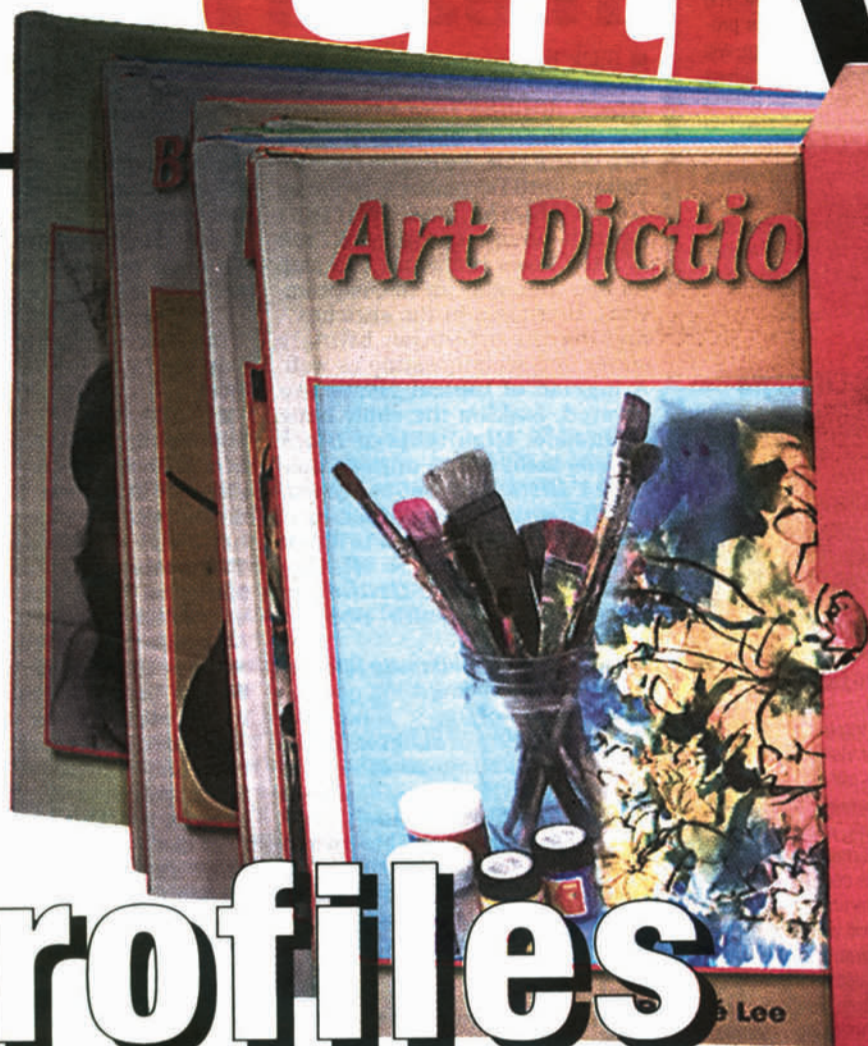


CitiVibe

Great African Artists by Donvé Lee (Awareness Publishing), R1 495. ISBN: 1770081704



Great African Artists



Donvé Lee

Profiles

tell the real story

SABRINA DEAN reports on a couple of recently released historical anthologies that could change the way young South Africans view their past

"THE younger generation should consider themselves lucky to be able to access their history so freely."

This was a sentiment highlighted during the recent launch of two collections of educational books for children, namely: *Learning African History - Freedom Fighters, Series 2* by Chris van Wyk; and the *Great African Artists* series by Donvé Lee.

Each collection is comprised of 10 individual titles, presented in simple language and detailing the childhood, life and work of each subject. The books are intended for children aged 10 to 14 and are beautifully presented in aesthetically pleasing slip cases, with vibrant, sturdy library bound covers to ensure a long life.

Education Minister, Naledi Pandor, was present for the launch. Wishing the publishers and authors every success with both series, she said: "The people whose life stories are told in these series are wonderful role models for both learners and educators."

She went on to add that reading is fundamental, emphasising that children need to be encouraged to learn about their own history.

EXPANDING THE LIST

This second series of *Freedom fighter* biographies was written in response to demand for more books on subjects not included in

the first series, which was released in 2002. The 10 icons are: Lilian Ngoyi, Yusuf Dadoo, Joe Slovo, Mohandas Gandhi, Cissie Gool, Robert Sobukwe, Walter Sisulu, Ruth First, Bram Fischer and John Dube.

During the launch, Van Wyk reflected on his high school history lessons, which were filled with the history of apartheid. "It taught us how we were supposed to live," he said.

He went on to say that it was only after school that he started enjoying history, discovering through his own reading that: "It included me. My ancestors weren't

just onlookers but participants. History is a story of our lives and belongs to all of us whether we are black or white."

A TRIBUTE TO GREAT AFRICAN ARTISTS

Lee says she believes that art is essential to our wellbeing in general and especially to that of our children.

She pointed out, though, that when she was in school, art history classes taught her that all the great artists came from Europe.

University taught her that they come from America too.

"These books show that great artists do come from South Africa," she says.

The series includes an illustrated art dictionary and showcases nine diverse South African artists from a variety of backgrounds, specialising in a range of media. They are: Dan Rakgoathe, George Pemba, Noria Mabasa, William Kentridge, Gail Catlin, Dumile Feni, Bonnie Ntshahintshali, Willie Bester and Peter Clarke.

Lee said that, aside from the challenge of deciding who to include, one of the greatest difficulties lay in trying to explain complicated art terms in

a language that children could understand.

EXCELLENT PRESENTATION

I think these books are fabulous. Quick, easy to read and illustrated with numerous telling photographs, even adults will get something out of them. In the case of the freedom fighters, many of us bandy about these iconic names, with little knowledge of the actual role they played.

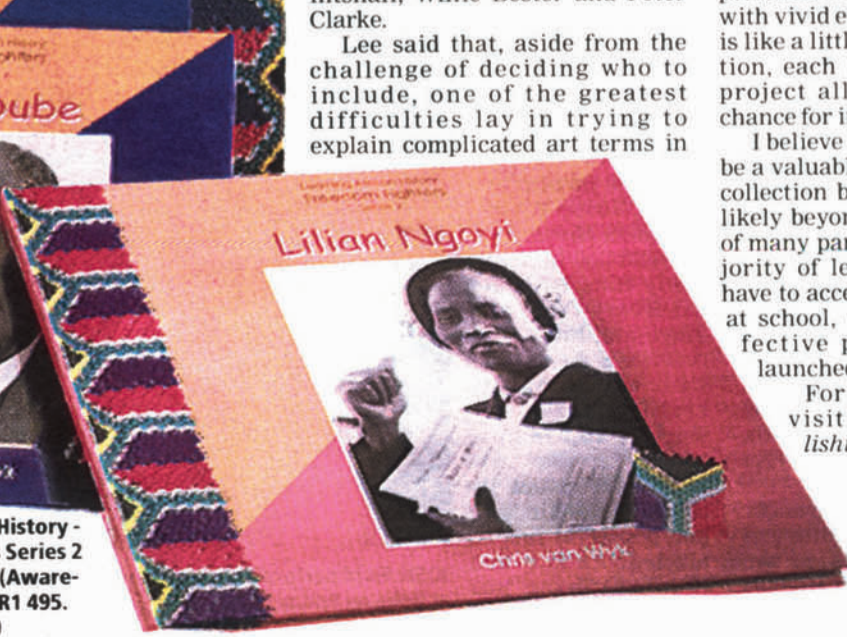
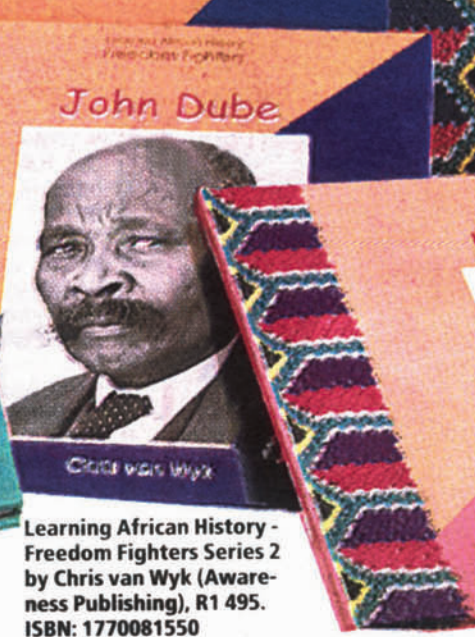
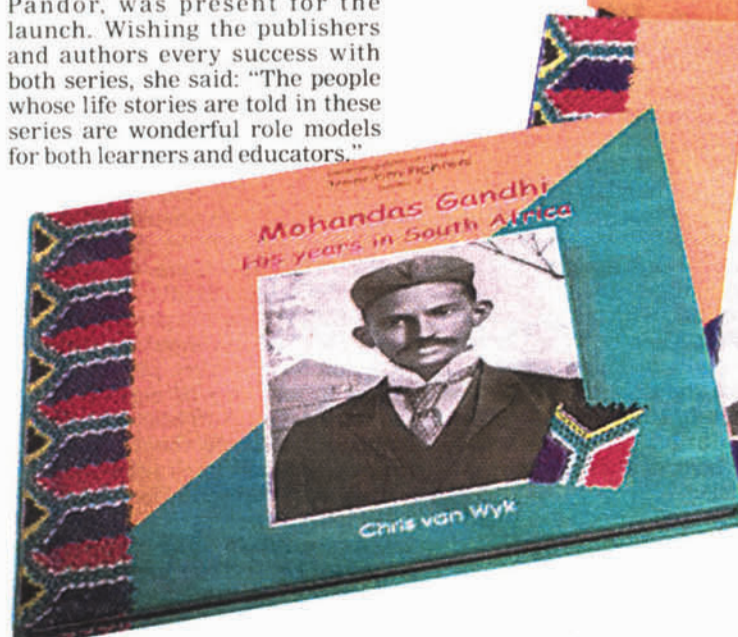
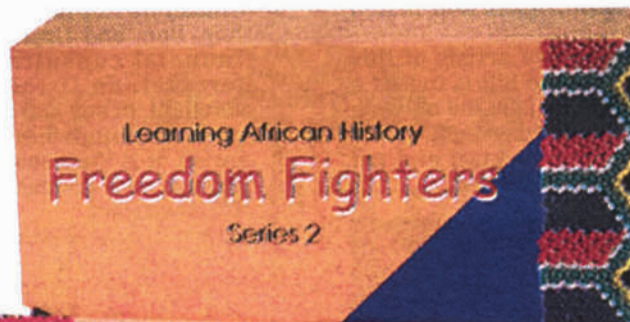
The books give insight into the people, tell their stories concisely and without undue embellishment. In 10 minutes you can read about Ruth First and place her in the context of South Africa's struggle history.

Great African Artists gives more than just an understanding and appreciation - the books are very much a tribute and also an introduction to many of the diverse features of different art media.

It is truly wonderful to read each artist's story, trying to interpret how they carry their life experiences over in their art. Filled with vivid examples, the collection is like a little art museum. In addition, each book contains an art project allowing youngsters a chance for interactive exploration.

I believe that these series would be a valuable addition to any book collection but they are expensive, likely beyond the financial means of many parents. I suspect the majority of learners will probably have to access them at libraries or at school, unless a more cost-effective paperback series is launched.

For further information visit www.awarenesspublishing.co.za.



Learning African History - Freedom Fighters Series 2 by Chris van Wyk (Awareness Publishing), R1 495. ISBN: 1770081550