

BOOKS

Bringing the joy of SA art to children

Donvé Lee is an artist, author and gifted storyteller who shares South Africa's art history with young readers by introducing nine leading artists from different backgrounds in a set of 10 colourful volumes.

Great African Artists, published by Awareness Publications, includes an art dictionary condensing complex concepts into a simple vocabulary for easy accessibility.

Lee is committed to art education and encouraging creativity in children and adults.

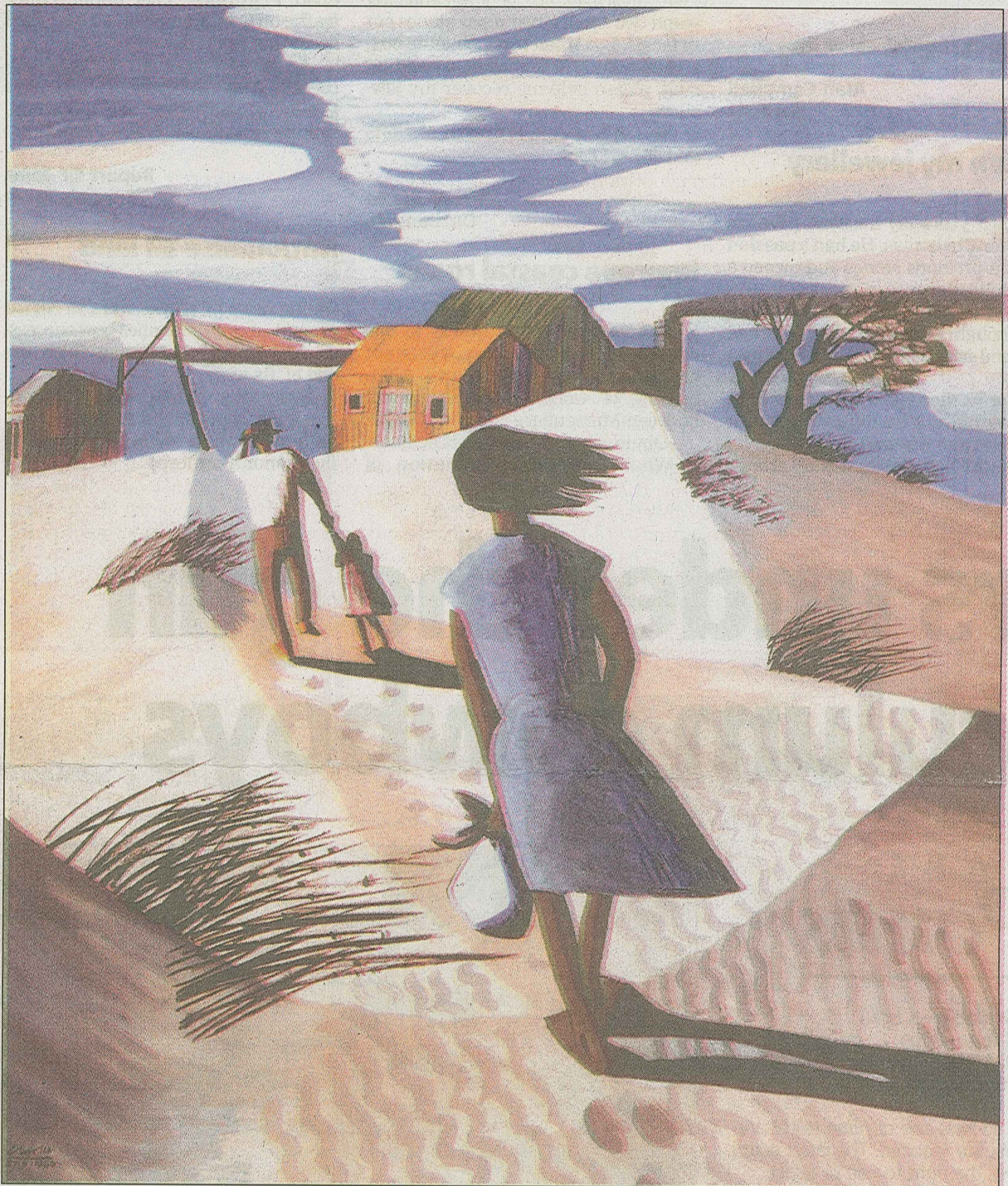
She remembers a lack of accessible information about South Africa's great artists during her school years and, in a bid to redress this, has chosen talented individuals who provide a broader introduction to South Africa's complex social and political history, one that doesn't flinch from issues like Aids or apartheid.

Carefully researched and condensed profiles of each artist's childhood, life and work are introduced to readers with encouragement to think about the art, insight into their sources of inspiration, a chronology of the important dates in each artist's life plus glossary and index. There is also the bonus of a simple art project that can be adapted to more sophisticated needs to encourage youngsters to explore and develop their natural creativity.

The artists as role models for both pupils and teachers are likely to prove inspirational.

They are Willie Bester, with his message "art can restore your pride"; Gail Catlin and her unique liquid crystal painting; artist Peter Clarke, recently awarded the Order of Ikhamanga (silver) by President Thabo Mbeki for his contribution to art and literature; Dumile Feni, who produced remarkable art during his short life; William Kentridge, said to be South Africa's most famous living artist; Noria Mabasa, whose marula wood sculpture stands in the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg; the tragically short-lived ceramic artist Bonnie Ntshalintshali; George Pemba, known as the "painter of the people"; and Dan Rakgoathe, another talented individual who eventually lost his sight due to diabetes.

In each artist's profile the design, text and colour reproductions are



CAPE DOCTOR: 'Wind Blowing on the Cape Flats' – gouache, 1960, by Peter Clarke, who grew up in Simon's Town and often paints seascapes. The artist is featured in *Peter Clarke – Following Dreams and Finding Fame*

GREAT AFRICAN ARTISTS

Donvé Lee
(Awareness
Publishing)



excellent. There is more art history than in Lee's previous series of eight books, published in 2005 also by Awareness Publishing, titled *Our Heritage – African Arts and Crafts*.

These books explain and provide examples of art, craft and culture with textiles, paper, wire, clay, basketry, beading and turning trash into treasure, which must have inspired the fun projects in her latest anthology.

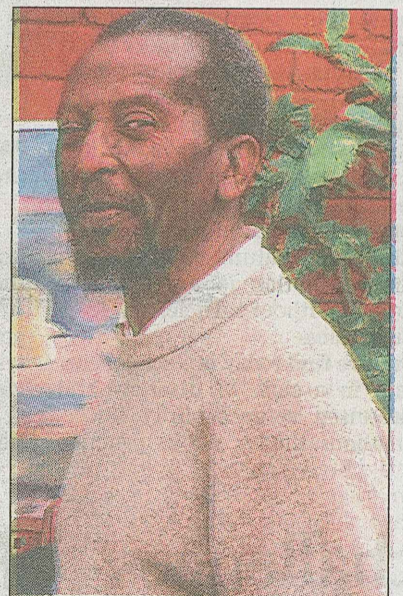
Lee's passions are writing, creativity and education, and she is

currently writing her second novel. She graduated from Wits with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1975 and has since won awards, exhibited, written, taught and earned more academic qualifications.

I have no doubt she found it difficult deciding who to include, considering what she calls "the abundance of artistic talent in this country". In her selection of artists and their work, she has attempted to include a wide range of different media to introduce to readers. Another provision was the translation of the artist's intention and working methods to make the process accessible to children who have no prior art training.

She is delighted to have been involved in the creation of art books for South African children and is hoping there may be a demand to translate them into more languages.

– Veronica Wilkinson



INSPIRING: Peter Clarke – one of the nine artists featured