Minette van Rooyen

The Sketchbook

In 2006 Harvard's Fogg Art Museum staged an exhibition, "Under Cover: Artists' Sketchbooks". The exhibition was organised by Miriam Steward, then Assistant Curator in die Department of Drawing. "It's almost as if we're catching the artist unaware", said Steward. "In many cases, these sketchbooks resemble a diary. One can follow the artists on their travels or trace the progression of an idea. While the sketchbooks range in date their use has remained surprisingly unchanged. Artists from all eras have confided their travel sketches, figure studies, and notes of every kind to their sketchbooks."*

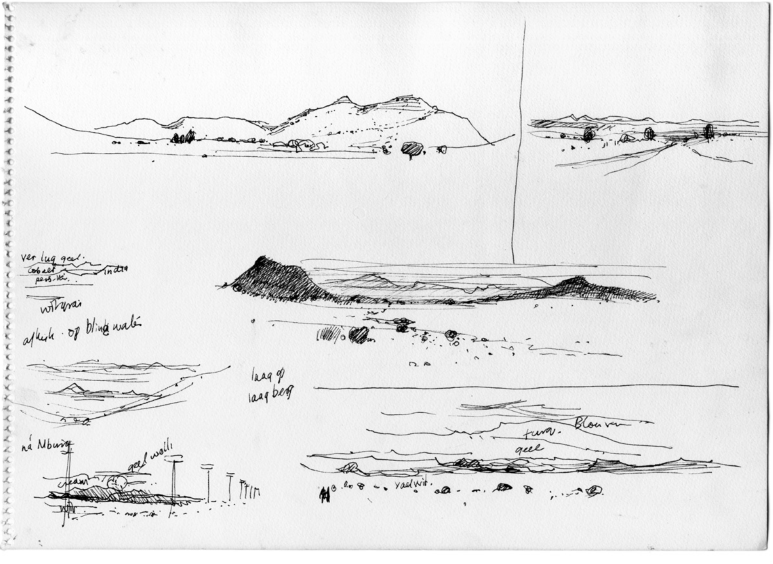
Intact sketchbooks are uncommon, as over the years the majority of them have been disbound and sold as individual sheets.

This exhibition not only documents but also emphasises the fragility of our unique environment. The Karoo is under immense pressure with a looming possibility of fracking – an action that will change this pristine landscape forever.

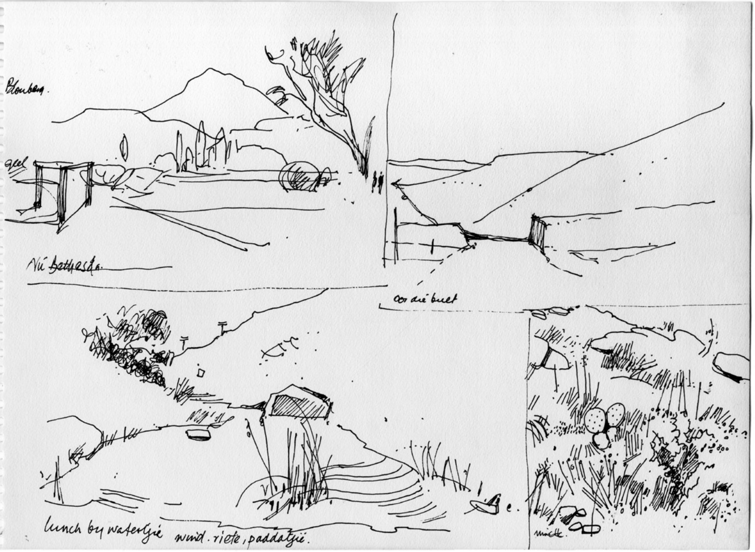
The names of places, beacons and mountains read like poetry. Some years ago I was travelling on the R48 looking for a guest farm where I was to overnight and there, unexpectedly, in front of me was the entrance to the Rooipoort guestfarm – recognisable from a watercolour by Minette that has been in my possession for some time. The evocative power of spare indian ink lines and delicate watercolours was astounding.

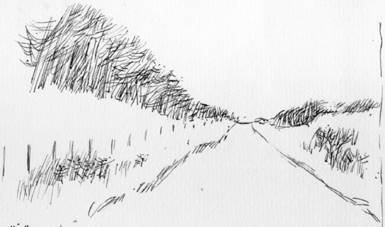
Harrie Siertsema, 2013

* http://www.harvardartmuseums.org/about/press/exhibition-sketchbooks-harvards-fogg-art-museum-provides-glimpse-artist-work

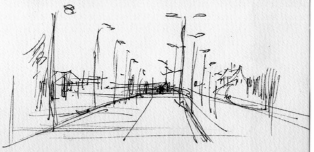


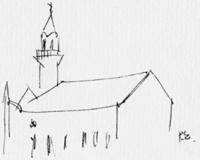
ver lug geel.
cobalt
india
afkyk · op blinkwalé
laag op laag berg
Blou ver
geel
geel walli
cream


Blouberg.
geel
Vir Bethesda.
oor die bult
lunch by watertjie
wind. riete, paddatjie.



Minette.





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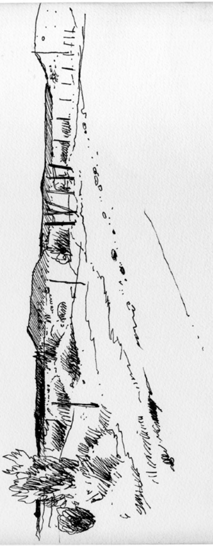

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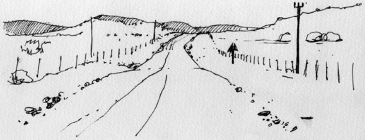

Minette.

"Sketsboek"

Dit was drie moeë en dankbare vroue wat elke jaar Karoo toe gemik het. Minette met potlode en sketsboek byderhand, Marie, bibliotekaresse, en ek, met 'n interessante ma in Graaff-Reinet. Dit was ons herfstog - altyd Maart of April. Ons was honger vir die landskap; deur die Vrystaat, waar Marie groot geword het. Dit was kosmostyd langs die pad. Kosmos, eenvoudig-mooi soos kindertekeninge. Die sipresse het begin geel word, soos kandelare. Die berge was nog nooit so blou nie. Na Colesberg het die Karookoppies op die horison verskyn, soos bakens. Oor die Lootsbergpas, langs die mooi Karooplaashuise met hul rooi dakke en witgepleisterde mure, die eerste blik op die vallei waar dinosourisse in die moerasse gewei het. My oupa, Jurie Laubscher van Graaff-Reinet-poppefaam, het gehelp om fossiele daar uit te grawe.

Ons waardering, genot en blydskap is deurgaans beklemtoon deur Minette se entoesiasme - en humor - wat sy in haar sketsboek uitgebeeld het. Ons het in Pastoriestraat in 'n eertydse slawehuisie gewoon, danksy die goedhartigheid van dr Hesse van Pretoria wat dit beskikbaar gestel het. 'n Volmaakte, gekondenseerde huisie - 'n stoep, 'n groen houtvoordeur met groen hortjies, twee slaapkamers

weerskante van die gang (piepotte onder die bed en waskomme op die kas) en ‘n woon-eetvertrek agter met ‘n kompakte kombuisie. Die badkamer was agter in die klein binnehof, kompleet met Viktoriaanse bad.

Elke dag was ‘n avontuur; die dorpsmense geel en bekkig, die dorpie self tydloos en elegant, die wydgestrekte veld met die kenmerkende berge - Tandjiesberg en Spandoskop. Ons het gery om die Uilhuis op Nieu-Bethesda te sien. ‘n Eienaardige, surrealistiese skepping van wat genoem word “outsider art”. Minette het nooit opgehou om haar gewaarwordinge neer te pen nie. As sy ‘n geel gestreepte kat op ‘n vensterbank sien, is hy verewig. Haar werk van daardie tyd, hoofsaaklik die sewentigs en die tagtigs, is ‘n rekord van ‘n vars en suiwer Karoo wat helaas nie oral meer bestaan nie. Ons sê dankie vir haar entoesiasme en ywerigheid en plesier in haar werk, nog steeds.

Isabella du Toit

First published in 2013 by Modern art projects (Map) – South Africa
on the occasion of the exhibition *Minette van Rooyen "Sketsboek"* at
Map – Pretoria
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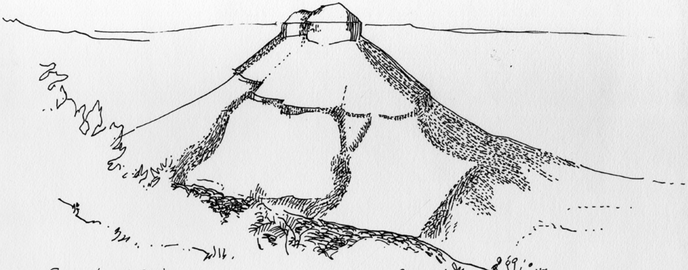
Map - South Africa
PO Box 39
Groenkloof
0027, South Africa

info@map-southafrica.org
www.map-southafrica.org



Spandautop - Gr. Reinet

- Cullinan
- Dullstroom
- Graskop
- Pretoria – Tshwane
- Richmond