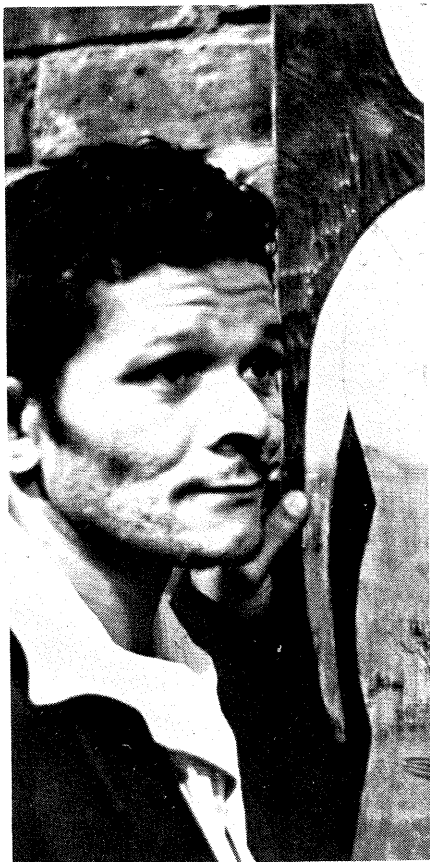


# The Moses Testament



*He is known throughout South Africa to a host of artists and art lovers simply as 'Moses': a short, stocky, very serious man, who for the past ten years has worked as an assistant in several of Johannesburg's leading galleries. He is at present with Gallery 101. He is probably as familiar with South African artists and their styles as anyone in the country.*

*What is not generally known is that his full name is Moses B. Gamatjie, and that he is writing a book.*

*The full title of the book is 'The Artist's Friend - For the Art Lover,' and it exists in manuscript, hand-written in pencil, in two exercise books. These are excerpts from 'The Artist's Friend,' printed without emendation, exactly as Moses wrote them.*

We very seldom read books on South African art written by a South African so I decided that its up to me to make art live here, and my only hope is to succeed. If art means to us all what it means to me then we would of had a string of Galleries and paint shops or rather a little 'Art Town' here ages ago.

I am still following art day by day and I am really amazed that I'm not tired of it yet and I hope never to get tired, and to my surprise I am still learning more about it.

The artist does the painting and you do the buying so naturally you buy what he paints and you will not buy what you dont like, and I am certain you do it with a clear mind and in your right sense.

I have also learned that most of our lady artists play an important part in art, and who said that a woman can only make a good house-wife and an excellent cook? Well he is right, but he forgot to mention that a woman can do as much as a man and still be the master in the long run.

I sometimes sit and wonder where these women get the strength and stamina from, but believe me I havent the slightest idea, and yet it is surprising because they never seem tired and yet most of them do their own cooking and cleaning and a lot of other odds and ends, and still make time to entertain friends and enjoy themselves and yet they never complain and for that reason I say that they are born artists. To paint and run a house are two different things entirely but yet they seem to cope with it. Our male artists ought to be proud to have their women folk to carry on with this fine work and even when time is bad they never back out.

I find art a very difficult profession and I am always left stunned to see how easy our women go about this task without as much as winking an eye, and I also have the feeling that they go through many a restless night. If it was me I would not eat nor sleep at ease knowing that it will haunt me the whole night thinking of what I'm going to paint the following day, so I take it from me what a terrible time all our artists go

through.

If you are a collector of prints and paintings it may one day lead to your own good as we do not know when a certain painting or print will be in great demand and that is the time to sell it for a price you never dreamt of. We all know that people do not buy paintings for safe-keeping but always looking for the best in names and always buying one the artist's pride for an investment and knowing that one day or another he will be able to live happy on the sales of these various master-pieces which he has so dearly treasured. Some of these paintings are very good and expensive when bought but the owner is not worried he just simply sits back and wait for his chance to come and then he steps forward and pronounce the painting for sale and at his price at that. I also know of quite a number of people who are busy collecting all kinds of paintings at present and I do want to wish them the best of luck.

Painting is a messy business and tiring as well so if you havent seen an artist at work yet then you havent seen anything. If an artist is not satisfied with the results of his canvas he simply repaints the whole picture no matter how big the canvas was so you can say that you get double trouble for your money. He also has got to go through sleepless nights and tense moments if the brain cease to function then he starts all over again.

From my point of view I think that the artist is the most troubled man on earth apart from his personal worries he has got to concentrate on his office work by day and at least think what he is going to start painting tonight and his mind is never at rest, and yet we the people who has but one job to cope with for the day are always the ones who complain and I am certain that all the artists will agree with me.

An artist usually puts a certain amount of his salary into painting and he is always pleased to get the best results. If he was not sure of himself then he would have made use of his idle money in many other ways, but knowing that he's the boss, and his work is bought, no matter who buys them, the fact remains that they are sold.

Many a day I sit and wish that someday I will also become an artist, but when I think of all the things I have to go through and all the paint I'm going to waste I get so annoyed that I simply try to brush the thought from my mind but all in vain, as it keeps repeating itself, and the trouble is that I cannot fight myself and I hope to take a chance at it some day if time allows.