

# GALLERY 21

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## SPECIALISTS IN CONTEMPORARY ART FROM SOUTHERN AFRICA

Dear Paul,

3.3.92

I refer to your telephonic call of to-day, concerning my Mother and Hasli. I appreciate your concern and would like you to know what the position is, as seen from my side. I'm writing this in English, so that Caroline can understand the contents.

Hasli has been on the market for a while, but Henri turned down an offer which would have seen him clear. The property consisting of farmhouse (1160 m<sup>2</sup>), Spycher (300 m<sup>2</sup>), land with "Hofstatt" (2500 m<sup>2</sup>), parking lot (255 m<sup>2</sup>), Anteil Freilaufzone (4300 m<sup>2</sup>), is being offered at Fr. 2,3m, though I understand he would accept Fr. 1,8m, excluding agents commission, there being "Schuldbriefe": total Fr. 1,3m and 1st bond of Fr. 1,2m (Schweizerische Volksbank).

When my parents left S.A. and decided to live at Hasli, Mother paid Henri Fr. 30,000.- at that time, to enable the upper barn to be converted into a room for my Father, and a room/kitchen nook/shower/toilet for Mother, on condition that they could live there till the end of their days, rent free. I do not know the exact further details, except that Mother did spend of her own money for additional costs and that she lost a further + Fr. 9,000 through falsification of her signature by my brother. The exact details don't matter here, but I do have them. In addition she brought from South Africa numerous Spanish antiques, pewter, copper, works of art, and an antique Swiss linen cupboard, African masks etc., which may all be lost if attached in the insolvency. I also do have copy of that list, however some of the listed items appear to have been appropriated by Henri in the meantime, being in his flat in Basel, respectively in Monique's home.

If Mother has to move out of Hasli, there are a number of possibilities, bearing in mind that at present she has a Sister from Rüeggisberg Gemeinde who looks after her once a week or every fortnight:

1. Mother has told me and also written that she would never go into an old age home and rather die;
2. Jenny has offered to house Mother in her renovated house in Italy south of Brissago, in a groundfloor flatlet, at no costs, on condition that Mother will bring some of her possessions. I reported back that it was fine, provided Mother remembered that the land was very steep, the house was directly over the main road, accessible by narrow steps and that one had to climb up from the flatlet to the house by outdoor steps and Mother being frail and 88 years old, could not expect to go shopping etc. As to medical services/Sisters that was another problem to be considered.
3. Mother would probably be happiest in a small flat with a small garden somewhere in the country, for she derives great enjoyment and purpose from gardening, but it may not be easy to find such a place. The flat in my opinion should preferably have built-in cupboards, which would enable her to sell most of her antiques and other objects and convert them to cash and live off the interest, in addition to her AHV widows pension. I cannot help with finding such a flatlet from this end, maybe an agent in Switzerland could.

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In addition, Mother has a very small capital in the form of unit trusts left in S.A., blocked currency. This would have to be sold immediately, and I am sure that the S.A. Reserve Bank would grant permission for sending the proceeds to Switzerland in view of her age and the problems she is facing. In addition, I recently sent her some documentation from the AHV (ref. 5.01) concerning supplementary support and suggested that she applied through Monique, my brother's friend. But I have not heard whether anything has been done in this respect.

4. Finally, if all else fails, Mother can stay with us in our house, which we are renting for another two years. As our children are no longer with us, there is space, but from past experience, being under the same roof creates problems, even if both Caroline and I are working. In addition, the reasons why Mother left S.A. are 100 times worse (they were both attacked by Blacks, in their own home and nearly died). Elderly people are being attacked continually, robbed, or used to gain access to homes. Gangsterism is ripe and most suburbs had to establish citizen's guards, as the police cannot cope since the release of former political/criminal prisoners. Even farmers are murdered every week so that farms become vacant and useful for the future Black Government !

We would require however that Mother sells all her belongings in Switzerland on auction as you mentioned, proceeds being paid into a trust a/c with your firm, to avoid any further family problems. All she needs to bring to S.A. are her daily requirements and clothes, and she could live very well on her pension and interest income, as everything costs about 1/4 of the Swiss equivalent, and she would also be able to afford a qualified Black nurse.

As you know, we are scaling down completely and hope to be able to return to Switzerland within the next 2 years, in view of the disastrous situation facing S.A. one way or another, certainly in my trade. So it would be futile to waste anybody's money on transport costs, and I wonder if Mother would ultimately be able to return to Switzerland.

Another important point is that Mother should not operate any bank or savings account by herself. There should be two signatures, one being from the trustee, to avoid further misappropriation of her assets or funds, or pressures from my brother. Thus all auction proceeds and present accounts should be handled by your firm in trust.

Please let me know if there is anything else you need to know from my side or action you want me to do.

Kind regards and many thanks !

*Fernand*

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