

1996 Sally moved to Luxembourg, partly for private reasons but also because she realised exactly how difficult it was going to be to make a name for herself in Italy. That is precisely what she has done in Luxembourg. Sally's name and work is recognised throughout the arts community in the Grand Duchy and that – along with being one of the first locally-based artists to have her own website – has helped her establish contacts abroad that have led to her participation in group exhibitions in The Hague, Florence, Bologna, Detroit, New York and, of course, her native South Africa. She says she found it quite easy to establish herself in Luxembourg, although it was a mix of pure chance and courage that got her the first exhibition at the now defunct Biver-Risch gallery. Basically, three months after arriving in Luxembourg her hairdresser, upon hearing she was an artist, told her to introduce herself to publisher Mike Koedinger – at that time putting together his annual Explorator guide. It took Sally some time to pluck up the courage to knock on Koedinger's door, but he gave her a list of contacts and one of them was the Biver-Risch gallery where she was given a slot in the gallery's 1997 summer group show.

Since then, Sally has had five solo shows and participated in numerous group shows in Luxembourg. She has also had her work used by RTL for its annual collection of espresso cups – again a matter of being in the right place at the right time, she says humbly – and has been the subject of portraits in Rob Kieffer's coffee table book on Luxembourg City and in the ministry of culture/Samsa Film production Portraits d'Artistes video collection.

Even so, Sally does not feel totally integrated into the Luxembourg scene. "It's been easy in one way, but on the other hand it's not been so easy to gain a solid footing, because I'm not a Luxembourgish artist – I'm an artist who works in Luxembourg." Nevertheless, Sally says response to her work here has, for the most part, been very positive. She may not be a Luxembourgish artist, but her work has been affected – even if indirect-

ly so – be her surroundings. Her latest passion is to work with light and the effects it has on paintings. "I miss the light," she says as we sit in her studio in the Schleifmillen – in the valley of the Alzette it is a dark and damp location. Once in the studio – she had previously worked in her living room – Sally started moving away from representational work. "I had been painting flowers which had backgrounds that were very, very decorative – very African. So I said to myself, I'm not going to worry about the flower anymore, I'm just going to use the background." For her latest works, Sally now uses iridescent paints from Italy – where she still gets most of her materials. "It's just so gloomy here, so I had to do something to counteract that. I need light, the sort of crystalline light we have in South Africa."

Sally has said she would like to return to South Africa on a more or less permanent basis eventually – she would keep a base in Europe if her children stay here. But she is excited at the prospect, especially as South African arts scene is currently "bursting". "There is a lot going on, but what is perhaps difficult down there is to get enough local sustainment for what people are trying to do. Art is often pushed into the tourist direction in South Africa, and there is heavy political discussion about art. But we need to create a sustainable market with solid galleries." Although she says she will find it stimulating to work in a place where art is not just something buyers stick on a wall. "Art is never seen as something separate – it is always integrated."

But when she does move back, it will not be without difficulty. "I'm going to be a foreigner in my own country – I've been away for a long time now. Although I've done shows there, I will need to establish a presence again." I get the feeling she will succeed.

Sally Arnold's work is on show at Interieur Bauwens-Boffi Studio, 130 rte d'Arlon, Strassen on Thursday 13 May. Check out: www.sudafricana.com



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The Skuinshuis Scholarship

The Skuinshuis Scholarship is a project Sally Arnold has set up to gather funds and enable a scholar (preferably female) from the underprivileged community of Northend, Prince Albert (Karoo) in her native South Africa to attend an Arts/Music/Design faculty at a South African college of higher education.

Tuition plus residence fees at a highly recommendable Technikon in somewhere such as Cape Town – where Sally also studied – amount to around Euros 10,000 for a three-year diploma course.

Once a student has been chosen, Sally will prepare a newsletter to all donors about their progress and career plans. "A donation in Euros will convert to many more SA Rands, help educate someone in the Arts – and contribute towards solving one of the most pressing problems facing the new South Africa today. I have regularly donated a percentage of my works sold since May 2000 to this educational fund", says Sally. "I see the Skuinshuis Scholarship as a way of giving something of value, in terms of culture, back to the community."

Anyone interested in contributing towards this fund should contact Sally either by e-mail: sallyarnold@sudafricana.com or via GSM: 021 21 51 44.