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Fax transmis Cal
Tor Andrea Vinassa

Faw no.: D721 4461 2500

From: Elza Miles

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separations from Human and Fousseaus Cover image, Drawing

po G40, Untitled no 166.

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ration of Brn Marcodsa Ts ound gue contribution to Booth

African art and the Cold movement, the Johannesburg Art Gallery
iw heldding & retrospective edbibdttion of his art as well as &
selection of sculptwres by his wife Sonja Ferlov who died in

PEA. Manoobas, now ninesby vesrs old, returned to Bouth Africa

fear the first time since his deprsrbture in 1938 to mark the
egethibition. Elza Miles curator of the exhibition writes about

Mancoba., The edhibition closes on February 1995.

"I othink I have found my spicitusl bouse so fae as form is

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ped at the content I am still sesrchng forâ\200\231. These

wor oe Erne Mancoba wote from Pards to his friend Dr Sool am

Goel. He continued "My ispressions of the French people are happy
vd thwiv or

ay =f For humanity, formally, is excellent. I

feel for the first time that I count as a human-â\200\224being - EE

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mat such glaring bestiality as you find in London. In

foe

London the street crowd was just one face. In Paris every man has

Mancoba left South Africa in 1938 to study art in Paris. He
planned to stay there for five years. Nevertheless, coincidences

the outbreak of World War 2, four years of internment in a German
camp, marriage across the color bar, artistic involvement
brought about an absence of five years.

Unlike his friend, the painter Gerard Sekoto, who was not to
return to South Africa, Mancoba is currently on a visit to this
country. He is accompanied by his son Honga.

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En route to Paris, Mancoba spent a few weeks in London. He
visited the British Museum to look at the African sculptures in

the collection. What impressed him about them was their serenity.

Unlike the repose of the African works, his own sculptures

ELT the pain of a shattered society as reflected in the
ivediowi dual.

In Paris Mancoba enrolled at the École Nationale Supérieure
des Beaux-Arts. There he befriended the Dane, Christian

Foulsham who introduced Mancoba to other Danish artists. Among
them was the sculptor Sonja Ferlov whom Mancoba married in 1942,

In spite of a looming war, life in Paris was exciting.

Mancoba's Danish friends took him to galleries exhibiting the art

of Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque and Henri Matisse. They also
encouraged him to work on his own instead of attending art school

and introduced him to the informal Académie de Chaumière where

gathered to draw from the living model. In turn Manobas

,
with his friends when they looked at

shared his African

African art and artefacts in the Museum of Man.

Ever since their first visit to the Museum of Man, Manoba and Ferlov kept returning to the collection of African art. On one occasion they rubbed shoulders with Picasso. Manoba was struck by Picasso's interest in African art which contradicted the much gushed and noncommittal retort: "L'art nègre, connaît

pas {("Negro art is a mob of crooks").

Ernest Manoba, born on the 29 August 1904, grew up in the mining town of Boksburg and attended Anglican Church schools on

the East Rand. His parents saw to it that their children were

educated. Manoba once explained that his mother had both her hands full. In the one hand she held Christianity and in the other Africa. She was a good storyteller. She told them the fairy tales of Hans Christian Andersen, their Fingo family history and she insisted that they read books in English.

After Manoba had trained at primary school he left for the

Diggeson Training College at Grace Dieu near Pretoria in 1920,

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Four weeks later he qualified as teacher. He was given a

the College until 1922 when he left on a bursary

from the Transvaal Education Department to study for two B.A. degrees at the University of Fort Hare.

It was at Grace Dieu that his artistic talent was discovered by

Mr Fauline. She encouraged him to do

one of the teacher's, Miss

Southey at Grace

woodcarving. In 1928 he made his first major

Dieu: the Bantu Nadonpa. This sculpture of awakening womanhood

to be the earli South African interpretation of Mary as

wdies at Fort Hare to carve an alta

fare rupted his

anel for the Woodville Chap HE.

=1 ir Brahamstown. At the end of

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he moved bo Town where he was employed as caretaker of a

Flats in Kloof Bi bo He eventually completed his

through UNMISS when he and Gerard Beloto taught at
in Fietersbburg.

ard sepecially in District Bis, where

Life in Oape Town in

he had a studio, was stimalating. 1.8, Tabata, a fellow-stuadent
and Friend from Fort Hare, introduced Manooba to Goodam and Jane
Goel. Mancoba also met the sculptor Lippy Lipshitz: and the

painter Irma Stern. Lipshitz: sheared his Parisian experiences with

Mancoba, and recommended that Mancoba read Primitive Negro

Roulpture. This book bad an dsmense influence on Manooba. Thouah

mcd a in scale his new carvings became powerful images of

uncharted life force that reveal either a Madonna or a face

wrestling to be freed from a chunk of wood.

Phen Mancoba arrived in Paris in 1924 and was not

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ink and watercolour for

representational any more. He us

soared in 1940 he started to paint in oil.

Fishes and comfort were never to mark Bonds and Ernest
Mancoba's lives. They always had to share their polychrome working

spaces. After 1932 Mancoba stopped sculpting and devoted his time
to painting and drawing.

In 1947 Ernest, Bonds and Monga moved to Denmark. They

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wher they returned to France to live in dgoye-en-Valols, &
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village in Bed bany.

In Denmark they became part of the vibeant bot short lived
Cora group. Both Mancobess were invited dn 1948 to take part in
the first public mend festation of Cold, This show was hosted by
the Ho

(Harvest) art scolety in Copenhagen. Though the Mancobas

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meesement Te visual language. Mancobe was never bo sever tiles with

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Try 1960 the Mar retuned to Faris. The following year

Marcoha found the "content" be had been looking for when he
arrived in Ferds over twenty veers before. Me became a French
citizen. He and Borja settled in the Montparnasse where they

converted an old shop into a space for Tidvipg and Foe weeding. In

1984 Sonja died in Farid

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where Ernest and Moegs still Live.

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gin Britany.

Irn Derusarb they b pe part of the vibrant but short lived

Cord group. Both Manoob ware invited in 1948 to take part

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