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36-38, Charles Street African Arts and Crafts pays a tribute of sincere appreciation to
BLOEMFONTEIN 4 Miss M. M. Malherbe of the United Kingdom Information Office,

: and Dr. A. B. Hoffman of the National Museum, Bloemfontein, who
} Phone 5386 P.O. Box 331 } undertook the arrangement of the Exhibits, and Mrs. Tidmars
h
} for kindly arranging the flowers.

6 LIFELINE OUT OF AFRICA

which he had requested (communication from ancoba in Paris, September 1990).

In The Star (8 June 1936) he referred to the influence which this book had on his art. It had left on him a lasting impression of the inspirational influence and the innovative effect which the classic art of Africa had on twentieth century European art. The concluding chapter

Heals with the significance of African art for contemporary art forms. The appreciation which this book awakened in him for the art of

Africa resulted in a woodcarving, Faith*+ [15] which he completed in 1936.

At that time interest in the classic art of Africa, which included rock paintings, petrolyphs, woodcarvings, pottery and _ basket

weaving, was limited to ethnologists and individual South African artists such as Elza Dziomba (1902-70), Lippy Lipshitz (1903-80), rich Mayer (1876-1960), J. H. Pierneef (1886-

1957) and Irma Stern (1894-1966). Stern undertook her first expedition to Dakar in 1937. The Amazing Bushmen of Walter Battiss (1906-82) appeared in 1939 and in the same year his fellow painter Alexis Preller (1911-75) visited the then Belgian Congo.

With few exceptions, the South African art critics of the time disregarded the merits of local art forms. Amongst those who recognised the meaning of these art forms were Professor

. L. du Toit (1897-1938), head of the Depart-

ment of Afrikaans, Art and Culture at the University of Pretoria, and an anonymous editor of the newspaper The Bantu World. The latter championed the cause of the local arts in a leading article, â€œPrimitive African Artâ€:

The Arts are the things which have been handed down from generation to generation in such things as woodcarving and pottery. This we may call Primitive African Art, and we do want our people to realize that it is a gift of God given to us generations ago,

it) Asterisks denote works which have not been located.

which should be kept guarded with loving care. People from all parts of the world are intensely interested in our primitive art and will remain interested so long as original African art is not spoilt by becoming too Europeanised. European art has a beauty of its own but no African need be ashamed of the

primitive art of our forefathers. (The Bantu World, 2 June 1934)

And in 1936 Du Toit wrote in the catalogue for the Empire Exhibition:

No South African Art exhibition would however be complete without a section of Native Art. Here is greater tradition and less contact with modern Europe though interesting interactions are clearly discernable. (5)

The art critic Hugo Posthumus, who was married to the sculptor Elza Dziomba, held a different opinion in his article "Sculpture in South Africa" (1935):

For the art of the original South African native was never very important. What one finds in the various curio shops and elsewhere, is for the most part a perversion of that indigenous art as it is taught in mission schools, where certain selected patterns are produced in the form of mass-productions, and mainly for commercial purposes. (South African Panorama, 1946: 63)

Posthumus goes on to say that:

In any case the art of the Bantu, a race which came to inhabit South Africa at a comparatively recent date, has always been far below the standard of negro-sculpture of Central and West Africa. It is by this negro-art that the sculptor in South Africa has been influenced, not directly, although it is lying next door, but indirectly through European schools of art.

It is ironic that Posthumus did not refer to Mancoba at all in his article. At the time Mancoba's *Future Africa* (1934) and *Faith* (1936) were works of the same standard as those of Lipshitz and Dziomba, to both of whom Posthumus devoted much attention.

Although Lipshitz and Stern appreciated Mancoba's art, it was neglected in all the authoritative books on South African art until 1988. The Director of the Johannesburg Art Gallery, Dr Anton Hendriks (1899-1975), did not share the enthusiasm which Lipshitz and Stern had shown towards it. In answer to a query made by Bruce Arnott for his Master's thesis, *The Evolution of Sculpture in South Africa*, concerning Mancoba's art, Hendriks replied (13 September 1961):

I do not know what happened to the African sculptor Mancoba. I was never extraordinarily impressed with his work. He was sent to Paris and never returned to South Africa. (Lesley Spiro, curator of modern art and sculpture of the Johannesburg Art Gallery brought this correspondence to my atten-

tion.)

Until recently the attitude expressed by Posthumus towards the local arts was still prevalent in South African art circles. None of the public art collections of 1938 regarded the wooden carvings and other traditional handiwork of the black people as art. These art objects were only included in collections with a bent towards ethnology and cultural history. As a consequence of this Lipshitz wrote in his diary:

I used to admire the Bantu arts and crafts and Bushmen art immensely at the Museum and frequent the curio shops. (B. Arnott, 1969: 7)

The museum to which Lipshitz refers is the South African Museum in Cape Town and not the South African National Gallery.

THE EARLY YEARS, 1904-1938 17

The high regard which Lipshitz had for Mancoba's talent prompted him to give Mancoba a letter of introduction to Elza Dziomba. Mancoba remembers that he went to her flat to meet her, armed with this letter and a few examples of his work. He posed as a messenger for the benefit of the flat watchman, and had to ascend the stairs to the top floor to reach her studio. Black people were not permitted to use the lift in that building (communication from Mancoba, Paris, September 1990). Dziomba, who was amongst the referees mentioned when Mancoba applied for a grant and a loan (one hundred pounds sterling each) from the Bantu Welfare Trust for overseas art study, on one occasion entertained Mancoba and his sister Edith at her studio flat in Chester House, Jeppe Street (communications from Edith Ntomtela, Alexandra, April 1989 and Ernest Mancoba, Paris, September 1990). The other referees were Dr Rex Martienssen and Professor G. E. Pearse of the Department of Architecture, University of the Witwatersrand; Brother Roger Castle of St Peter's in Rosettenville and Jan van Niehuys (or Niehaus the note found in the papers of the Trust is unclear). Rheinallt Jones and Charlotte Parker gave their full support to Mancoba.

Dziomba was born in Eylau (West Prussia). Her father's ancestors were French Huguenots who emigrated to Germany. In Germany, their French name, De Somare, became De Zomba and then Dziomba. She was trained at the Kunstakademie in Berlin and like Lipshitz attended classes at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière. In 1933 she settled in Johannesburg.

Dieter Bertram (29 June 1991) brought to my attention the fact that Lipshitz praised Mancoba in a letter to the South African painter Cecil Higgs (1900-86) on the eve of her departure from London to Paris in 1939:

When you are in Paris you must meet Man-
coba, a friend of mine, the first South Afri-
can Negro artist to leave this country to study

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MATABELI
MAKOMDE
MAPOGGO
MOORISH

NOK (prehistoric)
NUBIAN
NYASA
OVAMBO
OWO

SWAZI
SWAHILI
XHOSA
YORUBA

ZULU

The astonishing range of African Art as it has survived into
.-â\200\224â\200\224recent-times,_wilt"bethe dominant impression of visitors to this
Exhibition. Africa has its Old Masters even as Europe.

v4 : ; te res xe Bo,
WORKS OF ART AND CRAFT WORK OF THE FOLLOW-

ING KIND ARE REPRESENTED:

AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS, including trowels, picks, hoes and
billhooks.

BASKET-WORK, including hats, mats, trays, measures and grain
baskets.

BEAD-WORK, including necklaces, collars, headbands, belts, ear-

rings and, love-letters.

CARVING (in wood, ivory and horn), including heads, animal figures, masks, nose-scrapers and sweat-scrapers.

Ceiling including | a collection of Egyptian ceramics.

DELLING, including bisque figures by Samuel Makoanyane.

HOUSEHOLD UTENSILS, including spoons, headrests, calabashes, dishes and milking-pails.

HOUSING: photographic exhibit of the Ndebele Houses

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, including Sansa, dancing Spee rattles, flutes, reeds, violin and bow.

ORNAMENTS, including bracelets, beads, snuff-boxes, head-collars and pipes.

PAINTING, including Bushmen painting, and modern oils- and water-colours by Pemba, John Makhafola and Paul Ramagaga.

POTTERY, including vases and household utensils.

SCULPTURE, including a photographic exhibit of tribal sculpture and works by Dziomba and African artists.

TRIBAL and CEREMONIAL WEAR, including a unique grass witch-doctor's dress.

WEAPONS, including shields, spears, knives, bows and arrows.

WEAVING, including cloths, carpets and wall hangings.

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Mall, Riveria Rd. Tel: 646-5366): 200\234Spring
Exhibition200\235. PR

CRAKE: (35a Grant Ave, Norwood. Tel:
728-3643): Eight solo exhibition of Severa
Rech until September 14, 2 22

= (17 Ocean St, Kensington. Tel:

616-7841): Permanent exhibition of
paintings and sculptures by Zakkie Eloff
an

EVERARD READ
RARY (Cnr Bath and Bolton Rd,
Johannesburg. Tel: 880-9348): Marc
Edwards from September 3 to 22.

GENCOR: (Rand Afrikaans University.
Tel: 489 2708): Paintings by Deborah
Kersh, Miriam Prekel, Laguerenne from
September 1 to 22.

= (3b Hyde Sq, Hyde Park.

200\234Tel: 788-1113): Ceramic sculpture by

Henriette Ngako; Diane Victor's second
solo exhibition and Kagiso Patrick
Mautloa until September 10,
HERITAGE STUDIO AND
GALLERY: (14 Woolston Rd, Westcliff.
Tel: 646-9226). A new art venue featuring
Bev Watson and Susan Reyneke.
INNESBURG ART.
(King George St Joubert Pk. J: i;

5- 9nd gallery; changing exhibition of
25. i 1 ygontemporary stone sculpture trom;; »
CISA AR one :

GALLERIES |

3130): An exhibition of Bushman art in

association with the Rock Art Research
Unit of Wits University .

McKERRON: 42 Mandeville
Rd, Bryanston. Tel: 704-2537):
â\200\234Coronations and Cystalsâ\200\235 by Judith
Mason until September 14:

KIM SACKS: 92a Frances St, Bellevue.
Tel: 648-6107): Joint exhibition of Fibre
Art by Jutta Faults and artist jeweller
Frances Robinson Gier! from September
ch

KEITH ALEXANDER STUDIO: (73
Hamilton Ave, Craighall Park. Tel: 880-
1352): Latest originals and prints. Open
daily (six days) by appointment.

MUSEUM AFRICA: (Old Market
Bldg, 121 Bree St, Newtown. Tel: 833-
5624): Anne Frank World Exhibition.

NATALIE = (8 Lower Mall,
Hyde Park. Tel: 880-2212): International: -
art. Artists include David Hockney, Jim
Dine, Joe Tilson and Marc Chagall until
September 30. eon meee

OUT OF AFRICA: (77 Salvia Rd,
Kyalami. Tel 702-1553): Sculpture garden

Zimbabwe.

Mall Sandton Ci
Chappell and Ric!

THOMPSON
Ave, Melville. Tel:
paintings and cha
Hibbert.

GALLERY U/21 Hotel

. Edith Kohn, Alan
ard Rennie. ;
: (78 Third
726-3813): Oil

rcoal drawings by Erika

TOTEM: (Mutual Sq, Rosebank. Tel:
4471409/Sandton: Tel: 884-6300): A
selection of glass paintings from Senegal.

TRIPLETRIP:

(Tel: 659 0423/659

0760) Works by Sculptors Sari Saunders,

Skrzypzak.

; Mickey Korzennik and Barbara

VISUAL ARTs: (4th Ave Melville.

Tel: 482-2370): Ne
Hall entitled â\200\234The

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W paintings by Peter
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Forest Hill. Tel 683-7254): Works by
international and local wild!ife artists,
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Namaqualand. Tea garden open first

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Speakers will include:

Elsa Dziomba, Mrs. Scarnells Lean, Dr. Arend Koole,
Mr. Pieter de Waal and Professor F. C. van N. Fourie.

Films will include:

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