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From Fondwe to Naledi Station

It was a penniless Thomas Nkuna who arrived from Venda at Fuba Academy (~~Fuba: Federated Union of Black Artists~~) in 1985. Lack of funds prevented him from enrolling as an art student immediately.

Thomas Rulani Nkuna was born in the village of Njerere near Sibasa on 26 September 1959. He was the second child of Albert and the late Modjadji Nkuna. <sup>He As his peers he took part...</sup> In his pre-school years he took part in activities such as swimming in pools of the river which flows through the village and gathering clay from these spots to model a variety of images. Soon it was apparent that his clay figures were exceptionally good. Only when Thomas attended the Fondwe Primary School did he realize that he and his friends were producing "art" in their pastime.

At school his sketches drew the attention of his teachers who did not always approve of his preference for drawing over other school subjects. He soon devised a way in which he could sketch unobtrusively underneath his desk. His childhood pastime became a passion and he was almost set on his way to become an artist when in 1982 the government of Venda awarded him a scholarship to pursue art at Rorke's Drift Art Centre in Natal.

Unfortunately for Thomas, the fine arts section of the Rorke's Drift (Art Centre) had to close down in that year because it did not generate income. This disappointment together with the French Government's failure to secure a three year bursary which he had been promised from September 1991 left a slur on his short artistic career. He was (brutally) murdered on 17 September 1992 at the Dube Hostel in Soweto. Six days after his disappearance his