**CITATION: ESMÉ HANID BERMAN**

Esme Berman was the first art historian in South Africa to produce a comprehensive reference work on South African fine artists, *Art and artists of South Africa. An illustrated biographical dictionary and historical survey of painters & graphic artists since 1875*(1970), revised and expanded in 1983 to include sculptors, additional artists and, in particular, black artists. The book is now in its fourth edition. Apart from the comprehensive biographical detail on artists, Berman also gives invaluable information and histories on related subjects, such as the histories of art associations, academies and museums. Her work has been a standard reference source for the past 40 years; it is lodged in libraries throughout the country, and is widely used by learners and scholars alike.

Berman has close links with Wits, of which she is a graduate. She was one of the ‘Wits group’ students of 1948-50 who studied art under Professor Heather Martienssen (other group members included the artists Cecil Skotnes, Christo Coetzee, Larry Scully and Nel Erasmus) and she has generously lodged her research papers and archives relating to *Art and artists of South Africa* with Wits’ Historical Papers.

She recently co-curated with Professor Karel Nel (WSOA) a major exhibition on Alexis Preller. Both the exhibition and accompanying publication are landmarks in the reassessment of an important SA artist. Close attention to primary source material and fresh analyses of visual evidence have led to radical new interpretations. Berman’s engagement with this project further enhances her contribution to the history of art in this county and deserves the recognition of being awarded an honorary doctorate degree from the University.