

# INSTITUUT VIR EIETDSE GESKIEDENIS

Die Universiteit van die Oranje-Vrystaat



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## EXPOSURE

### BHEKISANI MANYONI



**By Nkopane Makobane**

A GROUP of contemporary South African black artists are to have their works exhibited for 54 days at the Oglethorpe University Art Gallery in Atlanta, Georgia in the United States next year.

The exhibition has been described as "the first ever of its kind to be held in America where South African artists are to be given a unique opportunity to become world-renown." It will be held from January 16 (the official holiday marking Martin Luther King's birthday) to March 10.

Announcing details of the exhibition at a Press conference in Johannesburg this week, the exhibition curators, Ms Beverley Segel and Ms Ray Imerman, said more than 20 individual artists as well as weavers from Meropa Community Art in Bushbuckridge and sculptors from Katlehong Art Centre will take part. These groups, they said, included the academically-trained and self-taught artists.

The artists are: Speelman Mkwa Mahlangu, Mbongeni Ntanzil, Isaac Hlatwayo, Karl Ditlopo, John Mathan, Puseletso Mohl, Bhekisani Manyoni, Paul Sekete, Mvemve Jiyane, Duke Ketye, David Mbele, Hargreaves Ntswana, Godfrey Ndaba, Ben Macala, Eric Mbatia, Daniel Matsidiso, Mike Khali, Winston Saoh, Solomon Sekhalela, C Khumalo, Peter Sibeko, Lurant Sihlali, Osia Maseko, Wanda Mlangeni, Ntlanhla Naba and Tsho Mngeni.

In a joint statement, Ms Segel and Ms Imerman said the procurement of art for this exhibition was made much easier by the fact that local artists are such a special group of people.

They said in their search for suitable and sufficient art to sustain the exhibition of this magnitude, they had to first break down the barriers surrounding black artists.

"It was hard work convincing the artists that we were serious, and the exhibition was in fact taking place abroad. Perhaps the idea of being given an opportunity to feature in such an important exhibition seemed unrealistic, to many of our demotivated but talented artists," they said.

According to them, after purchasing all the art pieces for the exhibition (over 100 paintings, sculptures, tapestries and others), the items were crated and shipped to the US. At that stage they (curators) were still unsure if the art was acceptable.

They said on arrival in the US the works got full colours for their quality, degree of fine arts content and aesthetic appeal.

"The incredible fact is that most of these artists are self-taught. The training that other artists did receive seems negligible when compared to the training afforded artists abroad. We can be confident in the fact that our local artists can compete on an international level," they said.

They added that although the amount of artists featured on the coming exhibition seemed high, there are more local artists who deserve the exposure and

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