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Daniel Magaziner, *The Art of Life in South Africa*, Athens, OH, Ohio University Press, 2016; 366 pp.; US\$99.95 hbk; ISBN 9780821422519

In this gentle masterpiece Dan Magaziner gives us a history, which is also a story, about the teaching and making of art in South Africa from the 1950s through to the early 1980s, the theories that underpinned it and the personalities that made it happen. He provides a new script for a painful period and in so doing gives us insight into the life of art, carved out first in the art school of Ndaleni, set on a hill, on the edge of the small town of Richmond, in the province of what is now KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, and then taken into the classrooms of the unequal world beyond. For a time, particularly the 1960s and into 1970s, the reputation of Ndaleni art school rode high and the rich store of letters, cuttings, and art works which comprise the school's archive and institutional memory give a sense of this unique life. (continued next page)

Magaziner shows the art school's early and unpromising beginnings, set behind one of the main buildings of the Indaleni training college, how it grew and, in a modest way, began to make history and change the scene of African art education in South Africa. Names such as the teacher turned art student O'Brien Nkasha, Abednego Dlamini, Silverman Jara, Hamlet Hobe and many others appear mostly briefly but they have their place. Sometimes the artworks of students give a sense of the dialogue of their creative work with the pressured times – Michael Likhi made in one of the practical sessions, 'the burned wood carving reminiscent of Gerard Sekoto's "Song of the Pick" . . . four recognizably African figures, heads bent down and eyes downcast under the weight of a rail sleeper that they carry along a twisting track'. (p. 181)

The book is in one way a study of art taught under the shadow of the apartheid years and within the structure of Bantu Education, but it is also about lives within art, where an individual's life, not necessarily her work, is understood as 'artistic'. Behind the Ndaleni school of the 1960s but also later was the philosophy particularly influenced by Herbert Read and Dewey that with the right training, art can become the maker of harmony in a new world, with the artist herself as a prophetic harbinger of this. The art school's early teachers began to put these ideas into action in the art school itself. One of these was Ann Harrison, trained at the Slade, influenced by the Bauhaus movement, and briefly an art educator at the art school. Another key figure was Jack Grossert, who became art inspector for Native Schools. And then there was Lorna Pierson, who saw it through to the end and whose memories and insights Magaziner draws on with loving skill. This sense of treading new ground and bringing back to life a lost, dynamic creativity feeds through the pages of the book: 'Ndaleni, a neat, self-contained space that was a part of, but also apart from apartheid' (p. 206).

In the middle and final chapters of this long book, Magaziner takes his reader into the worlds of the students at Ndaleni and their teachers, such as Peter Bell and Lorna Pierson, and then into the difficult lives of students when, after their year at Ndaleni, they sought to make a living from teaching art in the compromised and under-funded classrooms of the system of Bantu Education. One of the emergent themes of the book is how to adapt, compromise and yet not lose your creativity; how to pass on the skills of making art to the students in underequipped, overcrowded schools, some in deep rural areas and some in the segregated spaces of South Africa's cities. Some struggled and failed. One, the dedicated art teacher Silverman Jara, was killed by militant students in September 1980 in the then Ciskei, as he tried to protect his school from arson (pp. 238–9).

Through his careful sifting of the Ndaleni archives of letters from former students as they reported on their successes or struggles with failure, Magaziner presents fragments of biographies which provide a dense comment on art education during the deeply difficult years of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Voices come to life through letters and in a paradoxical way, apartheid takes on a different dimension. Apartheid meant 'navigating Bantu Education and Bantustan bureaucracies for wages and materials' (p. 206). So apartheid, the world in which the teachers

operated, was for them ‘as much the promise of progress as it was the reality of limitation’ (p. 207). Their existence and selfhood as art teachers were ‘embedded in the structures of white supremacy’ (p. 207). As those structures went into decline by the end of the 1970s, so the position of the art teachers within became even more precarious. And eventually, the art school closed its doors and died. This study by Magaziner relocates an important story in a region and in time. With its beautiful cache of images from students’ artwork and pictures of the students themselves, he gives the Ndaleni era the new life it deserves within the history of art and art education in South Africa, but also within the history of African life in South Africa.

Liz Gunner

University of Johannesburg, South Africa