



UGANDA # MISSIONARY DIMENSION
COLONIALISM # ART SCHOOL
CHRISTIANITY # MARGARET TROWELL

WORKING GROUP: KAMPALA

RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

Margaret Trowell, founded the first European-style art school in Anglophone East Africa in the 1930s. As a devout Christian, one of her chief reasons for training indigenous Africans in painting and sculpture was to get them to produce Christian imagery to aid religious conversions.

"I do not think we shall fully preach Christianity in Africa until we too speak to men's eye as well as to their ears, and tell the story of Christ in a language which all can understand. We can show Him not historically in foreign dress but as a man amongst men as we know them here, for Christianity belongs to every race and time..."

Trowell published the book *And was made man* in 1967 with the assistance of the UK-based Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. It comprises a selection of images of the paintings and sculptures made by her students juxtaposed with quotations from the Bible. It is the only publication of her students's work that Trowell ever produced. None of the works featured are attributed.

"The old pagan African felt the spirit world all round him and took for granted the in-tervention of spiritual powers in our daily life. I believe the matter of fact way in which our young African artists portray the earthly life of our Lord may be due to their acceptance of that unity of the spiritual and material. If that is so it is a quality of which we are badly in need today."

While Trowell wanted indigenous Africans to abandon their traditional beliefs in favour of Christianity, at the same time she greatly admired what she saw as the spirituality embedded in indigenous worship. She felt that these were qualities that could be appropriated by Christian, thus renewing the faith worldwide.

Both quotations are from Trowell's introduction to *And Was Made Man*.

Bibliography:

And Was Made Man: the life of our Lord in Pictures by students of the Makerere College Art School: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1967.

Sunanda K. Sanyal, "Imaging Art, Making History: Two Generations of Mak-erere Artists", Emory University 2000, p.32 (unpublished PhD thesis).

Do religion or spirituality play a role in art education your context - either in its historical development or in the present-day curricula?

If so, how would you describe it's impact?

If not, what impact do you think it could have if it were to be incor-porated into the curriculum?