

EN Â© Â°01-000(-00%

â\200\230 Report: Visual Arts Research, 1 July - %o November 1992

ie Artistsâ\200\231 Birthday Calendar

Sele Spanisoarshin

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esa Living artists

Aleem Levaquin | y neath cA ZAC) ta IE

1.3.2, Thabo Mothudi
seen LUCAS Sithole

1.3.4, Mizriam Maseko

ee Fieldwork

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My research focused on the finalising and producing of the

Artists' 200\231 Birthday Calendar and fieldwork.

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1,i. Sponsorship

When I learned towards the end of May that Fuba was not in the position to fund the calendar I started looking for sponsors By

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the end of August the Gencoar Development Trust, pledged R50 000,

the Foundation for the Creative Arts R10 000 and Sanlam R5 000, iy aan Ot eT eae 0000 Warwan GUA OCnEGn co UMMC ric amc Tmt ch VOC Wi ty be Soldat Rad per eany .) Cuthoucaned copes aie earmarked for promotion.

Logo Cembvriaine

Copyright remains for fifty years with a deceased artist. In the

instances of Micha Kgasi, Simen Lekgetho, John Mohl, @gabulani

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Ntuli and Moses Tladi 27 had to trace their families for

Permission to use images of the deceased artist's work. With the ca FN ALCS a CDT dd Ch > em Let ed cto LUA eee FN) Ls tn Cea) TT tot Coa Ea Lesa ot ATC SECURE permission.

I nearly despaird SOI Tm FT co Feet Tat Cod een CG TT ter Conca Ten Celt vem cca eT ye Fy Cay cc

recent research on him which appeared in The neglected tradition (1988) indicated that he was still alive. Ntuli was born in 1898. Nobody eaene ta have knowledge af his death. I contacted without success the Durban Art Gallery and the African Art Centre in Durban because Ntuli is fairly well known in Natal. Eventually I

spoke to Yvonne Winters, a librarian of the Killie Campbell

Rappers. She went through her records but could not find any

reference to Ntuli's death.

As a matter of interest she showed me of early drawings by Gerard
VAIS 2

Ehengu which have been presented to the Campbell Collection by a
relative or Dr Max Rohler. He was the first person to encourage
and commission Bhengu. During our conversation on the phone she

said

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stated that Ebhengu died in 1990 and not at the beginning of
this year as I was informed. According to her Bhengu died in

poverty in the shack area of Umlazi near Durban.

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Consequently I contacted a Roman Catholic priest of Umlazi,
Fr Phineas and he confirmed that the Bhengus lived in the
Breck street neighbourhood and saw him in the

My inquiry after Ntuli led me to the curator Lynne Oakley of
the Zululand Historical Museum in Eshowe. Oakley did not respond
to any of my calls or enquiries. As the editing of the calendar
was reaching its deadline, I phoned a Lutheran minister in
Ntumeni, the Reverend Julius Neoloavu. He contacted Mrs Ntuli on my
behalf and consulted the church records which stated that Ntuli

died on 11 March 1988 and was buried three days later. He also

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established that Mrs Ntuli had none of her late husband's
precious Crowing 2

Angela Lloyd wrote about the painting of Tladi which is used on
the cover and she phoned me with the news that she traced Tladi's widow.
She also informed me of the date of Tladi's sale on 20 December

1969. The calendar was already at the printers and I could not

insert the latest information. Hopefully Lloyd will publish an

mentioned that a child of Mothudi was staying in Belgravia. I met Michael Mothudi from whom I borrowed the painting which is the image for May.

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in some cases Licas Sithole inscribes his sculptures Lucas T Sithole. Though this manner of inscription has been notified in a

factual cescmintian of ane of his Sseulptuces an fhe Neglected

Tradition exhibition, it has not been explained. Fernand and Caroline Haenggi of Gallery 21 who are his agents contacted him and only then did they learn that he at times also incorporated his African name: Tandokwazi.

1.3.4, Mizream Maseka

When I interviewed the sculptor Thamas Masekela earlier this year, he introduced me to Mrs Anna Moagi of Evaton who collected his work. Among the pieces in her collection I noticed a painting by Mizream Maseka. As the year progressed it became evident that Maseko was the oldest artist in June. Mrs Moagi consented to ny

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request that I may use an image of the Maseko in her collection
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Under the Sun I retrieved his address in Fietersburg district and wrote to him. This was followed up with an interview at Zoo Lake Where he was exhibiting with Artists Under the Sun. His veneration for tradition was evident. He also explained his technique of staining leather which is his particular mode of expression. Thus he contradicted Durant Sihlali's notion that he

Uses imitation leather.

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2. Fieldwork was carried out in Cape Town, Bloemfontein, Ga-Rankuwa, Fort-Elizabeth, Alice, Grahamstown and Johannesburg. Cape Town

My visit to Cape Town where I spent a week was to establish goodwill.

ee»1.1. South African National Gallery (SANG)

Emile Maurice and Joe Dolby of SANG both expressed enthusiasm for Fuba»200\231s venture into researched documentation. Maurice introduced me to members of the South African Association of Art and Jonathan Comerford of Hardaroud Frinters where artists are equipped to print professionally. Through Maurice I met Sidney SUES GL motte Vey Coa Fea ODPL CHU rest ag od (TMU a) Ah FF La Cv CO Ee ALS TN (ea TD a (=D aa TENN CSOeL Cd Fut > CRA CST CTSA CLO

barthdates and addresses. Maurice also provided me with me his uncle, the sculptor Louis Maurice»200\231s birthdate which has not been

documented in recent research (Rankin, 1»89: Images of wood).

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Dolby invited me to accompany him to the first of his series of interviews with doe Wolpe who is the doyen of art dealers in CUS yc ratapl Cores

In the library of SANG I came across a catalogue of the Society Of Artists Exhibition (1921) listing works by Moses Tladi.

Lo could not find any references in the Cape newspapers (1915) of an exhibition of Micha Kgqasi»200\231s sculpture in the South African eiogentanae

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ocial drinking custom. This complaint could explain Kgqasiâ\200\231s

ODSession with carving morals on alchohol abuse.

kW Rodenstein wrote on the historical aspects of the
Hermannsburg Mission Society in the April issue of the same
Journal. (My letter to the Mission Museum in Hermannsburg,
Germany, enquiring after Kgqasiâ\200\231s sculptures in its collection has
not been replied to yet.)

Bodensteinâ\200\231s article gave me perspective on the pride that
Rgagiâ\200\231s descendants, who are all members of the Lutheran church,

take an their tradition. He writes ...Hermannsburg missionaries

heave always shown a great amount of consideration and

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In 1854 the Hermannsburg Zulu Mission was found in Natal and in

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2864 Behrens and Kaiser were converting the Bakwena near
Rustenburg in Transvaal. Egasi was a Lutheran teacher and
preacher of the Hermannsburg Mission Society at Egabalatsane near
Fretoria.

foworked through issues of Spark magazine from its anceptian tea
L939 in the hope that I might find some reference to Ernest
Mancoba. I faund the address of Mancobaâ\200\231s acquaintance (F
Goodlatte who has long since passed away.

eedei. In Cape Town I documented the works of African artists

Gerard Bhengu, Gladys Mgudlandlu, Eli Kobeli and Ismael Thyssen. IT was also shown the art collection of the University of Western Cape and made the acquaintance of Gordan Metz of the Mayibuye

ar,

Centre. Since we have exchanged information.

2.2. Bloemfontein

On a very short visit to Bloemfontein I managed to fit in an interview with professor Leon Strydam who knows most of the African sculptors at Botshabelo in the Free State. He has a sound collection of wood sculpture which includes works by Albert

Dasheka, Thamas Lehupela, George Ramagaga and Michael Zondi. I

documented these pieces.
feo. GacvRankuwa

in my previous report I mentioned that I could not find Ephraim Mapoanya's paintings in the Ga-Rankuwa Hospital. An interview with the artist clarified the matter. His paintings and woodcut were safe in the administrative offices. I have been unable to trace the sculpture which he carried out for Medunsa.

One of the aspects that struck me in the run of my fieldwork in GacRankuwa was the sense of pride that artists like Stobane Rarakash Nthathe, David Fhoashoka, Ephraim Maponya, Anton Makau, Martha Modiba, Tke Nkoana and Jacob Mathibe take in the African tradition. No one of these artists has succumbed to the brand of "township" art. Stobane who is responsible for the ANC logo has recently returned from exile. It is interesting to see how he is coping with the years of his absence in his art.

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the doyen of South African painters, the octogenarian George Femba. I visited him at his home in Swartkopsvalley and we had fruitful discussiens on his art. He brought to my attention a navel The magic brush by dir Hans Cohen. It was never published and is based on Fembaâ\200\231s life. Louise Almon who is currently recording Fembaâ\200\231s histary gave me the manuscript to read. Iman braught ta my attention Fembaâ\200\231s letters which are kept in the Cory Library in Grahamstown.

In Fang George VI Art Gallery I had access to the records on Femba and Gladys Mgudlandlu. The two paintings by Mgudlandlu were aniy recently acquired by the gallery. They belonged to the chidrenâ\200\231s ward of the Provincial Hospital and were presented to the care of the gallery.

Although Femba is one af the pioneer artists of the region the gallery has up ta date not purchased a painting by him.

Almon brought me in touch with Bob and Cathy Binnel who awn four paintings by Femba. She also directed me to the Highbury Gallery and Craft Centre which is run by Fembaâ\200\231s grandson Siphiwo Given.
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At Alice I met professor Eddie de Jager. He is an anthropologist wha has written two books and numerous articles on COMLEnGh a Vint miGdiiEAt Dein Soni Ohman. Â\$OVer Muie year eu hem hac DUD Upsar tine ColleauLan tor the University of fort Hares itis

housed in the De Beers Centenary Art Gallery and deserves a

Visit. Currently this is the most I poke on? Fat ects Cen Ck Tee cea tata Ta Ca
contemporary African art in South Africa. It was most revealing
ta have De Jager as a guide.

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en, Grahamstown

In the Cory Library I had access to the correspondence between
George Femba and the Lovedale Press as well as to the original
illustrations which he carried out for Lovedale Press.

IT also had access to the illustrations which Eric Mbatha
Carried out for Loavedale Press.

In the library I found correspondence between Reverend C J
Ferguson-Davie af the SA Native College (now University of Fort
Hare} and the Department of Foreign Affairs in connection with
the weli-being of the sculptor Ernest Mancoba (formerly a student
at the College) who was interned by the Germans during WW2.
Meancopa Lett South Atimca im Lae fom containmed study an Paris
(France). There is also a short letter (telegramme style) of
Mancoba stating the circumstances of his arrest.

IT visited the St Feterâ\200\231s Home of the Community of the
Resurrection. Mancoba resided with the nuns of this order in 193%
when he carried out the panel for an altar of their Chapel.
Sister Dorianne who is now in charge of the archives received me.
In one of the scrap-books I retrieved an interview with Mancoba
in the African room of the Eritish Museum in 1938. This interview
canfirms facts that he disclosed to me in an interview which I
had with him in 1990 in Faris. I was elated: needless to say.

Lonkie McKenzie who drove me to Alice brought me into cantact

with ms Fay Henley. She lectured in the Department of English at Fort Hare and acquired work by African artists from exhibitions that were held under the auspices of the University of Fort Hare. Iohacd access ta her collection which moat only has a fine painting by Femba but alsa an early, and unusual painting by Eric Nocoba. fef, JONANMesburg

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Weasel var Huyssteen af the Fatlehang Art Centre introduced me ta Rager Buczynski whoa has been avidly collecting contemporary African art. His collection includes works by pioneers like Herekiel Ntuli, doahn Mohl, George Femba and the later generation: Sidney Beck, Dumile, Ezram Leggae, Vincent Baloyi, Sidney Eumala, Michael Zondi, John Muafangeja, Faul Tavhana, Ephraim Ziqubu, LUCAS Seage, Xaba and Stanley Nkasi.,

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Â» Muraia at SANTA Hospital

Dumile Feniâ\200\231s career as an artist started while he was a patient at the Charles Hurwitz South African National Tuberculosis Association (SANTA) Haspital. There he painted anta the brick walls in 1964 at least five murals. One of these, a landscape with cattle and their herd was eniggmatically inscribed: "Permanently mixed up sed Dumile â\200\23044",

The fact that Dumile was drawing and painting in the SANTA Hospital is recorded in the SA Art History, but nobody seems to have taken note that- Ephraim Ngatane was also treated in the hospital in the same year as Dumile. It is not mentioned that he

underwent treatment there prior to his sudden death in 1971.

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Ngateane covered the wall above a Clerc ta Citeamntalig Comin ca cobimerenn chapel

With an imposing Madonna. The rich palette and sinuous flow of line of his Madonna were complemented by the stark Stations of the Cross in black paint by H Sathekge.

On my first visit to the SANTA Hospital in June 1989 I also recorded three rural scenes by an anonymous artist. Two weeks ago PS eae Chai ava cote ele encas i th eer rem ee rice | Tanwar cs accompanied

by a professional photographer and an art historian who is

researching Naqatane's work. During recent renovations which were

undertaken at the hospital all the murals - except for one of Dumile's and a landscape by the anonymous artist - were neatly

covered in white paint.

eefer,. Interviews

io was fortunate enough to meet the neglected sculptor Sidney Beck at his home in Caronatonville. He teaches at a primary school and in his spare moments paints and sculpts. He has

executed some fine bronzes in an impressionistic manner.

One of the perks of my research this year was my interview with Alpheus Kubeka for whom I was on the lookout since the inception of this project. He shared an exhibition with Godfrey Thabang at the Gainsborough Gallery in 1952. The Johannesburg Art Gallery has just acquired one of his paintings, a portrait of a woman. Kubeka was one of the first students to attend classes at the Folly Street Art Centre and Fred Schimmel owns one of the little landscapes that he created at that stage. To keep the wolf from

the door he took up a position at Steinmuller in 1971.

Through Linos Siwedi who is researching Ephraim Ngatane I met the late Sidney Kumalo's widow. My visit to her home where some of the most exquisite Kumalos are housed was a gesture of goodwill which will be followed up with a session of documenting

the pieces in the family collection and Kumalo's books.

Elza Miles