

INSTITUUT VIR EIETDSE GESKIEDENIS

Die Universiteit van die Oranje-Vrystaat



Publikasie nr. 01 21 611 4	Datum 8.10.03.23.08.13	Onderwerp nr. I II	Dokument nr. I I I I
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23 MAR 1980

ART

DUKE KETYE displayed his promise and determination at his first one man exhibition at the NSA some eight years ago.

He had promised the secretary of the NSA, then Mrs Melita Nemirovski, that he would arrive in time for his opening — and he did. To do so he had spent more than a week walking from his small village in Transkei. The show was a sellout.

In his latest exhibition, Ketye gives expression to strong religious themes. His sculptures are dominated by a powerful Crucifix and an impressive depiction of two hands praising the Lord.

His drawings are devoted to the Stations of the Cross. He has produced more than simply Biblical illustrations for he sees the Christ figure and His disciples and executioners in terms of township personalities. The result is overpowering in impact.

He portrays the characteristic African postures of grief, with heads buried between elbows, and hands clasped at the back of necks, in his descriptions of women mourning at the foot of the Cross, for example.

While Jesus is being nailed to the Cross, a pair of tackies worn by one of the soldiers loom large in the background.

As Jesus dies on the Cross (No. 12) the faces of the watchers are shocking in their contrast. Unfeeling township gangster types relish the entertainment while the grieving women watch numbly.

The Pieta (No. 14) is beautifully inspired, with a large seated African mother cradling the limp body of her son in her ample lap.

Ketye deals with the Easter theme without resorting to sentimentality or excess piety. He projects an impression of universal suffering bravely borne and the Africanisation of the figures underlines the modern relevance of suffering.

Apart from the subject matter, Ketye's sense of composition reveals his developing creativity as an artist. He chooses unusual angles of vision — the nailing of Christ to the Cross, for example, is viewed from the crown of thorns looking down towards protruding nails.

MARILYNNE HOLLOWAY

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