practised fluency. To trace its slow, rhythmical arabesques across the line of a thigh or the contour of a torso, is one of the pleasures of the civilized art of contemplating a drawing at leisure.

His style acknowledges that of Matisse more than any other, but in the end it is personal to him.

This I can best describe as a refined compound of the sensual and the classical.

His nudes are warm. They luxuriate in the experience of life. Though - as all drawings must be - they are made up of countless abstractions, the final image, in the end, is a tangibly real one.

Yet, and this is where the classical strain comes in, they are all subject to firm and impeccably balanced artistic control.

His compositions are stable and harmonious with emphasis on the tactile quality of the objects described. Though bounded only by delicate line, his forms speak of density and weight. They have, finally, that quality of being. They exist independent of the flux of movement or accidents of chance.

This collection of fine drawings should provide valuable insight into the structure of the art of one of the country's most distinguished painters.

1.	Nude	Charcoal
2.	Basuto Woman	Charcoal
3.	Coloured Girl Sitting	Charcoal
4.	Girl Sitting	Pen and Ink
5.	Nude	Conté Crayon
6.	Profile	Ink
7.	Lying Nude	Crayon
8.	Study of a Roman Girl	Pen and Ink
9.	Standing Figure (Rome)	Pen and Ink
10.	Sitting Figure	Brush and Ink
11.	Reclining Figure	Pen and Ink
12.	Resting Figure	Pen and Ink
13.	Standing Nude	Pen and Ink and Wash
14.	Sitting Girl	Pen and Ink
15.	Figure Lying	Pen and Ink
16.	Sitting Figure	Pen and Ink
17.	Figure with Crossed Legs	Pen and Ink
18.	Resting Nude (back)	Pen and Ink
19.	Figure resting against Cushion	Pen and Ink
20.	Crawling Figure	Pen and Ink
21.	Movement Study	Pen and Ink
22.	Sketch of a Nude	Pen and Ink
23.	Standing Figure	Pen and Ink
24.	Sleeping Girl	Crayon
25.	Figure with Crossed Legs	Pen and Ink
26.	Sitting Nude	Pen and Ink
27.	Figure Kneeling	Pen and Ink
28.	The Model	Pen and Ink
29.	Standing Figure (back)	Pen and Ink
30.	Standing figure	Pencil
31.	Crawling Nude	Pen and Ink
32.	Malay Girl	Crayon
33.	Lying Nude (back)	Pen and Ink
34.	Sitting African Girl	Conté
35.	Model Posing	Pen and Ink
36.	Lying Nude	Pen and Ink
37.	Leslie Sleeping	Pen and Ink
38.	Lying Figure	Pen and Ink
39.	Greek Model	Pen and Ink