

| Gerda Dullaart

When you rock up at the Amakhono

farm no one is in sight. After exten-

sive knocking and peeping around, I

find one artist after the other en-

grossed in their work. Some use

their bedrooms in the large old

house as studios, others occupy communal space.

All the artists at the commune have their own distinct style, stemming from the individual message they want to carry across. But there are commonalities: almost all work with earthy media: Sandile Zulu uses fire, Durant Sihlali paper, Vusi Zwane cow dung, Nhlanhla Mbatha

Soll:

Durant Sihlali has lived and worked there since the 1993 inception of the Amakhono Art Centre. He has ages of experience behind him. In his young days, he had to paint commercial art, like the seaside view on a mug you buy at a curio shop.

I was called a kaffir pot artist, he jokes. His technical skill ensured him a living at all times. One has to dream up ways of making a buck.

In the 1970s struggle years he taught at the Fuba Academy. There the con-

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Earthy African artistry is incubating here

cept of making art with objects one found along the wayside helped out when there was no money for materials. He would let the students use

all sorts of rubbish in a creative.

way.

This lead him onto paper making, in which he is currently very interested. His art has always tapped from the colourful wall in the Afri-

can home.

â\200\234Floors and walls were never regarded as art, but as curiosity. I worked on what was rejected as art, because it was a denial of our peopleâ\200\231s culture, and I wanted to carry it on to the next generations.â\200\235

Now Sihlali has a beautiful new theme. He interprets Bushman art, especially engravings, on embossed

\_ cotton paper.

â\200\234The two arts talk the same language, even though they are centuries apart,â\200\235 he says. â\200\234I was impressed by the stylistics of Bushman art. So ultramodern. Their mastery of anatomy and movement astonished me. Yet we refer to them as primitive.â\200\235

Franke Severin owned the piece of land on which the Amakhono â\200\230Art Centre is now situated. . When she realized her dream of an art centre, John Mokone was there as the ad-

ministrator. She has become more and more detached, but he still runs the place. It is not easy at all to keep the peace among artistic temperaments. Mokone and Sihlali add an air of humble dignity to the place.

Sandile Zulu is working in the spacious lounge, firing long grass plumes and treating them with cloth and water. â\200\234Fire is a language to me. This work forms a context in which to deal with socio-historical issues as an artist,â\200\235 he says.

Zuluâ\200\231s work was recently exhibited at the prestigious Sandton Civic Gallery. There his abstract work reminded critics of a psychological battle towards creative expression.

He manipulates fire, and stresses basic geometric forms. The intensity of fire and organic materials always refers back to the SA context.

Vusi Zwane works with cow dung on canvas. Finding the right consist-

ency in which the two materials |

work well together was an interesting process of experimentation for him. He had trained as designer at Fuba and specializes in textiles. â\200\234African art mostly falls in the design and craft category,â\200\235 he says. â\200\234It is easier to make a living as a design-

er, than an artist.â\200\235 He is currently

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Vusi Zwaneâ\200\231s creation of cow dung and textiles, strongly influenced by his design background.

investigating European opportunities to take indigenous designs to textiles for the overseas markets. Prince Mundeke comes from Kongo and works in minute hyper-realism with pastels. He will soon have an exhibition at the Johannesburg Art Gallery under the title of Looking for Harmony. â\200\234Art is the essence of civilisation. Civilisations come together around culture,â\200\235 he says. â\200\234Art is a world of colour. The aim of creation is also to find har-

mony. I aim to look for harmony among civilisations in art.â\200\235 One of his unbelievably correct portraits is taken up in the collection of gifts to Mandela, now showing at the Johannesburg Art Gallery.

Nhlanhla Mbatha joined ~ the centre right in the beginning. He uses compressed board, soil and gel. This month he exhibits at the Rembrandt Gallery at the Market Theatre, and he also was chosen to exhibit in France.

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pils. It can be used by children as  
young as four years.

City Vision visited a centre in Waverley and spoke to teacher Vivienne Channon and a few of the children.

Channon said the success of the system could largely be attributed to the 'just right' level of the programme which help kids to acquire confidence in dealing with maths.

She said there were many 'small steps' between levels and children never advanced to the next step until they had mastered the first one.

Stephanie Khoury (8), said she used to 'hate maths'. Her friend Jacquie Pienaar agreed, but said that now she enjoys maths and finds it much easier to cope with.

Her results confirm this as she is now six months ahead in the Kumon

Right: Stephanie Khoury (8) and Jacquie Pienaar (8) with Vivienne Channon at St Mary's School in Waverley where they attend Kumon classes twice a week. The Kumon programme is a unique Japanese programme developed to add sparkle to maths in order to achieve

good results.

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they are given an easy starting point. All students begin at the level which is 'just right' for them and move through the worksheets at the appropriate pace.

There are no 'failures' as children work at their competency level. Because they start at an easy level they are able to score 100%. This gives them confidence.

The programme is not a replacement for the school syllabus, but is only a supplement which stimulates the child and instils confidence.

According to Channon the programme will help the child to 'sail through school'. But, she added that a year's exposure to the programme is needed to maximise results.

Â® Queries to Vivian (#646 5806)  
or contact the Kumon head-office (@

788- 4308).

Picture: Johannes Vogel

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While mathematics and science are compulsory subjects in the junior secondary phase (Standard 5 to 7) roughly 5% of pupils in this phase do not have access to these subjects.

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Shock report â\200\224 thousands miss out on maths, science

did not offer mathematics and 342 did not offer science to their Standard 6 and 7 pupils in 1995 in seven provinces (excluding the Eastern and Western Cape).

The report says the dropout rate for these subjects during Standard 8 to 10 is also extre-

â\200\230he majority of these certificates amounting to about 62 000 â\200\224 were issued during the first week of last month. It is uncertain when the waiting will be over for the rest.

Information on the outstanding certificates was released last week when the MEC for Education in Gauteng, Mary Metcalfe, replied to questions put to her on the matter, by the Democratic Party (DP).

The DP said the party was concerned by the â\200\234distressing inefficiency on the part of the South African Certification Council (Safcert) and the GDE in ensuring that these certificates are all issued as timeously as possible.â\200\235 |

It was inexcusable that matriculants still had not received their final certificates at this late stage of the year, the DP. added.

Metcalfe said that no certificates were issued from January to April this year because the department waited for the completion of the supplementary examinations. The plan was to issue certificates by 30 May, however the 62 000 certificates were only received from Safcert on 27] May so that they were issued in the first week of June.

Safcert, which is responsible for the printing and issuing of certificates to provincial departments, said they could not release the outstanding certificates until they received the necessary information from the GDE.

Metcalfe said the delay in issuing the rest of the certificates was cau-

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