

INSTITUUT VIR EIEITYDSE GESKIEDENIS

Die Universiteit van die Oranje-Vrystaat

f Bron

j nr.

0 121546

Onderwerp

nr.

Datum

Foi fOr BL 3a 4

Knipsel

nr.

| |

Sumap Cimes

charlotte Firhank-King  
took 18 months to paint  
126 eight-centimetre  
â\200\234gupes in this work of mi  
â\200\230hat records Africa's |  
history and heritage =

Markâ\200\231s concern for the preservation |  
of black Africa is almost. obsessive.  
â\200\234Black history has never been written  
â\200\234down. Itâ\200\231s passed through families in|  
stories and song. We absolutely have to  
have some record of all this before it |  
disappears. How many white South |  
Africans know where the Ndebele come |  
from â\200\224 or anything at all about their |  
traditions? The map is the beginning of  
a campaign to harness the past in an  
acceptable form â\200\224 a form that could  
even be used by our education Sys- |  
tems.â\200\235  
There were some interesting inci- |  
dents on the research trail. â\200\234Often there  
are reasons for not talking about belief

systems. Most of them are spiritually based. We went to see some Ndau women. One still had an old ceremonial costume, and reluctantly she put it on for us to photograph. Suddenly she seemed possessed and fell on the floor, writhing in apparent agony. She spoke in a child's voice. It seems she'd been possessed by the spirit of her dead daughter. We were told ceremonial robes are not to be worn. They belong to the ancestors.

Another time I was driving around

in a highly inappropriate sports car. If I was looking for the Himba. Oh, and incidentally, continues our mine Of information, the Himba never bath. They rub their bodies with ochre and fat. They have the most stunning complexions. Maybe some cosmetic house should take note of that.

Anyway, there I was in my Sports car, in the middle of a desert, with a very rural Himba warrior sitting next to me showing me the way. Dire Straits was blaring forth into the wilderness.

And out of the trees staggered a huge army of British UN guys, completely lost and wanting ME to show them the way. Maybe you had to be there, but I found that hilarious.

After trekking round the continent, paying his respects to tribal lords and wading through the limited available archives, Mark would compile a list of details relevant to a particular tribe. Together with any photographs he'd managed to find or take, he'd assemble the information for Charlotte. She would paint an appropriate figure. over

and over until it was deemed accurate. Then she'd add it to her map.

We had as many experts as we

could find to check the figure first, Charlotte sighs heavily. And when we were as sure as we could be, we'd go with it. We've also had people check-

ing the final product and the criticisms

thus far have been negligible.

The question now is what to do with a painting the size of the average room.

Mark has it all worked out: It's no use

as an educational tool if there's only one available. So we're making a lim-

, ited number of prints and selling them together with an information sheet and a couple of other smaller drawings. The original will probably be auctioned. Weâ\200\231ve agreed to donate 25 per cent of the profits to an educational charity.

Any remaining money will be used for |

our next project.â\200\235  
Markâ\200\231s in a rush. Heâ\200\231s in a rush to get out of Johannesburg and back to the  
â\200\230bush. Heâ\200\231s comfortable there. And he has work to do. And Charlotte?

â\200\234Tâ\200\231ll go back to my painting. Thatâ\200\231s |

what I do, I live out in the country and

paint. And Pll wait till Mark presents

me with my next task.â\200\235 Q

Pet

Ey

~ INSTITUUT VIR EIETJDSE GESKIEDENIS |

Die Universiteit:van die Oranje-Vrystaat

ps : oe ae a emsâ\200\235  
012,516 AioniWliaZASsiior1] (ots Lc aerat  
Sunday Times yg. ee ee p37. Dat.....28.OCT. 1990.  
T |  
| MAPPED OU | he  
| Levee rma  
A nation without a ; a  
history is like a man hose  
without a soul. Former 2 ee  
game ranger Mark  
Valentine agrees with \* (ij Wats fetter ees  
\_Seretse Khama on this, ee  
and is ensuring it  
\_ won?t happen here. He â\200\224 SR eee cece eeee  
\_ spoke to Linda Shaw â\200\230 ae

| about the preservation  
 \_ of our heritage in art. AR cece eee  
 | Andrzej Sawa took :  
 pictures 3 : Sean  
 39 prc | the creation of a map of Africa large  
 re \_\_, .| enough to contain every indigenous | Be ices ee ta ecg SS  
 he inside of Mark Valentineâ\200\231s | plant, animal, fish, tribal costume-and |  
 office looks like an Ndebele hut. even shipwreck. | 6 2 A eee  
 , Orsome kind of hut. Unusyal in | Mark spent three years looking for |  
 : Rosebank. You have to watch | the right artist. He found Charlotte in |  
 yourself in here. One false move and| 7? se ethene ite dee | ODS, eg face Seg gS es A a  
 d ees  
 you could be stabbed through the heart one of those organic markets. She was |  
 by a spear. Or poked in the eye with aâ\200\231 selling detailed wildlife paintings. |  
 panga. Mea CLA IND |â\200\231 Painting detail was not her problem. | FO ae. ee  
 Today we have | extra piece of} Research was. So Mark took on that |  
 furniture. Itâ\200\231s the hugest painting youâ\200\231ve \_ role. ?  
 ever seen. It looms into the room, twoâ\200\231 ~â\200\224- Markâ\200\231s cute. He onl  
 y stops Salling 10: perk eee a ee ein ade Deel  
 metres square, depicting every known take breaths. And he has that boyish  
 black tribe in southern Africa. And hyperactive enthusiasm that makes him â\200\230  
 Â¢ven if this kind of thing is not exactly! hard to dislike. Just as well. â\200\234Get  
 ting i Bee ee eee eee ee eee  
 your cup of home brew, the effect is the rural blacks to talk to you about  
 awe-inspiring. their traditions isnâ\200\231t easy. I visited | oH  
 There are reasons for this. Most no- almost all of the tribes. Some of them  
 table is that none of the 126 figures is | still wear their traditional garb, but not |  
 taller than eight centimetres, and each, | many. Iâ\200\231m always telling people that  
 DT eras eta a: ae ais wees  
 Captured down to the last exquisite traditional Africa is alive and well and â\200\224  
 bead, has been painted under a magni- wearing an overall. Blacks are still  
 fying glass. living the way they always have. You, Tn ee eee ee eee ee  
 In a corner lurks the artist, rubbing just have to get them to talk about it. |  
 her eyes and what remains of her eye- Historically they donâ\200\231t trust the white |  
 0 Bee es eee  
 Sight. \Charlotteâ\200\234Firbank-King | as de- - man very much.â\200\235  
 voted the past 18 months of her life to |