Discover South Africa's first black artist working in an international style.

Moses Tladi
1903-1959

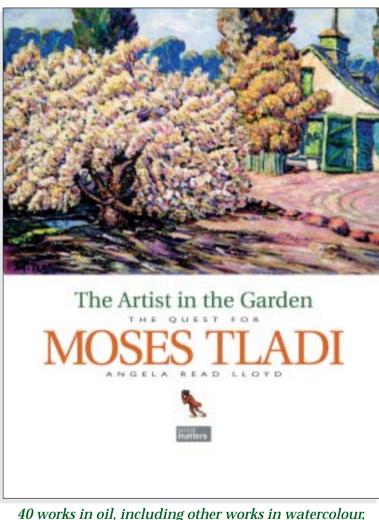## The Artist in the Garden
The Quest for Moses Tladi

Like Monet, who was his first inspiration, Moses Tladi was a gardener and an artist. Born in remote Sekhukhuneland, east of Pretoria, South Africa, the son of a medicine-man who made a living by working in iron, and a mother who was a gifted potter, Tladi in his early childhood herded cattle in the dramatic hill-country around his home.

His parents had become "believers" under the influence of the Berlin Missionary Society and he was educated at the Lobethal mission, at ga Phaahla. Tladi, like many young men of the time, went to the cities in search of work.

It is not known how he encountered Herbert Read, but in the mid 1920s he found employment in Johannesburg as gardener to Read at his property in the fashionable suburb of Parktown.

Tladi's talent was discovered by Herbert Read's daughters who were schoolgirls in the mid-1920s. Read took Tladi under his wing, and introduced him to the collector and philanthropist Howard Pim. Read and Pim promoted Tladi at public exhibitions from 1929 onwards. Pim died in 1934, but Tladi continued to flourish, with Read as his patron until the outbreak of the Second World War.

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40 works in oil, including other works in watercolour, pencil drawings and sketches –reproduced in colour.

Foreword by Desmond Tutu
Archbishop Emeritus, Cape Town

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author, Angela Read Lloyd, is Herbert Read's granddaughter and the two schoolgirls were her aunts. Although Tladi had left when Angela went to live there, she grew up with his pictures on the walls and her childhood world was the paradise garden Tladi and Read had created together.

Following the author's early researches and discoveries, Moses Tladi appears to have been the first black artist to exhibit formally in South Africa, and was certainly the first black artist to exhibit in the South African National Gallery and achieved wide acclaim.

Because of the sporadic nature of the discoveries, the scant information about Tladi's everyday life, and the development of the author's friendship with the Tladi family, especially his daughter Rekiloe, Angela tells a human story rather than an academic outline of an artist's life.

The Quest for Moses Tladi is a poignant and personal story relating to a wider world of art, family, home, love and loss against a background of the dramatic events that have encompassed all of us since the dawn of the new South Africa.