

ZEN GARDEN ART WORK

Helen Martins owl sculpture



This beautiful cement owl was made by an artist in Nieu Bethesda who recreates Helen Martins famous 2-faced owls. They can be purchased in all sorts of shapes and sizes for little money from the vendors near The Owl House Museum. This particular owl was donated to the residents of Cedar Lakes by Christine Maritz (1963 – 2021) for the Zen Garden.

Artist Helen Martins

Helen Martins was a reclusive individual who, as an artist and person, to this day remains something of a mystery. She was born on 23 December 1897 in the Karoo village of Nieu-Bethesda. At the age of 20 Helen moved to the Transvaal to begin a career as a teacher. A few years later Helen however had to return to her dull home town to care for her elderly parents for 31 years until their death. Her parents left Helen their house and she started to transform the house and the garden and fill it with eccentric artwork.

Her *Camel Yard* contains more than 300 sculptures of camels, pyramids, people and owls. The most famous of her owls made of cement and broken pieces of coloured glass bottles are the 2-faced owls. Another unique creation is the wonderful yellow sun.

There is though much more to learn about Helen Martins and her artwork. Today, The Owl House is one of the primary reasons why visitors stray off the N9 just past the Karoo town of Graaff-Reinet to the tiny village with no street lights - Nieu Bethesda. The Owl House was turned into a museum and all of Helen Martins' work was finally recognized and preserved. <https://theowlhouse.co.za/helen-martins/>

Donations



Two of these owls made by an unknown artist in the early 1990s were donated by Cliff Watkiss.

Cliff has been a resident of Cedar Lakes since 2015. He recently moved to a retirement village. Sadly, Cliff passed away on 16th April 2023.



Gilda Gunn kindly donated this African beadwork Owl to the Zen Garden.