

Work reflects the French connection

LOUIS JANSEN VAN VUUREN: SOLO EXHIBITION. At the Association for Visual Arts, Church Street, until February 1. **SERENA KLEIN** reviews.

LOUIS JANSEN VAN VUUREN'S recent move to France shows strongly in his exhibition at the Association for Visual Arts.

Getting accustomed to his new home in the Limousin region, Van Vuuren felt inspired to interpret the seasons, landscape, and the style and richness of typical French gardens.

Other "French" themes in his exhibition include homages to Henri Matisse and Claude Monet. Nude women, still-lives of flowers, and goldfish in the garden are Van Vuuren's playful reinterpretations of French masterpieces.

His vibrantly coloured, sensual pastel drawings are evidence not only of the artist's fascination with the French landscape, but also of his love for blue, which

he sees as the manifestation of the mystical element of life. He uses all shades of blue for the things that are glorious and mysteriously deep – like mountains or the sea.

At home, in the region around Cape Town that he knows intimately, Van Vuuren has produced a series of works, *My Heart Longs for the Boland*, in which he portrays the South African landscape as an object of desire. One can sense the longing for home.

Probably because he travels between two worlds, he juxtaposes the richly varied indigenous imagery of Africa with Eurocentric aesthetics.

Drawings in the series *Cap de Bonne Esperance* present a spectacular view from the balcony of a room: one sees the magnificent blue of the ocean. A bowl of cherries, a glass of champagne, shells and a palm tree make one want to be there, too. Or at least send a postcard saying: "Look what a wonderful life I have!"



MUSING ON MONET: Glowing irises