



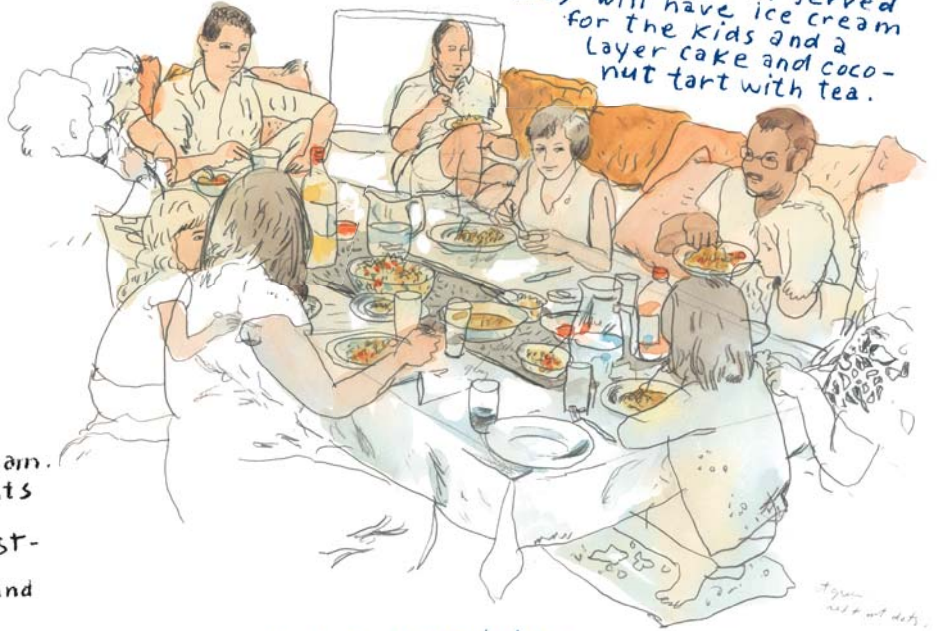
This portrait of Andries Bicker, a governor of the Dutch East India Company who sent Jan van Riebeeck to the Cape, hangs in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. From the first days of Cape Town, artists sketched its life and times. In the 19th century it was the famous artist-explorer Thomas Baines, with his long black beard, wide brimmed hat and colorful scarves. 25 of his pictures hang in the Castle of Good Hope Museum in the city. I counted them. In the 20th century it was Sandra McGregor's turn. For nearly 20 years she drew and painted the people of Cape Town. She now lives in retirement home in Vredes Street.



"I remember most of the people I sketched. The streets, the buildings, the Malay girls, Indian women in bright patterned dresses. And then there was Cass. Cass was a wonderful model. He had gorgeous expensive costumes which were lovely to paint. He was a dancer and very religious. He had made the Hajj many times. Each time he returned from Makkah, he asked me to paint him in his new Arab Kit.

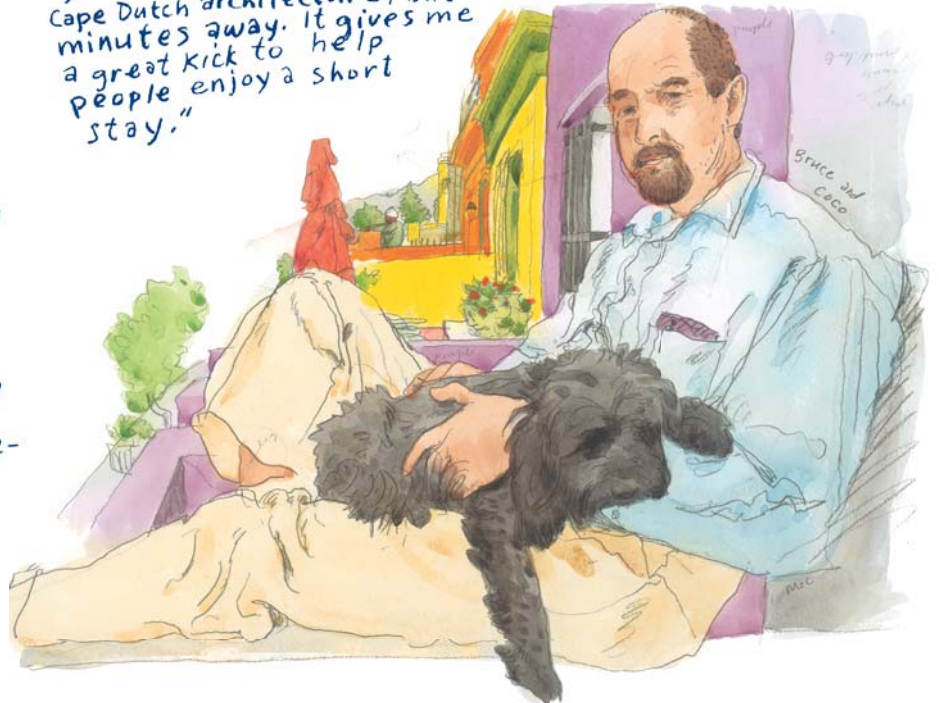
"When I paint a portrait I feel a oneness, an energy flowing between the sitter and the painter." She pointed to a portrait of Cass on a book cover and sighed. "I wish I hadn't sold that one."

A group of visitors enjoying Malay cuisine in Shereen's living-room café. She served chilli bites, Koeksisters and pompadours for starters. Zanie made chicken beryani served with Sambal. For dessert they will have ice cream for the kids and a layer cake and coconut tart with tea.



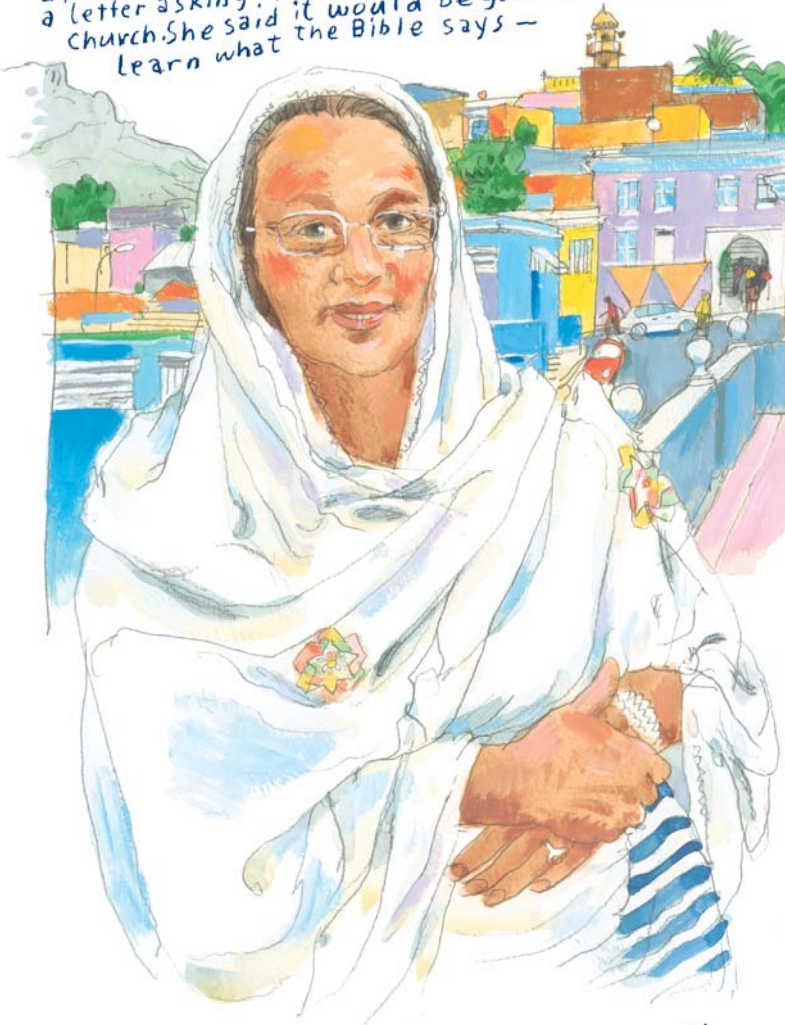
Bruce Speirs - Rose lodge.

"I came here on vacation. Thought it was a beautiful country. A great place to open a B+B. I lived in Germany for 35 years. I began as a ballet dancer in Canada then went to Germany where there was more work. I was a salesman and an English teacher. I could open a B+B. No problem there. Six months later I moved here and found out how to do it. The first year was difficult. It always is in the beginning until your place is mentioned in travel books. Bo-kaap is a residential area of colorful buildings like this one, the most interesting part of Cape Town. You can wander around the streets and admire the Cape Dutch architecture, but the city is only five minutes away. It gives me a great kick to help people enjoy a short stay."



Shereen: "I was born in the Noon Gun Restaurant at the top of the hill. It wasn't a restaurant then. It was my mother's bedroom. (laughs)

"When we went to school, we spoke Afrikaans. It was the language of the oppressed. Our parents didn't want us to go to an Afrikaans language high school, so I went to St. Paul's, where we were taught in English and also attended church. My grandmother was given a letter asking if she didn't mind if we went to church. She said it would be good for me to learn what the Bible says -



and how they sang the hymns. She wasn't insecure about me learning another religion. We had our own system of living by a religion which she termed as 'a way of life'. My parents encouraged integration, different religions and cultures. I often take my grandchildren into a church.

"During Apartheid when we were running from the police, we would go to Desmond Tutu. He was Archbishop of St. George Anglican Church in Cape Town from 1986 until 1996. He would hide us under the piano. We thought it was the last of our lives. One incident I remember in District 6 Church, sitting beside the piano and my friends were underneath. I peeked around the corner of the piano and saw Bishop Tutu leaning against the big door. Outside the police were banging on the door, and he shouted, 'Not here! Not inside this holy place! Not here!' They went away. I always remember that moment.

"There was a lot of trauma at the time, people leaving or getting shot. Police would have excuses to shoot, calling it self-defense. All this happened with my kids around. Between 1985 and 1990 were the saddest years of my life because friends left the country, some tortured to give names. I lived in the heart of it and experienced the struggle.

"My husband was a French Huguenot, and we were separated by the Morality Act.

"He said, 'It's not my business to go to the army and be sent to the bush and shoot anything that moves.' He left.

"In 1991 Mandela came to Tana Baru cemetery in recognition of those who were buried at Robben Island and those buried here. My mother, my daughter, Zainab and I were there. I have photos of the four of us. A picture of Mr. Mandela and my daughter, she was 11, was in the newspaper. Mr. Mandela came in 1994, when we celebrated the bicentennial of the Anwal Masjid Mosque. He mandated me to put this area on the international map. We celebrated the first elections that same year.

"In 1999 I stood for the ANC (the African National Congress party) in the Bo-Kaap, and I won. It was exciting. It was nothing about money. Everyone had to put their hands in their pocket. We were here when the real issues were at hand. I enjoyed it. Since then our infrastructure is very good. Education is better. We worked hard to have computers in every classroom.

"After the real problems were solved, it was just play. Politics is not taken too seriously these days. Today I speak a lot with young people and they seem very clique-y and group-y. They won't have anyone else in their crowd. They stick together with their own kind. We saw that in apartheid and we broke it - and now it's back again.

"I believe in the power of praying. I say to people, 'Pray! Throw it out into the universe and something positive will come back.' That is why I am a tour guide. Often tourists want to know the down side. They say, 'We've been on the bus and hear that everything is rosy and so good. Please tell us what is wrong.' There is so much wrong, but it is going to get better. We are working on it." 🌍



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with my avid interest in drawing and history, Cape Town and the Bo-kaap were perfect subjects. Lovely people in the midst of a turbulent history. I'm blessed.
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