JEP-0001-0001-001

ASPECTS OF TWENTIETH CENTURY BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN ART - UP TO 1980

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A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Fine Art and Architecture, University of Cape Town, in fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Fine Art.

Cape Town 1989

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"Literature and art do not, like poor journalism, tell people what they know so well in the ordinary circumstances of their lives. Any great South African literature , while recognising this anguish, should help us not only to know it clearly but enable us to move beyond it. It must provide a vision beyond our cultural and political crisis.

If we blacks are to contribute in a meaningful way to a future South Africa, this contribution should include literature and art that says: this is where it hurts but there is a tomorrow. Make no mistake about it. No black person will romanticise this anguish, nor will he suggest that it should be a black danse macabre. He invites his white countrymen and says 'We are all in this together and woe unto you if you should resist the national purgation which awaits us, to move beyond the crisis. Resist humanism with brute force and you undermine the only significant option which holds promise for the future of the subcontinent.'" (N.Chabani Manganyi 1981:36)

PREFACE

The research for this dissertation was undertaken in the period from 1984 to 1987. In the course of documenting aspects of twentieth century black South African art, research was executed in various museums and galleries in South Africa, and in Europe in the Museum of Mankind in London, the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh, the Musee de l'Homme and the Musee des Arts Africaine et Oceaniens in Paris, the Musee d'Ethnographie in Geneva, the Museum fur Volkerkunde in Berlin, the Koninklijk Institut voor de Tropen in Amsterdam and the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde in Leiden.

I would like to thank the following institutions for their financial assistance in the course of this research:
The Human Sciences Research Council
University of Cape Town: Postgraduate Research Scholarship
Maciver Scholarship
Harry Crossley Bursary (Travel Grant)
Jules Kramer Grant
Harry Oppenheimer Institute (Travel Grant)

My gratitude and appreciation go to my supervisor Associate Professor Bruce Arnott for guiding me in the research and production of this dissertation.

I would also like to thank the following galleries, institutions and individuals for their generous help in

providing information on artists and for providing visual material for documentation:

Africana Museum, Johannesburg; Alliance Francaise de Pretoria; Ann Bryant Art Gallery, East London; The Campbell Collections of the University of Natal; Centre for Research and Documentation, University of Zululand; Church of Sweden Mission, Sweden; Durban Art Gallery; Eshowe Museum; Federated Union of Black Artists, Johannesburg; Gallery 21, Johannesburg; Gertrude Posel Gallery, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg; Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg; Inter-library Loans, University of Cape Town; Johannesburg Art Gallery; King George VI Art Gallery, Port Elizabeth; Pretoria Art Museum; Rand Afrikaans University, Johannesburg; South African National Gallery, Cape Town; Svenska Kyrkans Mission, Sweden; Tatham Art Gallery, Pietermaritzburg; William Humphreys Art Gallery, Kimberley. Peter Clarke; Prof.E.J. de Jager; Peder Gowenius; Dr Thomas Matthews; Dr Anitra Nettleton; Durant Sihlali; Cecil Skotnes and Jo Thorpe.

Finally my sincere thanks to all those artists who participated directly in the process of this work in providing information on their lives and work.

INTRODUCTION

The following study is concerned with the influence of Westernization on the development of black South African art, culminating in a form of art referred to as urban black art. While the essential aim of this dissertation is to document selected twentieth century artists and their works prior to 1980, it is felt that a broader art historical context is required, placing contemporary black South African art within the evolution of black African art in general, and in relation to so-called traditional art of the African peoples in South Africa. For this reason, an outline is given in Chapter 1 of some changes in style, imagery, symbolism and form occuring in black African art as a result of contact with Western socio-economic and cultural models.

Since Western art schools in Africa have played a major role in developments in twentieth century African art, a general survey of Western art schools in Africa ,their teachers and artistic products is presented. In South Africa the influence of art schools for black artists, in particular the Polly Street and Rorke's Drift schools discussed in Chapter 3, cannot be over- emphasised.

Providing a wider art historical context in which to place black South African art also required an outline of so-called traditional art forms, found essentially in figurative wood carving and mural painting, discussed in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 looks at four black urban painters

active prior to 1950, although they continued to work into the 1970's. The same chapter discusses the Polly Street and Rorke's Drift schools, founded in 1952 and 1962 respectively. Chapter 4 deals with selected artists active in the 1960's and 1970's, working in the media of sculpture, painting, drawing or printmaking, with form and content analyses of certain of their respective individual works.

Throughout this dissertation the term 'black' is used in describing African peoples or Bantu-speaking peoples of South Africa, rather than referring collectively to African, Coloured, Malay or Indian members of the South African population. The term 'black' is not used in any ideological or political context, and does not refer to Black Consciousness except where mentioned. Neither does 'black' refer to any particular stylistic movement in the history of art. Where contemporary art of black Africa in general is discussed, the term 'African' is used.

Because of the strong Western stylistic orientation in most of the works examined, art historical methodology of form-content relationships within the works themselves is used, while placing the artists and works within a wider cultural and socio- political context. In the case of so-called traditional art forms, an anthropological approach is applied as a basis for analysis.

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CHAPTER 1

WESTERNIZATION AND CHANGE IN AFRICAN ART

1:1 Introduction

Black African art has undergone a significant revolution since the late nineteenth century. Changes brought about by Western colonisation and urbanization have produced a range of new styles, iconography and techniques, giving rise to major developments in African art. Few European scholars of African art history have examined the influence of Western culture on African art[1]. As H.E. Graburn observes, "It is a surprising fact that in most of the world today very little 'traditional' art is being produced. Yet the comparative study of art has so far concentrated on these forms which are by now historic or very rare"[2]. A great deal has been written on so-called traditional or ethnic African art, one of the earliest twentieth century works being C.Einstein's Negerplastik (1920)[3]. Later works on the subject include P.Guillaume and T.Munroe (1926); M.Sadler (1935); P.S. Wingert (1950); M.Trowell (1954); W.Schmalenbach (1954); F.Boas(1955); A.Gerbrands (1957); L.Segy (1958); E.Leuzinger (1960); D.Paulme (1962); W.Fagg (1965); F.Willet (1967); D.Biebuyck (1969); W.Bascom (1969); J.Delange (1974); R.Brain (1980); W.Gillon (1984); and J.Vansina (1984)[4]. African art and its influence on European art, notably on Cubism, is given due consideration, without the inevitable absorption and exchange of influences between Africa and Europe being seen as a two-way process.

"The confluence of West African and Western (French) musical traditions in New orleans gave birth to Jazz, and in Paris

(c.1915) the re-discovery and re-assessment of West African Negro sculpture was a prime factor in the development of the Modern Movement in painting, and later in sculpture. In both instances the primitive forms provided new methodical and technical premises from which Western artists could evolve vital new forms...
"It is therefore to be expected that the re-enactment of a similar process of cultural cross- pollination will evince stimulating results." (B. Arnott 1967:5)[5].

W. Bascom notes that paradoxically, while European artists denied their heritage of naturalism at the turn of the century and turned to the inspiration of African sculpture, African artists a short while later rejected their own heritage in adopting naturalism, due to intensified contact with Europe[6].

Within South African art history a similar process of "cultural cross-pollination" has occured; white artists in the early twentieth century such as Irma Stern (1894-1966) and Alexis Preller (1911-1975) turned towards an 'African Mystique[7].' for their inspiration, while black artists such as Gerard Sekoto (1913-) and Sydney Kumalo (1935-) became familiar with Western art styles and techniques.

A thorough study of contemporary developments in African art is beyond the scope of this dissertation which concerns itself with parallel developments in twentieth century black South African art. However this chapter outlines some of the changes in African art due mainly to Western influences, providing a wider context within which to situate black South African art.

1:2 Art and Artefact

i. Traditional African art

Traditional African art functions as an integral part of cultural and social expression. Sculpture as well as painting (especially more recently) have served to mirror the religious, social and political structure of African life. Art history in Africa therefore raises the question of the distinction between craft object, artefact and art object.

"Art is a Western category word which originated in Western Cultural tradition expressing exclusively a Western idea. Therefore, much as it is desirable that a definition not be restricted to one civilization, the word 'art; may not necessarily be suitable for describing objects from other cultures."(Ojo 1982)[1].

'Craft' is a European term coined to describe a tradition of decorative or utilitarian artefacts in contrast to Western 'fine art', which is considered art appropriate for Western museums and galleries[2]. The terms 'art' and 'craft' as they are used in a Western context do not necessarily apply to African art history where most art is created with an extra-artistic function, without the formal compartmentalization found in European art[3]. Nineteenth century European collectors used the term 'artefact' to describe African art objects in a similar sense to the above definition of craft. However after 1900 objects in ethnographic collections which corresponded to the Western notion of an 'art' object began to be placed under the category of art[4].

In the anthropology of art H.Haselberger[5] suggests that art objects in non-European cultures are distinguished as 'art', by the degree of aesthetic intention on the part of their creators. Thus in the case of a Melanisian carving a wooden paddle , if the

carver strives to give it a beautiful form, without decoration , then the paddle may be regarded as an art object by virtue of the aesthetic intent[6]. Distinguishing art from playful mark making Haselberger sees art as producing a result intended to affect someone, seperated from play which is an end in itself. Graburn proposes that "art is an analytical category particular to the cultural tradition of 'civilization',..." and as such "...it is not necessary for the producers to have a concept of art in order that we may study it, anymore than it is necessary for a people to have a concept of 'culture' just like ours in order to legitimise our study of that culture."[7]. Thus in seeking a terminology in art history that is cross-culturally applicable, for the sake of compromise, traditional African sculpture and painting may be considered art, with the definition of art, according to R.Layton[8]., being that which deals with form and expresses images and metaphors. An important consideration in African art history however, is the danger that the basis of analysis becomes 'African' and not 'art[9].

" African art is rarely spoken of in terms of the specifics found within the disciplines of art. It enjoys special dispensation from the mental rigour we are accustomed to encountering in Western art appreciation and criticism. Painting, sculpture, architecture and design are apt to be bundled together under the evocative term 'African art'. " (Nettleton 1973 :199)[10].

European art collectors and scholars have tended to be dismissive of African art the more it is influenced by acculturative processes from the West[11]. Contemporary African art forms have moved away from ethnological criteria associated by the West with so-called traditional 'primitive' African art (like wood sculpture and mural painting), and have been replaced by, for example, so- called tourist art and Western art techniques and

media, such as oil painting or printmaking. This does not really imply the 'death of all that is best in African art', as supposed by W.Fagg[12]. Naturally changing life styles and evolving cultures give rise to new art forms, and the tendency of art collectors to denounce changes in African art is the same attitude according to Graburn,that prevailed towards the 'untouched native' before the anthropological advances in the study of cross-cultural changes in the 1920's and 1930's[13]. "Just as people do not stop being human when their cultures change, so art does not stop being art just because styles and media change."[14].

1:3 The Process of Change

i. Decline of Traditional African Art

Nineteenth century European missionaries, colonial administrators and art collectors are commonly associated with the demise of indigenous African art[1]. Certainly by 1900 only very ancient and sacred heirlooms remained for the taking[2]. This served to increase the rarity value of art objects in ethnographic collections as well as stimulating the manufacture of counterfeit pieces to supply the demands of provincial museums and a growing collectors' market, both in Africa and in Europe[3].

Christian missionaries played an early role in the decline of traditional art in Africa, by destroying pieces either directly, or indirectly by supplanting traditional religious practices with Christianity, thereby discouraging the creation of religious ritual objects for traditional worship.

"Large quantities of 'heathen' sculptures were destroyed at the hands of, or at the instigation of Christian missionaries. Woodcarvers and brass-casters lost their customers through conversion. And in the mission schools, which dominated education in Africa, students were taught to look down on their artistic heritage as evidence of the backwardness of their forefathers." (Bascom 1976 :304)[4].

M.Sadler, writing in 1935, sees the decline of traditional African religions as fundamental to the decline of traditional art forms.

"The indigenous art of Africa is above all things stamped with the associations of religion. In this fact lay its power. But the same fact explains its decay and is the presage of its doom."(1935:7)[5].

U. Beier suggests that while foreign administrators, missionaries, and traders were in part responsible for the deterioration of traditional culture and art, in some areas this

decline was also due to internal social and political change. Internal social stability like traditional religions had evolved in relative isolation and as a result was possibly more threatened by the infiltration of new ideas and ways of life[6].

Prior to the period of intense colonial expansion in the late nineteenth century, African states still had control over their religious, political, and trading activities and the process of absorption of ideas and goods was relatively indirect. However colonial domination brought this to an end, replacing the indigenous African functionaries with European missionaries, administrators, educators and soldiers[7]. Domination of this sort had considerable influence on style, iconography and media in African art.

ii. Evolution of Style and Iconography

Transmission and absorption of style, iconography and technique from one part of sub-Saharan Africa to the next is difficult to isolate and analyse[8]. Radical evolution as a result of European infiltration is easier to record. For example, the naturalism of Bakongo sculpture is often cited as an example of European stylistic influence[9]. It is important nevertheless not to regard all traditional African art as being a static, unevolving phenomenon[10]. Incidences of change are noted by Fagg and Bascom[11]. Examples include the Ife bronze casting technique and styles believed to have been brought from Ife to Benin City circa 1400, strongly influencing the naturalism in Benin court art.

A major indicator of evolution in African art is stylistic change and variation[12]. M.Schapiro defines style as:

"...a system of forms with a quality and a meaningful expression through which the personality of the artist and the broad outlook of the group are visible. It is also a common vehicle of expression within the group, communicating and fixing certain values of religious, social and moral life through the emotional suggestiveness of forms. It is besides a common ground against which innovations and the individuality of particular works may be measured."(1953:287)[13].

Within the multifarious art-producing groups in Africa two major stylistic tendencies are noted: naturalism and abstraction. In this sense 'naturalism ' is taken to mean, "a general reference to the visual aspects of the subject whether this be a natural or man-made model", while 'abstraction' refers to "elements whose derivation from natural sources is evident, but whose form has been generalized to the point where the appearance of the abstracted elements is no longer comparable to that of reality."[14]. Examples of the first stylistic tendency, naturalism, include Classical African sculpture of the Ife and Benin cultures (Nigeria)[15].; while the second stylistic quality, abstraction, includes amongst others, the sculpture of Baule and Senufo (Ivory Coast)[16]., Ashanti (Ghana); and Bakota (Gabun).

Since the nineteenth century African art has been moving away from the use of abstracted and highly geometricised, stylized forms, towards the European notion of naturalism. However the view that most ancient forms of African sculpture were abstract is not true for all African sculptural traditions[17].. Classical Ife bronze figures and portrait sculpture are distinguished by extremely naturalistic features, for example, The Seated Bronze figure of Tada (Plate 1.1)[18]., while Ife terracotta sculptures exhibit a range of stylistic features, naturalistic, expressionistic and abstract[19].. According to F.Willett[20]. it has been possible to detect a modern style in Ife sculpture

characterised by greater stylization than that of the earlier naturalism.

Thus there is a two-way process of stylistic change in African art, as Schapiro notes,

"Study shows that both processes occur in history; there is little reason to regard either one as more typical or more primitive. The geometrical and naturalistic forms may arise independently in different contexts and co-exist within the same culture."(1953:300)[21].

Changes in style may or may not be influenced by evolution in subject matter. In some cases Christianization has led to a new iconography being integrated with traditional forms and styles[22]. A case in point , cited by Willett[23] is a Baptismal font carved by the artist Bandele in Ekiti in 1965, in the form of a traditional Ekiti drum. The Christian subject of the Risen Christ, is integrated with the more traditonal 'marandola' motif found on drums carved in the Osi-Ekiti style (Plate 1.2).

Images of European colonists provided a wide appeal throughout West, Central and East Africa[24]. For example Thomas Ona, a Nigerian sculptor, records European missionaries, explorers and district administrators in a traditional Yoruba style (Plate 1.3)[25]. Brain[26] remarks that Ijebu Yoruba sculptural representations of the white man show similar patterns of stylization to those found in the faces on the Benin plaques, where the European subjects have the long, hooked nose and the drooping eye of the Ijebu-Ode style (Plate 1.4). More naturalistic examples are found in a series of wooden carvings of Queen Victoria, derived either from one famous photograph which hung in a district commissioners office, or from photographs handed out on the Queen's birthday (Plate 1.5)[27].

There are instances where changes in style and form can be directly attributed to European prototypes . W. Fagg cites ancestral figures carved in the manner of European ships' figure-heads. Here the form has undergone a change while the function remains traditional. Two figures from the old trading port of Brass in the Niger Delta representing the Ijo 'King' Ockiya appear to be based on figure-heads (Plate 1.6)[28]. Brain[29] gives a further example of Kalibari Ijo ancestral screens that have undergone an evolution in form as a result of contact with European carpentry skills. Traditionally created to commemorate the political wealth and trading power of ancestral chiefs and merchants, Brain describes these screens as, " the highest flights of 'assemblage' in West African art: unlike almost all other West African sculpture, they are not carved from a single block of wood." This change is attributed to contact between Delta carvers and European traders and seamen who over the years introduced carpentry techniques to the area, so that separately carved motifs of figures, heads and symbols are tied to a wicker-work screen (Plate 1.7)[30].

iii. Evolution of Symbols

Imitations and innovations in cross-cultural art forms may tell something about the internal and external identities of the people who make them. Often the purpose of art-making is one of communication and cultural identity. With changes to traditional modes, either through borrowed identities, or the creation of popular art, the function of art is revolutionized for those within the changing groups[31].

Visual symbols are fundamental to a unity of visual perception within any culture[32]., whereby social groups establish a recognisable 'code' through which messages may be transmitted either for the maintenance of the cultural/social status quo, or simply to identify one group from another.

The communicative function of visual symbols is also linked to their aesthetic qualities .

"It cannot be doubted that these designs and paintings also have an aesthetic character; here is the first form of art. Since they are also, and even above all, a written language, it follows that the origins of design and those of writing are one: it even becomes clear that man commenced designing, not so much to fix upon wood or stone beautiful forms which charm the senses as to translate his thought into matter."(Durkheim 1915 :48)[33].

Two important areas are therefore suggested for consideration when evaluating art within rapidly transforming cultures; art and aesthetic intention , and art as communication[34]..

"Without symbols, social sentiments could only have a precarious existence...Thus systems of emblems, which are necessary if society is to become conscious of itself, are no less indispensable for assuring the continuation of this consciousness."(Durkheim 1915:231)[35].

Thus in rapidly evolving societies where cultural identity is threatened, the more pluralistic and urbanized the surroundings become for example, in fast developing cities in modern Africa, the greater the less-dominant groups' need for symbolic unity of cultural identity. A case in point in the twentieth century is the concept of Negritude, occuring in African poetic debates in the early 1930's. Senegalese poet Leopold Sedan Senghor (b.1906)[36]., theoretician and practitioner of Negritude, posited a unified African cultural view, as distinct from European culture, and important in terms of 'black' aesthetics.

"The African has always and everywhere presented a concept of the world which is diametrically opposed to the traditional

philosophy of Europe. The latter is essentially static, objective, dichotomic, it is, in fact, dualistic, in that it makes an absolute distinction between body and soul, matter and spirit. It is founded on separation and opposition:on analysis and conflict. The African, on the other hand, conceives the world, beyond the diversity of its forms, as a fundamentally mobile, yet unique, reality that seeks synthesis. (Senghor, 1970 :184)[37].

Negritude can be seen as an anthropological, mystical idea, affirming a rediscovery of Africa's uniqueness, as in the case of Senghor, or as a political orientation. In poetry the latter view was adopted by Angolan poet and liberation fighter, Mario de Andrade, who turned Negritude into a political battle cry, as well as an intellectual call for a new Angolan national identity in the 1970's[38]. The 1970's Black Consciousness Movement in Sowetan poetry in South Africa reflected similar attitudes, using poetry as ,"a message of consciousness-raising and race pride"[39]. The internal identity of Sowetan blacks was reaffirmed by certain traditional poetic techniques,maintained as unique in the face of white South African domination.

Negritude in the visual arts does not share the ideological definitions of poetry. However there are individual artists in black Africa whose approach to subject matter, form and style, is loosely connected to the ideology of Negritude. Ethiopian artist Afewerk Tekele (b. 1932), links allegories of Africa's past, present and future in his stained-glass windows in Addis Ababa. Portraying the struggle against colonialism and slavery, Africa's awakening knowledge and independant future is symbolized by two large male figures wearing traditional Ethiopian dress and jewelry (Plate 1.8). A further example is found in the work of Ghanaian sculptor, Oko Ampofo (b. 1918) who rediscovered his African cultural heritage, by visiting European museums, when

studying medicine in Edinburgh from 1932 to 1940. Upon his return to Ghana in 1940, Ampofo produced sculptures combining various styles derivative of traditional African sculpture, but creating new individualized forms. Styles in his figurative wood and cement sculptures include those of Ashanti 'akua-ba' figures, and Baoule styled heads as in Puberty (Plate 1.9). In 1945 Ampofo organized an exhibition titled 'New-African Art' which was the first Ghanaian exhibition of contemporary African art. The exhibition travelled to New York a few years later where it was the first of its kind to exhibit modern black African art in the United States of America. Ampofo also founded 'Akwapim 6', a privately funded Ghanaian art group[40].

In South Africa, contemporary black artists, such as Sydney Kumalo (sculptor), Lucas Sithole (sculptor), and Leonard Matsoso (painter), are some of the artists who have worked towards a reintegration of tribal roots in art style and content, with modern techniques and materials. This group of artists is considered more fully in Chapter 4.

It appears that when societies are threatened by loss of cultural identity, it does not always follow that they return to traditional roots in an attempt to achieve cultural unity. In some instances the more threatened a community is, by for example urbanization, the more readily it seeks out new symbols and signs of the 'civilized' world; for instance aspiring to the status that a motor car or transistor radio might bring ,or adopting clothing worn by the dominant group. There are further instances in Africa where the need for external distinctions as well as the need for conserving internal identity become more complex.

Graburn[41]. observes that with tourism and travel bringing new markets to remote areas, commercial art works such as souvenirs, become confused in the visitor's eye with traditional works, so that souvenirs symbolise the exotic place or culture for the visitor. At the same time these souvenirs also serve as reminders of a past identity to the people who make them, when their traditional culture has been lost.

"Thus, a Fourth World peoples 'image' in the eyes of the rest of the world is often strongly influenced by their portable arts and crafts as by what they actually do in some remote and forgotten homeland or reservation."(1976:26)[42].

With Africa well into its post-colonial phase, certain borrowed commercial art forms and materials have therefore become displaced labels of tribal identity, while serving on the other hand as newly integrated symbols reinforcing a sense of African independence. An extreme example is found in certain independent East African countries where government officials import foreign and modern Makonde sculptures as symbols of their countries' own African identity[43].

1:4 Types of African Art

Various types of African art have emerged since the late nineteenth century. M. Mount[1]. points to four categories, traditional art, mission inspired art, tourist art or souvenir art and new African art, since 1920.

Traditional art is considered virtually extinct[2]., and has in some cases been replaced by art created as a result of contact with Christain missions. Mission inspired art has had a long history in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in the lower Congo where reproductions of liturgical objects are traced to the fifteenth century[3].

Souvenir art encompasses works created for and sold to a foreign tourist market. This category dates back to sixteenth century Afro-Portuguese ivories made for sale to Europe[4]. Modern examples proliferate, one example being Kenyan Wakambe wood carvings of highly naturalistic animal and human figures (Pl. 1.10)[5].

New African art is distinguished by new materials, techniques and personalized subject matter, created by individuals, often reflecting an Afro-European school style. Some Artists work in conjunction with European art schools in Africa, others work independently[6].

Graburn suggests two major categories of 'inwardly' and 'outwardly' directed arts within which all acculturative arts of the Fourth world, including Africa, may be classified[7]. The term 'Fouth world' is defined by Graburn as including

" ...all aboriginals and native peoples whose lands fall within the national boundries and techno-bureaucratic administrations of the countries of the First, Second and Third worlds...people without countries of their own...people without the power to direct the cause of their collective lives." (Graburn 1976) [7a].

Third and Fourth world peoples coming into contact with First world domination create arts which are inwardly directed, that is, arts that are produced for the appreciation and application of those within their subordinate group. These same peoples may also create outwardly directed arts for distribution amongst foreign and/or dominant groups, which ultimately aim at a wider market. The latter group of arts is often despised by European art historians, and includes so-called 'tourist' and 'airport' art. (The latter term being coined by Frank McEwen, director of the Rhodesian National Gallery, in Salisbury, Rhodesia (Harare, Zimbabwe). Graburn defends this group as,

"...important in presenting to the out-side world an ethnic image that must be maintained and protected as part of the all important boundary defining system. All human social groups, from the family...need symbols of their internal and external boundaries; the practical and decorative arts often provide these essential markers." (1976:5)[8].

Within the two major inwardly and outwardly directed groups of art are seven sub-categories[9]: (a) Extinct Art referring to the total disappearance of traditional art forms, which in many cases have been sparsely documented; (b) Traditional or Functional Art, defined as traditional art combined with some changes in form and technique, which may or may not include Western images and symbols; (c) Commercial Fine Art, consisting of "pseudo-traditional art" works "...because although they are made with eventual sale in mind, they adhere to culturally imbedded aesthetic and formal standards"[10]; (d) Souvenir Art, where profit making is the prime motive of creation rather than pleasure or social function within the community. Here the symbolic content

is often reduced to tally with the consumers' popular idea of the salient characteristsics of the minority group concerned. Graburn calls these items 'ethno-kitsch';[11]. (e) Reintegrated Art is seen as a synthesis of cultural contact between dominant and minority groups, where an exchange of ideas, materials and techniques from a more industrially dominant group are applied in another way by the minority group; (f) Assimilated Fine Art contrary to the above synthesis, is the product of extreme cultural domination of one group over another, where the less dominant group will produce assimilated art in a desire to compete with the dominant group; (g) Popular Art is where for example, dominant influences of Western cultures assimilated by colonized peoples may give rise to an artistic elite, "...whose arts often take the forms of European traditions, but in context express feelings totally different, feelings appropriate to the new cultures that are emerging among the leaders of the Third World."[12]. Examples of this group include Mbari artists in Nigeria, or independent painters such as Valente Malangatane in Mozambique and Louis Maqhubela in South Africa. Expression in European terms, that is in medium and style is given to subjects ranging from tribal ancestry to colonial oppression, as well as recording for modern Africans the developing and urbanizing forces within their respective countries.

1:5 Western Art Schools in Africa

As the years preceding African independence witnessed the further decline of traditional art, certain European authorities and individual artists established art schools with the idea of preserving and encouraging native talent. Two groups of art schools emerged , missionary art schools and independently sponsered art schools. Most black African art in the first half of the twentieth century may be traced to these schools, some of which encouraged preservation and regeneration of tradition, while others emphasised the need for innovation.

i. Missionary Art Schools 1940-1947

During the first quarter of the twentieth century missionaries explored the potential for training black artists in a workshop atmosphere, designed largely for the production of artefacts and art works for the Church[1]. Mission inspired art was by no means new, dating back to the fifteenth century[2] in the lower Congo where Christian liturgical objects such as brass and copper crucufixes, statues of saints, and bells and staffs were produced[3]. However by the nineteenth century pieces included a marked reintegration of tribal iconography and style.

"Metal crucifixes... became more and more Africanized, and were absorbed into the indigenous culture, a process known from other African contacts with Christian, Islamic or outside influences. While Christian missionaries fought what they considered the misuse of Christian icons for 'pagan' use, Islam was more tolerant and acquiesced in syncretism." (Gillon 1984 :283)[4].

In the early twentieth century a more concerted teaching effort combining Christian instruction with art education took place at Cyrene Mission in Bulawayo, Rhodesia, from 1940[5], and at Oye-Ekiti in north-eastern Yorubaland in Nigeria in 1947[6].

Cyrene Mission art school, directed by the Protestant Rev. Edward Paterson, set one of the precedents in the teaching of painting and sculpture in Africa, by encouraging students to draw from their tribal heritage, and by minimalizing formal instruction[7]. Two important artists from Cyrene art school were Lazarus Kumalo (b.1930) a sculptor from Bulawayo who carved in red-sandstone, creating firgures which have features reminiscent of the monumentality of Romanesque sculpture (Plate 1.11); and Sam Songo (active ca. 1946-48) a sculptor who worked on numerous wooden relief-panel doors for the Colliery General Office in Wankie, Rhodesia. Songo also executed various water-colours illustrating Mashona legends and folk lore.[8]

In 1947 Father Patrick Kelly of the African Mission Society and Fathers Kevin Carroll and Sean O'Mahoney established workshops in Oye-Ekiti in Nigeria. Subsequent workshops were started at Ondu by Father O'Mahoney and at Ijebu-Igbo by Father Carroll. Many of the craftsmen working at these workshops were non-Christians producing Christian artefacts, who were not discouraged from executing commissions for traditional patrons as well[9]. A well known sculptor associated with these workshops was Lamidi Fakeye (b. ca. 1925), the son of a traditional Yoruba woodcarver, Osi Illorin (active in the early twentieth century). Fakeye developed an individual style under the combined influences of Nigerian woodcarver Bandele (b. ca. 1915) and Father Carroll, fusing Yoruba stylistic forms with Christian iconography (Plate 1.12)[10].

ii. Independent Art Schools 1937-1962

One of the first independent European art schools established in black Africa was the School of Fine Art at Makerere University in Kampala in Uganda, founded in 1937 by the British painter Margaret Trowell. In the 1940's[11] the school became affiliated with the University of London. Students were taught drawing, painting, sculpture, ceramic pottery, textile and graphic design as part of the art programme, which followed along the lines of British art schools[12]. In 1958 Cecil Todd from Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa, joined the school to teach painting. Todd's influence can be seen in student paintings of the late 1950's in their use of perspectival space and modelling of figures and forms in light and shade, resulting at times in a lifeless academic treatment of 'picturesque' African and Biblical subjects[13]. Artists from the Makerere school include Kenyan Wakamba sculptor Gregory Malobe[14] (b.1922, Munias) who joined the school at the instigation of British sculptor Henry Moore who met Malobe while on a visit to East Africa in 1941[15], Tanzanian painter and diplomat Sam Ntire (b. 1923 near Mount Kilimanjaro)[16], Ugandan sculptor George Kakooza (date of birth unknown) who studied under Maloba, and Ugandan painter and graphic artist Teresa Musoke (b. 1941)[17].

In 1936 H. V Meyerowitz (1900-1945) sculptor and designer, who had formerly taught at the Michaelis School of Fine Art at the University of Cape Town in South Africa, founded an art department at Achimota College outside Accra in Ghana. Meyerowitz established a three-year course with mural-painting, sculpture, basketry, ceramic pottery, lettering and wood engraving as some

of the subjects. The art department became affiliated to the University of Science and Technology in Kumasi in the late 1930's. European teachers who worked at Achimota included English ceramist Michael Cardew who built pottery studios at Achimota and Vuma in Ghana, and at Aduja in Nigeria, where he taught traditional potters the use of the pottery-wheel and high-temperature glazing techniques. Important artists from Achimota include the late Ghanaian painter and wood sculptor Kolfi Antubam (b. 1922- ?) and sculptor Vincent Kolfi (b. 1923, Odumasi)[18].

Among the several influential Euro-American organisations interested in the promotion of art schools in Africa was the Societe Africaine de Culture in Paris, which founded centres in Cameroun, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Nigeria, Ghana and Kenya. Intellectuals who gave their support, such as Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, Aime Cesaire and Leopold Sedar Senghor, lent the society and art school programmes an impetus concerning the broader issues of contemporary African life, art, literature, economics, politics and religion. The society's journal Presence Africaine, founded in 1947 by Senegalese writer Alioune Diop, provided a mouth piece for these issues and affirmed the presence or ethos, of black communities of the world, defending the originality and dignity of their respective cultures. In the 1950's the society held two conferences, "The Congress of Negro Writers and Artists" at the Sorbonne in Paris in 1956, and its sequel in Rome in 1959, at which papers were presented by Africa's leading intellectuals and artists, including Ben Enwonu, Kolfi Antubam and the South African painter Gerard Sekoto[19].

In 1949 the Academie des Beaux Art was founded in Kinshasa in the Belgian Congo, incorporating the Ecole St. Luc which had previously been opened at Gome Matadi in 1943 by Belgian priest and artist Frere Marc-Stanislas.The new school received an annual subsidy from the Governor General, and Frere Denis continued art instruction after Marc-Stanislas, teaching courses in painting, sculpture, ceramics, graphics and architecture. For the most part the academy exemplified the type of Afro-European art school which encouraged students to eliminate or ignore Congolese sculptural traditions in favour of a naturalistic style which conformed to European academic standards. Three sculptors who developed in the manner of European classicism were Andre Lufwa (dates unknown), Benjamin Mensah (dates unknown) and Ignace Manaka (dates unknown)[20].

A freer teaching approach was introduced at a workshop-school founded at Elizabethville in the Belgain Congo in 1944 by French painter Piere Romain-Desfosses. L'Academie de l'art populaire Congolais, as it became known, pioneered an approach to art intruction which served as a model for many later African art schools[21]. Desfosses affirmed that his aim was not to influence his students. He offered materials and a work space, with the injunction that students should not produce repetitive work. In this way he supposed that the work produced would be created entirely from the artists' own experience. This approach was not dissimilar to Paterson's teaching at Cyrene Mission, which encouraged students to draw from their cultural background and individual initiative, with minimum interference on the part of the teacher. A later example of this method is found in South

Africa at the Polly Street Art Centre in the 1950's, discussed in Chapter 3. Both Paterson and Desfosses hoped their students would create works that were wholly 'African',however the students work reflects an Afro-European style. Notable Zairian painters from the Desfosses Congolais school include Philipili Mulogoya (b. near Lubumbashi, dates unknown), the artist known as 'Bela' (b. in Chad, dates unknown) and Mwenza Kibwanga (b. in 1924 in Katanga Province at Mwanza)[22].

In the 1950's Desfosses' school was, incorporated into the Lubumbashi Academie des Beaux Arts et des Metiers d'art founded in 1951 by Belgian artist Laurent Mponens[23]. Several former students including Philipili and Mwenze taught at this academy, which provided courses in painting, sculpture, design and architecture. The training differed from Desfosses', being based on more conventional European art schools with a set curriculum and programme of instruction. Moonen's was however sensitive to the danger of imposing ready-made European styles on the students. Two professional painters who graduated from the school in the 1950's were Jean-Bosco Kamba (graduated 1958, dates unknown) and the artist known as Mode (graduated in 1959, dates unknown)[24].

1953 saw the creation of the Poto-poto art school, officially known as Centre d'Art Africaine, at Brazzaville in the Belgian Congo by French painter Piere Lods and engraver Rolf Italiander[25]. Like Desfosses, Lods aimed to infuence his students as little as possible, but he went further in encouraging an interest in local African flora and fauna and in traditional art forms, music and dance[26]. In comparing the styles of the

Elizabethville and Poto-poto schools Ulli Beier observed that whereas the stylistic emphasis of the former was "decorative and naive" the latter was "illustrative and exotic"[27]. Recognisable stylistic conventions from the Poto-poto school include stick-like figures with long limbs and small heads in decorative patterns and pseudo-cubistic mask-like motifs[28]. Artists whose works include these traits include the Congolese painters Zigoma (dates unknown), Thango (dates unknown) and Ondongo (dates unknown)[29]. (Plate 1.14).

The foundation of South Africa's first black art school also took place in the early 1950's in Johannesburg, at the instigation of printmaker, painter and sculptor, Cecil Skotnes. Named after the street in which it was situated, Polly Street Art Centre initiated a style of urban black art, so-called 'township art' which referred to the townships in which students lived and derived their subject matter. Artists who worked at the school included Egon Guenther, Larry Scully, Fred Schimmel, Gideon Uys, Mary Duxbury and Edoardo Villa. Important black artists from Polly Street Art School include painter Ephraim Ngatane (1938-1971, Maseru), graphic artist and sculptor Ezrom Legae (b. 1937, Vrededorp), painter Louis Maqhubela (b. 1939, Durban), and sculptors Lucas Sithole (b. 1931, Springs) and Sydney Kumalo (1935-1988, Johannesburg). Further consideration is given to the Polly Street Art Centre and these artists in Chapters 3 and 4[30].

In 1953 Ulli Beier founded the Nigerian literary magazine Black Orpheus with the aim of increasing an awareness in African and Afro-American literature and art. Reproductions of works by prominant black artists were published, including Sudanese

painter Ibrahim Salahi (b. 1930, Omdurman), Mozambican painter Valente Malangatane (b. 1936, Lourenco Marques) and Nigerian metal sculptor Asiru Olantunde (b. circa 1915, Oshogbo)[31]. Beier later founded successful workshop-schools in Nigeria, known as Mbari Centres (named after a traditional Nigerian multi-disciplinary art form 'Mbari'). The first of these centres was the Mbari Artists and Writers Centre, founded in Ibadan in 1961. Some of the numerous writers associated with the founding centre were the South African playwright Wole Soyinka and South African writer Ezekiel Mphahlele, as well as the Nigerian writers Amos Tutuola and the late Christopher Okigbo[32]. Interest generated by exhibitions and workshops resulted in other Mbari centres in Oshogbo and Lagos. Two important European artists who worked on the Mbari projects were Georgina Betts and Susanne Wenger[33]. Georgina Betts who was a painter, taught two of Nigeria's important contemporary artists during her third summer-school in 1964, painter Twins Seven-Seven (Taiwo Olaniyi, dates unknown) and painter and mosaicist Jimoh Buraimoh (dates unknown). Austrian born sculptor, Susanne Wenger took over as workshop director when Beier and Betts left Oshogbo in 1967[34]. Wenger, who had lived in Nigeria for a number of years, had become deeply involved in traditional Yoruba religious art in her own work, and she generated various student projects involving the building and decorating of religious shrines. She also taught artist Asiru Olantunde and sculptor Adebisi Akanji (dates unknown). Other well-known artists associated with these Mbari art centres were, traditional Yoruba sculptor and bronze-caster, Yemi Bisiri (b. in Western Nigeria, dates unknown), graphic artist Rufus Ogundele

(dates unknown), Muraina Oyelami (dates unknown) and Adebisi Fabunmi (dates unknown)[35]. (Plate 1.15).

In the 1960's other developments in Southern Africa did much to promote contemporary black art in countries in this region. Mozambican artist and architect, Amancio D'Alpoim Guedes started workshops in Lorenco Marques where the painter Valente Malangatana was discovered. Julian Beinart, then Professor of Town Planning at the University of Cape Town , initiated summer-school workshops with Beier in 1961 at Mbari centres in Ibadan and Oshogbo in Nigeria, and later in Zambia, Kenya and South Africa[36]. Frank McEwen, director of the Rhodesian National Gallery established gallery workshops, where students made soap-stone sculptures reflecting local myth and folk lore. Paintings of the gallery caretaker Thomas Mukarobgwa (dates unknown) were later acquired by the Museum of Modern Art in New York[37]. In the early 1960's Swedish textile and graphic artists, Ulla and Peder Gowenius arrived in Zululand, South Africa, and established weaving, pottery, textile and graphic design workshops at Rorke's Drift. These workshops developed into one of South Africa's best known black art schools, The E.L.C. (Evangelical Lutheran Church) Arts and Crafts Centre, discussed in Chapter 3[38].

Prior to any systematic approach to black art education in Africa, in 1935, M. Sadler spoke against the idea of European authorities attempting to revive or preserve traditional African art forms, saying that:

So long as the plastic arts are entangled with superstition and so long as the allurement of those superstitions retains any measure of power, it would be against public interest to reinforce their obsolescent authority by artistic propaganda, which, through the schools, might imprint on the minds of the

children a wrong conception of the validity of the claims of those superstitions upon their capacity for belief, and tempt them to the renewal of ritual habits from which their elders are shaking themselves free." (1935: 10) [39].

Specialists in the study of African art such as W. Fagg, J. Delange, W. Fry, L. Ngakane and G. Moore[40]., also caution against newly established art schools in Africa, although for different reasons, fearing that art schools often introduced new materials and techniques which were "taught to blind oblivion"[41]. of the artists own needs or traditions. At the exhibition of Contemporary African Art held in London in 1969 Lionel Ngakane criticised this aspect of Afro-European art education which while teaching technique, tarnished the African "soul" and often caused artists such as the South African born Gerard Sekoto (living in Paris) to "find themselves in two worlds and belonging to none."[42]. On the issue of deliberately emulating local traditions at the expense of contemporary influences Ngakane is equally cautious, saying:

"It is my contention that art should develop naturally, always reflecting man in relation to his times and environment. When this is supressed by missionary or government, artistic inspiration is embalmed. Benin art is a curiosity to Europeans and is given pride of place in the drawing-rooms of anthropologists. Contemporary African art should not be the exclusive concern of 'Friends of Africa', anthropologists and sociologists, nor does it need to be patronised by statements such as : 'charming and endearing because of its childlike simplicity'. It should be subjected to the highest criticism." (ibid) [43].

The art schools discussed in this chapter reflect the problem that African artists as sub-groups of acculturated communities experience, in having to find new visions after suffering the obliteration of their older cultures. Whether African artists should look back at indigenous traditions or towards the exotic and foreign traditions of Europe and America is a dilemma evident

in much contemporary African art, and it is the subject of on-going debate. Differing views are offered by artists and writers from different African countries, in the words of , for example, Ghanaian sculptor Vincent Kolfi, Nigerian poet Christopher Okigbo and black South African painter Louis Maqhubela:

"Outside influences do not constitute a danger to a virile tradition. But while we accept outside influences as inevitable ...no virile tradition will commit cultural suicide by brain-washing itself and rejecting its past completely. No art is produced in a vacuum. (Vincent Kolfi, interviewed in Delange and Fry 1969) [44].

I think all we hear nowadays of men-of-two-worlds is a lot of nonsense. I belong, integrally, to my own society, just as, I believe, I belong integrally to other societies than my own. The truth is that modern Africa is no longer a product of an entirely indigenous culture. The modern sensibility, which the modern African poet is trying to express, is by its very nature complex; it has complex values, some of which are indigenous, some exotic, some traditional, some modern. Some of these values are Christian, some non-Christian, and I think that anybody who thinks it is possible to express consistently only one line of values, indigenous or exotic, is probably being artificial." (Christopher Okigbo, interviewed in Duerden 1969) [45].

The moment you are African what you are doing becomes African ... all I know is that it is not necessary to force the issue. What is African will definitely come out whatever you are doing." (Louis Maqhubela, interviewed in Krell 1972)[46].

CHAPTER 2

RURAL BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN ART:

FIGURATIVE WOODCARVING AND MURAL PAINTING

2.1 Introduction

In order to understand the evolution of black South African art in an urban context it is necessary to outline significant traditional black art forms. In this chapter a survey is made of figurative woodcarving and mural painting, found amongst almost all of the rural black cultures in South Africa; notably, figurative woodcarving produced by the the Tsonga and Venda speakers of the Transvaal, as well as the North Sotho-speakers, the Pedi and the Lobedu; and mural painting among the South Sotho-speakers of Lesotho, the Orange Free State,and the Nguni-speakers of the Transvaal Highveld, Eastern Cape and the Transkei. While it is realised that these art forms might be considered part of the Western sub-category of art known as "craft", adherence is made to Haselberger's[1] tenet that a work formed outside of primary aesthetic concerns, that is for socio-religious purposes, may be considered "art" when the prevailing stylistic features form a dominant and integral aesthetic part of the finished work as a whole[2]. Almost all traditional African art serves a cultural function that is primarily socio-religious in purpose, rather than aesthetic[3]. For this reason it is suggested that the prevalent material art forms found in South Africa, such as beadwork, pottery, clay modelling and woodcarving

could be considered 'art' rather than 'craft', along with mural painting and figurative woodcarving. However, a full study of these is beyond the scope of this study.

Because the tradition of figurative woodcarving and mural painting in South Africa spans a relatively short historical time-span,(about three to four centuries), with sparse archaeological evidence[4], it is impossible to establish stylistic and historical progression or development beyond the mid-nineteenth century, where the earliest references to rural black art are found in the literature of explorers such as J.Campbell and W.Burchell[5]. Since migrations and tribal warfare brought different tribal groups into contact with each other, it is unlikely that cultural and artistic patterns amongst black cultures remained static. Constant affects of a cross-cultural nature made for art forms in constant flux. Furthermore, the term 'traditional 'is suspect. A.Nettleton points out "the very concept of 'traditional' relies on both the idea of history and a static political position. There are very few societies that would correspond to that model."[6] It is arguable that all art is transitional and most particularly that art which is produced by people living in Fourth World countries. K.Grundy writes of black South African societies, "Autonomy and isolation for most of these peoples are a thing of the past. The Fourth World consists of societies in transition and since culture is bound up with a people's situation and environment, arts and crafts are changing too, and rapidly."[7] Despite the difficulties with the term 'traditional', it is still used in this study, along with the term 'rural', to distinguish between art produced in rural

environments and urban art. Urban and transitional art forms apparently emerge when peoples from rural areas come into contact with the influences of industrialisation and urbanisation, usually of a Western European nature.

Comparisons between traditional art forms in South Africa and ancient African art traditions, such as those of the Ashanti in West Africa, or Yoruba in Nigeria, are not relevant to this study. Literature on South African black art has tended to dismiss the importance of local black art tradition when compared to the traditions of West and Central Africa. W. Battiss maintains:

"... the Africans in the vast area that comprises Rhodesia, South Africa, South West Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Southern Mozambique have produced nothing that can be remotely compared to the arts of West Africa, the Camerouns and the Congo." (1967: 19-20)[8].

The same author regards headrest-carving, carved totem animal figures and decorated dwellings as insignificant and comparable with pots and weaponry[9]. P. du Plessis[10] argues that Zulu-speakers show no great artistic tradition, with no masks or other ceremonial paraphernalia, and apparently concludes therefore that no valid figurative artefacts exist among other black South African cultures. This view is shared by E.J. de Jager , A.de Beer, M.Slack, and J. Beinart[11]. For these authors the advent of black artistic initiative coincides with contact with Europeans, and is seen as largely a twentieth century phenomenon. Beinart for instance attributes Ndebele mural painting to contact with white settlers, whereas the Ndebele apparently adopted this art form from the Southern Sotho who had a long established tradition of wall decoration.[12]

One of the problems encountered by scholars writing on black art is the lack of accurate documentation of this southern region. W.Gillon remarks that:

"An exact attribution of sculpture to any particular group within this large ethnic combine is really impossible unless the piece has been well documented". (1979:166) [13].

Nettleton[14]. cites the incorrect labelling of many figurative carvings from South Africa, often erroneously attributed to the 'Zulu', by European museums. Many have been incorrectly identified by reference to the traditional headring associated with Zulu elders. However the problem is a cross-cultural one, as the headring was adopted by dispersed Nguni groups and in turn by the people they conquered, such as the Ndebele of Zimbabwe, the Swazi and the Tsonga, and certain North Sotho groups such as the Pedi of Sekhukhuneland[15]. Art historians ascribe the lack of traditional art forms in South Africa to migratory factors and militant-subsistence[16]., especially in the case of the Nguni:

"There is as yet no archeological evidence of early art produced by the Nguni, and we can only assume that the arts and crafts of the 19th century and early 20th century are a continuation of an ancient culture of the people of the area. Among those artefacts are wooden sculptures, often pairs of males and females; beadwork; jewellery; arrows; decorated wooden household implements and domestic pottery". (Gillon 1984:340)[17].

Literature dealing with African art in general, makes scant reference to art south of the Zambezi[18]. Scholars who make passing reference to South Africa, mention Zulu woodcarving and beadwork[19]., however few examine the authenticity of such works. Neither have many attempts been made to find evidence of wider traditions prior to the nineteenth century, involving other forms and techniques of artistic production among the diverse cultures of black South Africa[20].

Zulu and Sotho speakers, are credited by R. Wassing with the production of beadwork and wooden vessels, decorated with naturalistic animals and human figures ." The Zulus of South Africa were probably the greatest artists, using the minute beads to fashion all kinds of attractive ornaments"[21].

Sotho, Tswana, Venda and Zulu art is referred to by A.Malraux and A.Parrot, L.Holy, E.von Sydow, H.A. Junod, W.Fagg and W. Gillon[22].

"The art of these peoples is characterized by all manner of designs made from beads, metal, leather, clay and wood. These are simple works, whose beauty lies more in subtle suggestion than brilliant invention; delicately woven geometric designs in brass wire, beaded coloured embroidery, finely prepared skins, applied to weapons, clothing, ornaments, dolls and a hundred and one domestic utensils, all show the sureness of taste. But the main art here is undoubtedly pottery".(Malraux and Parrot 1968 : 371)[23].

South African literature on traditional black South African art includes that of ethnographers: J. Walton, M. Shaw, H. Bohm, L. Hooper and P. Davison[24].; and art historians: H. A. Junod et al; W. Battiss, E. Berman, H. Fransen, T. Matthews, R. Levinsohn, A. Nettleton and C. Vogel[25].. Thus the difficulties of researching this subject are expressed by Nettleton in referring to her own research experience.

"In the context of African studies the artistic traditions of the Southern African black peoples constitute a largely uncharted field. Most of the general literature on African art registers a blank in the area East of the Great lakes South of the Zambezi River. The aim of this research is to fill part of the lacuna with an investigation of the traditional woodcarving of the Shona and Venda against the general background of the sculptural traditions of other South African black groups". (1984: Introduction)[26].

2:2 Figurative Woodcarving

Traditional or rural woodcarving in South Africa amongst the Bantu-speaking cultures consists of various forms related to a number of functions. These include utilitarian objects such as bowls and spoons, and initiation figures. According to Nettleton, free standing wooden figures are used in "initiation ceremonies, for investiture ceremonies, as house and field guardians, as fertility dolls and as puppets for use in divination and healing rites."[1]. There is little evidence to suggest a tradition of carved ancestor figures in South Africa. Nettleton points out that:

"Although staffs, axes, guns, headrests, hoes and other objects may be used in ancestor veneration and while some of them are figurated, a tradition such as that in evidence among the Igbo or the Luba, where free standing figures are carved to represent the ancestors, is not found among the groups being studied here." (i.e. South African groups)(1984:31)[2].

There is also no evidence of a tradition of wooden masks[3].

Nettleton[4]. divides black South African woodcarving producing cultures into two groups. On the one hand there are peoples who have a tradition of carving utilitarian artefacts, such as figurated staffs, decorated spoons and bowls, carved matracks and the wooden puppet figures used by traditional healers. This group includes Nguni-speaking people of Swaziland, Natal, the Transkei and Ciskei, and South Sotho-speaking people of Lesotho and the Orange Free State. On the other hand, are traditions of figurative wood carving, (free-standing carved figures (animal or human) and headrests which include figurative elements) amongst Northern Sotho-speaking peoples, Venda-speaking peoples and Tsonga-speaking peoples of the Transvaal. This group practices

woodcarving for reasons which differ from the first group, in that the figures function on a ritualistic level of socio-religious importance, where institutions of a socio-religious nature have survived. It is in the first group, where such institutions appear to have died out (or perhaps never existed), that no such tradition of wood carving exists[5]. There is, according to Nettleton[6], nothing to suggest that the Zulu are responsible for many of the carved figures in European museums, precisely because the Zulu have no history of initiation institutions, and no recorded use of initiation figures, or of field guardians.

Nettleton[7] also points out the complexity of the task confronting the art historian attempting to trace stylistic and formalistic groupings of figurated wood carving in South Africa, because of the diverse crosscultural influences that have been in effect since the seventeenth century or earlier. Migrations and the nineteenth century <u>difaqane</u> wars caused different groups to come into contact with each other, and led in woodcarving, to a difused range of styles and forms.

"The historical factors affecting the spread of styles and institutions are equally complex, involving a number of migrations and conquests, the migrations following not only a northsouth direction, but also a south-north one. For example, the migration of the Shona speakers southwards into the Transvaal in the 17th century together with the radiating influences of the Shona Changamire Empire left an indelible mark in the cultures of North Sotho, Tswana and the Tsonga. This influence is clearly seen in the art of most of these groups."(1984:34)[8].

i.<u>Tsonga-speakers</u> (Northern Transvaal)

The Tsonga in the Transvaal originally came from Mozambique where they lived between the Nguni in the south and Chopi of the

north[9]. According to Junod[10] the Transvaal Tsonga are mainly Northern Tsonga, consisting of Tswa, Hlengwe and Djonga peoples, who had a long history of contact with the Shona empire. Portuguese accounts record Tsonga in Delagoa Bay as early as 1554, where it is believed they traded with Arabs[11].

In 1821, during the difaqane the Zulu leader Shoshangane established hegemony over the Tsonga, influencing their military system; however their language and culture remained essentially intact. Certain groups fled Nguni rule to the Eastern and Northern Transvaal c. 1835-1840. These groups were forced to keep moving and living on the periphery of other tribes, and emulated various cultural and social customs. The majority of these Tsonga now call themselves va Tsonga, and where the Nguni influence is still strong they are called Shangaans after Chief Shoshangane[12]. Many Shangaans now live with the Tsonga, and have become cultrally integrated in Mozambique,and in Gazankulu in the Northern Transvaal[13]. Thus, as Nettleton notes[14] ,the Tsonga display two distinct woodcarving traditions; a headrest style related to the Shona with whom they lived , prior to emigrating to the Transvaal, and a free-standing figurative carving tradition which has unique qualities unrelated to North Sotho influences.

Little is known about the purpose of Tsonga free-standing figurative sculpture. Work of this sort is thought to be associated with initiation practices, especially for young boys, a tradition also of the Sotho[15]. Both North Sotho- and Tsonga-speakers have traditions of pole-sculptures as 'guardians' for houses and fields[16], examples of which are to be found in the

Africana Museum, Johannesburg and the University of Witwatersrand collection.

Two stylistic types of Tsonga figurative carving have been identified[17]. The first group includes pole-figure carvings, the figures being noted for elongated forms (Plate 2.1), pronounced in long legs which are slightly bent, long torso, neck and elongated head. Arms are short in comparison with these features. It is also this group that manifests the headring traditionally associated with Zulu male warriors and elders. This first group includes pairs of carved figures , one male and one female (Plate 2.2 a/b). Some of these are finished with a black patina, or with beads. The second stylistic group of figurated woodcarvings, is represented by shorter, squatter wooden figures, originating from the Transvaal Tsonga in the Soutpansberg region (Plate 2.3 a/b). According to Nettleton this group shows the influence of neighbouring Venda sculptural characteristics which accounts for the lack of the headring in these works. Generally, however, this group of squatter figures exhibits similar features to the first group. Of particular note are the detailed teeth, fingers on hands, domed feet, toes, spine, and genitalia. Figures from both these groups are believed to be used during investiture ceremonies where Nguni (i.e.Shangaan, Swazi and possibly Zulu) warriors received headrings and the right to marry[18].

The possibility of the existence of a third group of Tsonga sculpture should not be disregarded; a group related to the pole-sculpture of the Lobedu[19] in the North Eastern Transvaal. The third group is exemplified by a wooden sculpture exhibited at the BMW Exhibition in Johannesburg in 1985[20] (Plate 2.4). This figure

is believed to be a guardian figure (and is 1.15 m high) from the Tsonga-Shangaan area of the North Eastern Transvaal. According to J. Witt such guardian figures are rare among the Tsonga:

"The entrance to a Tsonga kraal is always 'doctored' with magic medicines to prevent evil spirits from entering the property. Very rarely, carved figures, which are treated with protective ointments are used for this purpose."(1985:24)[21].

Notable stylistic characteristics of this pole figure include long head and torso , very long straight legs , and a pronounced pelvis (no genitalia). The neck and head are large in proportion to the rest of the body having a square slab-like quality with gouged out eyes, nose and mouth. The arms are very straight and short, and closely hug the sides of the torso.

ii. Venda-speakers (Northern Transvaal)

Linguistically Venda-speaking people are unique in South Africa. They live mainly in the Soutpansberg mountains and southwards to the Letaba river. The origins of the Venda are not altogether clear, with various cultural links being made by different historians and anthropologists. Oral tradition records the Venda entering their territory from an area near Lake Malawi as early as the seventeenth century[22]. Junod[23] writes of the Shangaan-Tsonga and the BaVenda originally migrating from north of the Limpopo River to the North Eastern Transvaal where they lived together for over a century.

Linguistic and cultural correspondences between the Venda and the Sotho are identified by N.J. van Warmelo[24] and A. Kuper[25]. However evidence has also pointed to strong ties with the Shona of Zimbabwe. J.Blacking[26] sees the Venda as pre-Singo Shona migrants, with their origins going back to the Marangudzi

mountain north of the Limpopo river. Van Warmelo[27]. traces Venda genealogy from Victoria in Zimbabwe to the Transvaal. According to P.Maylam[28].recent archaeological and linguistic research has changed this theory. Referring to D. N. Beach[29]. he quotes: "We now know that the basic Venda-speaking people have been present in the Soutpansberg from very early times, and that they absorbed a number of groups of Shona immigrants."[30].

During the second half of the eighteenth century a new dynasty, the Singo, who were Shona immigrants, conquered the Venda state. Beach[31]. also writes of pre-Singo Shona rulers of Venda who built enclosed stone villages like the Shona. From these various influences, Shona traits were transmitted to the Venda via the Singo. The Singo also assimilated Venda culture and language, adopting Venda customs of initiation and worship of the Venda god[32]..

It is acknowledged that the Venda share both Sotho and Shona linguistic and cultural elements. This could explain why two obviously distinct woodcarving traditions are found amongst the Venda[33].. On the one hand a tradition of Shona origin, consisting of a more abstract and synthetic approach to relief carving (stylistically resembling Shona headrests) found in figurated drums and xylophones, divining bowls ,and headrests; and on the other hand the more naturalistic style of the Domba initiation figures which show stylistic characteristics close to the Tsonga and Northern Sotho[34]..

Nettleton[35]. has isolated two traditions in woodcarving amongst the Venda, consisting of:

1) " the nominally 'abstract' tradition of relief carving of objects associated with the royal clans and with ritual specialists " and 2) "the figurative tradition manifested in the figures used in female initiations the matano of Domba."(1984:183)[36].

The first group includes images on objects such as drums, (ngoma), doors (vhuti), xylophones (mbila), headrests (tshisiamelo), divining bowls (ndilo) and divining tablets (thangu), objects which relate to chiefs or traditional healers (Plate 2.5 a/b). The decorative motifs found on these objects such as chevrons, diamonds, and triangles, are similar to those on Shona wood pieces, suggesting :

"...either a direct derivation from this source or a common origin for both the Shona and Venda design languages...In the light of the historical interrelationships between the Venda and Shona it would appear that the latter is the most likely explanation." (1984:183)[37].

The second group of Venda figurative carvings is that of the figures carved for the female initiation (Domba) schools. The figurated carvings are known as matano, meaning 'shows'.(Plate 2.6 - Plate 2.9)

"These matano are used in tableaux to teach the girls social custom, myth and legend and, most important for sex education. The matano are manipulated while certain milayo (sayings) are recited. Some of the sayings (milayo) take the form of riddles which are illustrated/interpreted by the figurative element."(1986)[38].

Two other initiation schools,in addition to the Domba,the Vhusha,and the Tshikhanda,form the first stage of the cycle of three female Venda initiation schools. Vhusha involves small groups of girls in early stages of puberty, while Tshikhanda, is a bridging school between Vhusha and Domba. Both Vhusha and Tshikhanda are organized at village level, the latter bridging the gap between the Vhusha attended by the commoners and that attended by the nobles, before they converge on the chief's Domba[39]..

It should be noted that wooden figures for initiation purposes are found amongst the Tsonga in the Transvaal as well as Northern Sotho groups. However, these are used for male initiation . Wooden figures which are unique to Venda ceremonies are made by men, who are traditionally the woodcarvers in black South African cultures[40]. (Nettleton[41] points out that in societies such as the Sotho, the female initiation figures are made of clay by women who are traditionally the potters in the society,and who are also in charge of the female initiation schools. However in Venda society this is not the case.)

The Khomba, male officials in charge of the Domba[42], usually own the wooden figures themselves, and introduce them to the initiates. Because these figures are only used ceremoniously they are kept hidden when not in use . Much prestige is attached to the figures, not only for their ritual worth, but also for their status value, and the Vhakomba are hired by chiefs at high prices to carry out the initiation ceremonies.

"It is at the Domba that the commoners are introduced to court language and Venda cosmological and political mythology. It is significant in this context that the figures of the Domba are kept from year to year and that after a number of years' usage older figures may take on the character of ancestral relics, numbering among the "mysteries" (dzingoma) of the Domba. Thus while novelty and innovation are to some extent appreciated a greater value is placed on the older figures as they carry the weight of tradition with them." (Nettleton 1984 :371)[43].

The primary function of the Domba is to teach young girls the position expected of women in Venda society, which is based upon a system of patrilineal descent and patrilocal marriage, whereby the women answer to the men in the family; father, brother and husband. Women are subject to the authority of husband or father for life[44].

The stylistic and iconographical characteristics of the matano differ from other Venda figurated objects such as drums or divining bowls because of their representational nature, as opposed to the synthetic character of the decorative relief carving on the bowls[45]. Similarities in style of the matano to Shona and Tsonga carving are evident, with two early stylistic trends, "one towards a smooth, rounded concept of nature with an analytic mode, the other tending to angular stylization in which the forms are more synthetic."[46] More modern matano groups tend strongly towards a naturalisism ,often including European clothing (Plate 2.8).

Female matano figures invariably reflect the fertility role of women, most figures indicating a pregnant state (Plate 2.7 a/b). Most of the female matano are painted red,"...the colour men prefer in the complexion of the women they marry..." and have "well defined breasts " and "straight shiny backs"[47]. Further significance is attached to the symbolism of the colours used on the matano. Red is generally associated with young women, red-ochre with fire, menstrual blood and fertility; black is symbolic of older women, (likened to black soot after a fire has gone out); white is associated with young men, (signifying semen); and yellow with older men[48].

A variation on the traditional matano figures represent 'outsiders' or 'foreigners'[49]. (Plate 2.8 a/b). According to Nettleton[49a], these figures are representative of 'Shangaans' with whom the Venda had historical contact. The male 'Shangaan' figures are stylistically distinct from the Venda figures[49b]. In one particular Khombas group one of the 'Shangaans' is shown half

in civilian clothes and half animal skin. His aggressive ,"war-like", nature is indicated by a wooden gun. Sometimes male 'outsider' figures wear denim jeans like those worn by young men returning from the city. The male figure has a female counterpart, who is differentiated from the more traditionaly modest Venda matano figure by her flamboyant and exotic dress[49c].

Animals are also carved as part of the matano, and include the leopard, snake, crocodile, and domestic animals like the goat. The many symbolic attributes of these animals include: the goat, a metaphor for woman, and a domestic animal used in sacrifice to the mother's ancestors; the leopard (Plate 2.9 b), symbolizing the male in his predatory role; the snake (Plate 2.9 a), particularly the python, is important for its cosmological function in Venda mythology; other snakes include the mamba, cobra, puff-adder, and the mythological "rainbow" serpent (khove-ya-vhimbi)[50].

Finally, the Domba are not only attended for their importance on a ritualistic level, but are also enjoyed as a form of entertainment.

"The atmosphere at such shows is not one of hushed awe, but may involve a great deal of laughter and truly ribald commentary from the onlookers. Thus the figures must be seen not only as 'ritual objects' used as part of the "mysteries" of Domba, but also as a form of "folk art". In this they are in direct contrast to the synthetic forms of court art which embody the mysteries of Venda cosmology and are held in awe by most Venda traditionalists. The difference is visible not only in the attitudes assumed to the two categories, but also in their relative sophistication of style. The smooth, polished finish of the court arts and the precis of content is qualitatively different from the figurative naturalism, at times somewhat crudely executed, of the wooden or clay figures."(1984:399)[51].

iii. North Sotho-speakers (Transvaal)

Sotho is a broad general label indicating a large group of peoples loosely affiliated by a linguistic homogeneity. Sotho-speakers have been divided into three major groups:Tswana or Western Sotho; Basotho or Southern Sotho; and Northern Sotho[52]. These three groups emerged properly during the nineteenth century as a result of social and political developments, although they were earlier differentiated by settlement patterns[53].

Tswana (West Sotho) is a name denoting cultural homogeneity rather than a socio-political entity[54]. The Tswana lineage has been traced back to the thirteenth century in the Witwatersrand, whereafter their ruling lineage split up in the fifteenth century giving rise to the Huretshe and Kwene chiefdoms. Both groups were extremely powerful, particularly the Kwena chiefdom during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries from which many Tswana and South Sotho are descended.

Early sources refer to North Sotho-speakers as the Transvaal Sotho[55]. However, in order to distinguish between the Sotho of the South, that is, of Lesotho, the Sotho are divided into those belonging to the Northern and Southern regions of South Africa.

"The line between the South Sotho, who have a negligible carving tradition and the North Sotho can be drawn fairly easily, with the South Sotho being confined to the Orange Free State and Lesotho. But the distinction between the North Sotho and the West Sotho (Tswana) is less clear."(1984:42)[56].

The oral-history of the Northern Sotho goes back to 400 AD[56a]. They consist of a very large group made up of many tribes, each having its own name, and each differing in linguistic and cultural elements. Many of the North Sotho live in the area of

the central Transvaal known as Sekhukhuneland, and a large percentage are the remnants of the BaPedi empire. The North Sotho also include amongst other tribes, the Pulana, Kutswe, Pai, Roka, Koni, Tau, and Lobedu[57]. In the seventeenth century the Pedi succeeded in welding existing Sotho groups into one strong empire, which reached its peak in the nineteenth century. The Pedi are the only known Sotho society to have established the order of a state,prior to the difagane. The hegemony of the Pedi under Thulare was destroyed by Mzilikazi in 1824[57a].

The North Sotho in the Transvaal have been subject to contact with Venda and Lobedu since the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries[58]. The Tsonga also settled in their midst while, on the highveld, the Pedi empire was dominant. Many of the socio-political institutions of the North Sotho are shared by the Venda as well[59]. An example of this cross-cultural exchange is found in the North-Sotho Gananwe of Malaboch who have developed a versatile carving tradition due to continued cultural contacts with other sub-groups. The Gananwe live in the Blaauwberg Mountains and use object-types whose forms have been shared by their Venda neighbours. Thus there is a strong affiliation with the totemic figure of the crocodile, which is also used by the Tswana-Kwena group to whom the Gananwe are related. The crocodile carved from the trunk of tree, is used in male initiation schools[60].

Despite the cultural and political hybridisation of the North Sotho, the carving styles of the sub-groups of the North Sotho have been described[61]. However for the purposes of this study,

only the woodcarving of the Pedi and the Lobedu belonging to the North Sotho will be discussed.

a) Pedi

The Pedi live in Sekhukhuneland which lies west of Potgietersrust, and includes the district of Lydenburg, in the Transvaal. Here a tradition exists of woodcarving used for male initiation ceremonies. Both animal and human figures are used in these ceremonies; human figures for the teaching of social and sexual customs to the initiates[62].

Almost all the known wooden figures of Pedi origin are believed to be missionary inspired, most of these are highly finished, with attention given to clothing andfacial details. Nettleton has located an early pair of figures in Glasgow (collected c 1890) , which appear to be pre-missionary and share the stylistic vibrancy of the later Pedi carvings[63]. (Plate 2.10).

"These figures have square shoulders and hips on a cylindrical torso with arms carved well away from the body. There is a degree of finish to these figures and a rounded conception of the bodily volumes especially in the legs. Further, there is evidence of an interest in mimesis in the rendering of details such as knee caps and shoulder blades, although the hands and the feet are somewhat reduced in form. There is further a tendency for the volumes of the sausage-like legs to be pinched at the knee and the ankle giving a sense of swelling vitality also seen in the bulging forms of the buttocks. The vitality of the figures is enhanced by the bent-legged posture and the way in which the arms are bent with the hands thrusting forwards. This sense of rotund liveliness appears to be a specifically Pedi characteristic and is seen in later Pedi figures as well."(1984:44-45)[64].

A feature of these earlier figures is the rendition of genitalia. Clothing made of skin and beads covers the detailed genitalia, while later Pedi figures have carved clothing.

Nettleton supports J. R. Witt 's theory that the figures of later Pedi woodcarving such as those in the Witwatersrand University collection and the Africana Museum in Johannesburg, are possibly part of a tourist art tradition started by Lutheran missionaries dating from the 1920s and 1930s[65].

Amongst these more modern Pedi wooden figures it is possible to isolate two different stylistic groups. The first group, examples of which are in the University of Witwatersrand ethnographic collection, retains the stylistic features of the Glasgow figures, with the rotund and swelling volumes of arms and legs (Plate 2.11 - Plate 2.12). These figures have both arms and legs carved away from the body, giving them a naturalistic quality not found, for example, in the pole-like closed form carving of the Lobedu.

The Witwatersrand group consists of four figures: a young male (Plate 2.12 b); an older male (Plate 2.11 b); a young female (Plate 2.12 a) and an older female (Plate 2.11 a). A group which "has particular importance in the sphere of social relations and which is present in the symbolic system used in North Sotho, Venda and Shona divination."[66]. The older woman has a long fore-apron and back skirt, showing that she is an older married woman. This figure probably originally held a stick or staff. The younger woman has a short fore-apron and long back skirt, and displays the traditional hairstyle of a Pedi girl who has completed her initiation and is ready for marriage[67]. Of the male figures, there is a younger warrior with a staff in his hand and a traditional snuff box around his neck, and an older married male wearing a long fore-apron and a headress adaptation of the

Nguni headring. (Included in this group is a kneeling/lying woman (Plate 2.13 b), and animal figures such as a dog/crocodile and an ant eater, the presence of which suggests their probable use in tableaux during initiation ceremonies.) The Africana Museum collection includes a crouching/seated young male figure (Plate 2.13 a) . All the figures in the Witwatersrand collection show naturalistic stylistic tendencies with generalised details. They were made by one carver and collected in Sekhuhkuneland[68].

The second stylistic group is exemplified by figures in the collection of the Africana Museum in Johannesburg, which are much more elongated in appearance, the torsos and limbs extending vertically with little of the swelling noted in the first group. An example of a male figure belonging to this second stylistic group suggests a later origin than the Witwatersrand group (Plate 2.14b, right). This figure is more particularized by details such as beard and sandled feet, as well as being stylistically more rigid in appearance. Nettleton suggests the attention to detail in these examples has become more "linear and decorative" giving an "overall impression of a greater 'prettiness'..."[69].

Animal inititation figures are also common amongst the Pedi, but these are made by the Sotho overseers of the initiation schools and placed on the pallisades around the male initiation lodges. These figures are often destroyed at the end of a ceremony[70].

b) Lobedu

The origins of the Lobedu are unknown, however their founding dynasty is believed to be Shona[71]. After 1800 they were ruled by a 'rain queen', and their art of 'rain making' attracted the Pedi

into their domains[72]. According to Maylam[72a] the Pedi language gradually came to dominate the Lobedu. However, while they have become linguistically Sotho-ized their cultural traditions retain much in common with the Venda with whom they are believed to have lived after arriving from the north, possibly from an area near Lake Malawi[73]. Krige[74] is of the view that the Lobedu kinship structures and initiation schools follow North Sotho patterns, but as Nettleton points out with regard to wood carving:

"The Lobedu proper were a small migrant Shona group who established political hegemony over Sotho groups and there is a large Tsonga component in the political group. It is therefore difficult to decide whether the sculpture should be classed as Sotho or Tsonga especially where the style is basically hybrid."(1984:48)[75].

Lobedu figurative woodcarvings fall into two groups[76]: those used for initiation schools; and those placed around the queen's khoro, that is the stockade surrounding the queen's village. Khoro figurative carvings apparently serve as protective symbols, being made as field and 'kraal guardians'. It is recorded that freestanding figures of birds are placed around the stockade surrounding the house of the queen, as well as carvings of human figures on fences inside the compound[77].

In the first group of carvings, the significance of the bird-figure is found in the initiation schools for girls and boys, (vyali and vuhwera). The totemic royal founder ancestor of the Lobedu is the Bird of Muhale (Khiudogane), who is also the ruling spirit of the initiation schools. The bird, which may also be included in the stockade figures, "is the link between two aspects of sacred forces, that are conceived as mysterious, fearful, approached only through elaborate symbolism"[78]. Thus the

bird is a great goma, that is, "something mystical and secret, awesome and esoteric", as well as a symbol of royal ancestors[79].

If the Lobedu originally came from the Shona dynastic line, this could explain the origin of the bird symbolism (the most famous examples being the soapstone birds of the Zimbabwe civilization) which is widespread among tribes that migrated south from north of the Limpopo. In some tribes the bird is used as a protective symbol against lightning hence the name 'lightning bird'. Amongst the Venda the lightning bird is represented as a bird of prey (Raluvimbi). The South Sotho depict the lightning bird as a hammerkop, and among certain tribes of North-West Transvaal, the lightning bird is a flamingo. The soapstone birds from Zimbabwe represent two different bird types: birds of prey, hawk , eagle or a Bateleur type; and a more "conventionalized bird with a fan-shaped tail and square-cut wings, resting on a raised ring"[80].

The second stylistic group of Lobedu figurative woodcarvings known as khoro carvings, are unique to South Africa:

"The small tribe of the Balovedu is reigned over by a queen who also functions as a high priestess and is called modjadi (mujaji). In the capital of this tribe the only concentration of pole carvings in South Africa is found. The style is not homogeneous due to the fact that anyone able to carve can bring his work, even from a neighbouring tribe, when the stockade is due to be renewed." (Witt 1985:25)[81].

Human figures of the Lobedu stockade, known as khoro poles retain the form of the poles from which they were carved, a typical figure consisting mainly of a large head with a vague elongated outline of a torso (Plate 2.15 a/b). The poles vary in height, in some cases reaching two-metres[82]. According to P. Davison, "Headmen from all the districts are called up to provide poles

for the Queen's khoro when it is renewed. In this way the khoro of the capital expresses the solidarity of the tribe."[83].

Lobedu informants, according to Nettleton, suggest that these pole carvings are always of female figures which represent the spirits of past chiefs, they are also said to be spirits of the land. An example is that known as the Joubert figure, taken by General Joubert from the door of Queen Modjadij's house in the Lobedu capital[84]. Nettleton says of this figure:

"The Joubert figure is androgynous, the head with the head-ring and beard presenting the male aspect, but the lower torso with the skirt presenting the female aspect. The androgynous character of the figure is to some extent conditioned by the institution of female chieftainship among the Lobedu, the female figure being given the attributes of male chiefs among the Nguni and North Sotho." (1984:49)[85].

This type of figure is also known to serve as a guardian figure, for protection against lightning. The figure being placed on the apex of the roof of the queen 's hut representing,"spirits sent by our ancestors to guard the village."[86].

Examples of Lobedu figurative carving of human forms are rarely found outside their traditional locations. Nettleton mentions those carvings in the J.Witt Collection in Tzaneen and those collected by Krige which are in the ethnology collection of the South African Museum in Cape Town.

2:3 Mural Painting

The mural painting under discussion is essentially a domestic art form executed on interiors and exteriors of housing complexes, and like beadwork almost exclusively executed by the women in a community[1]. J.Walton and H.Fransen[2] both consider it a unique form of South African folk art.

Historically, it is not known how old the art of mural painting is in South Africa. It is presumed that the first tribes to practice this art form were those who developed the original solid-wall architecture, as opposed to woven, beehive-style huts of Zulu origin[3]. Walton[4] attributes the first paintings to the Sotho-Tswana which would include tribes such as the Tlapm, Huritse, Koena and Pedi. The idea of cylindical buildings for domestic use possibly spread from the North to the Nguni and on to the Eastern Sotho, into the Free State and other areas of the Transvaal[5].

A problem facing any study of mural painting done in the traditional manner in South Africa , is the impermanent nature of the materials used, largely because walls are plastered with clay which must be re-applied and re-decorated after each rainy season. The nature of the non-permanent materials used is possibly one of the reasons why research on mural painting has been neglected . The materials used (generally consisting of clay-based colours, slaked lime for white, and charcoal for black) fade and deteriorate, necessitating repainting at regular intervals. However, the recording of successive changes and

modifications to dwelling complexes over an extended period has provided useful documentary material[6].

This study includes mural painting of the Sotho-speaking people of Lesotho and the Orange Free State; Nguni-speaking people of the Highveld (Ndebele) and the Transkei (Xhosa); as well as mixed cultural groups in the above areas.

The use of naturalistic figuration and geometric shapes varies among these different cultures, however it may be said that there are more geometric-abstract motifs than naturalistic or figurative forms, especially in less acculturated groups. In 1812 and 1829 John Campbell[7] recorded both geometric designs and animal motifs on dwellings in Lesotho. The earliest mural paintings are believed to have originated in this region where animal motifs have an affinity to Bushmen rock painting found in the area[8]. A.Boshier[9] researched naturalistic painting in the Makgabeng mountains in the North-Western Transvaal, where he found evidence of rock-paintings depicting domestic animals such as sheep, which according to his informants were in a style ascribed to Bantu speaking people.

The principal group living in the Makgabeng mountains are the Xananwa, who according to Boshier[10] have adopted the Baboon as their totem. Other groups within this totemic system are the Tlokwa, Koni, Moletjse and Birwa tribes. The last occupants and artists of the caves in the area were the Tlokwa and Koni[11]. However, cliff-dwellng Bantu-speakers, the Dikolobe (The Pig) are believed to have lived in the caves before the Tlokwa or Koni, and are reputedly the artists of some of the rock paintings[12]. In

the same region, in 1916, N.Roberts noted Bushmen paintings apparently over-painted by Bantu-speakers :

"The original efforts of the Bantu are easily distinguished apart from their lack of skill by the crude materials used as paint. In some cases this is nothing but a paste of ashes and water, and many fine specimens of Bushmen work have been hopelessly ruined by having their outlines 'renewed' with this material. The natives explain this practice by saying they admired the pictures on the rocks and hoped by tracing over the earlier works to acquire the artist's power of reproducing the likeness of things seen." (1916: 572)[13].

According to Roberts, however, there are also works by the Bantu-speakers which have 'distinct originality'. Most of these paintings make use of white, and black from charcoal[14].

G.W. Stow[15] observed that some Bantu-speakers had Bushmen mothers, which offers a possible explanation for the occurance of naturalistic influences in murals by Bantu-speakers. In his study on symbolism in Xhosa mural painting, T.Matthews[16] contends that abstraction is more common than naturalism. He presents the view that naturalism is rejected for the sake of expressiveness and rhythmic formalization where "forms and colours are limited to those which make for correspondance rather than divergence"[17], and mural art is equated formally with musical rhythm rather than melody. There is historical evidence to support the notion that geometrical formalization is also a means of proclaiming human control over nature. By geometricizing and abstracting, nature is submitted to a schema, as opposed to an organic synthesis, that is essentially a way of creating order out of chaos[18]. Symbols produced by 'abstracting' from nature are further simplified into basic geometric shapes[19].

Matthews refers to the problem of assessing the degree to which geometricized forms retain their symbolic meaning. In Xhosa

murals particularly, when "the criteria is symbolic rather then visual...as the meaning of the symbols becomes lost, the painters themselves retain only the outer form of the image and reduce it from the level of symbolism to that of abstract abstraction"[20]. The dilemma is one which applies to the study of all traditional arts of so-called primitive societies; what Levi Strauss[21] refers to as moral justification of the symbolic meaning of any custom or institution. When repainting is frequent, and when traditional values are constantly merged with those of "outside" groups or European urban influences, it is fairly common for the original meaning to be lost. Separating symbolic content from decorative form, and trying to identify "internal" and "external" symbolic-decorative influences is virtually impossible without working for a long period with the people who produce the work. Further, it is apparently not uncommon for a particular group to deny meaning in designs and patterns when the symbolic nature is one they prefer not to divulge[22].

Because symbolic meaning is extremely difficult to identify, style and overt content become important when examining mural art. The relationship between the mural art work and the surrounding space it occupies is also significant in the case of traditional painting in a rural environment.

i. South Sotho-speakers (Lesotho; Orange Free State)

Much of the area of Lesotho was originally inhabited by San (Bushmen). Bantu-speaking groups are recorded in the area as early as 1600, where they lived together in relative harmony until the difaqane wars of the nineteenth century. A strong-hold

established by Kwena chief, Mosheshwe, at Botha Bothe in 1820/21 and later at Thaba Bosiu in 1824, survived the unrest and he assumed leadership over the South Sotho-speaking tribes who sought refuge in his mountain fortress[23].

As has been stated, mural paintings in Lesotho were probably the earliest examples of this art form in South Africa. Of particular significance in Lesotho murals are litema patterns of textural grooves worked into the actual plaster, usually in straight or curved parallel lines. An explanation of the origin of litema is found in its symbolic and formal relationship to the ploughed field, tema. Women use forks to make furrowed designs in mud walls; or designs are incised into the wall with fingers when the top coat of mud plaster is still wet[25]. Early Lesotho murals consisted exclusively of the litema technique, with virtually no paint applied to the design. Motifs ranged from lozenges, circles, zigzags, and other geometric forms, to obvious floral patterns, some being reduced to geometric form. In this sense litema is the best example of textural surface interacting with painted motif (Plate 2.18). Many earlier Lesotho muralists also made use of mosaic-type patterning, using small stones embedded in the wall surface (Plate 2.19)[26]. According to R.Levinsohn[27]:

"Multicoloured stones, usually of brown and white are selected to form patterns which consist primarily of various combinations of elipses. These mosaic patterns were previously employed in beaded sheilds used by the Taung people and when they become obsolete the Taung applied their patterns to their huts as decoration". (1984: 27)[28].

Walton[29] notes that the Taung and Tswana tribe who settled in Lesotho introduced the pebble mosaic surface onto walls which faced prevailing wind and rain, thus adding a practical advantage by enabling the wall to last longer.

Of the painting of these walls, H. Junod[30]. refers to Mosotho women who make use of the motif of the triangle in conjunction with a great deal of colour. In most murals, three or four clay-based colours are used, varying from white or light grey, brown, black and yellow, the colours being mixed with a ground of dung or the gum of trees. Certain early designs consisted of large 'all-over' patterns with solid masses of colour, or with bands of colours, either straight or curved, some of which bear an additional reddish brown colour[31]. Up to fifteen different clay-based colours have been recorded in the Zeerust district[32]. Junod[33]. refers to the more recent use of panels rather than 'all-over'patterns, made up of different colours, detailed with acculturated motifs of motor cars, steam engines, and the like. Brushes made from plant fibres are used , while traditional finger painting is also employed[34].

In areas of the Orange Free State and the Eastern Transvaal hybrid styles are found amongst the Sotho and Nguni-speakers. Amongst culturally diffuse groups settled on farms or on the outskirts of urban areas a large degree of decorative freedom is exercised where interiors as well as exteriors of dwellings are integrated into a total art form[35]. According to Walton[36]. the wall surrounding the courtyard often has the most decorative and concentrated patterns; consisting of traditional Nguni geometric patterns ,and figurated or naturalistic motifs. This use of naturalism however, may not be strictly limited to contemporary acculturated areas. Walton cites Campbell's reference to naturalistic motifs such as giraffe, leopard, antelope and elephants as early as 1912[37].

In both the Eastern Transvaal and the Orange Free State architectural elements of domestic dwellings, out buildings and courtyard walls are integrated with painted images. In some cases the Sotho may use litema patterns for the main areas of the wall, while windows and doors are given elaborate frames made of moulded relief patterns, richly painted in various colours. G.F.Rohrmann[38] proposes that the Sotho and Matabele living in the Orange Free State have acquired decorative architectural features such as gables, from the surrounding European architecture. Acculturated groups such as these, sometimes make ornate mouldings, from coils of plaster applied to the wet plastered wall. The finished work is painted with either natural pigments, commercial paint or shoe polish. Rohrmann suggests that this relief moulding is fairly recent (dated 15 years prior to his article c.1970), perhaps as a result of the "process of change and innovation prompted by the constant redecoration" that mural art demands. The same author gives an example of a house, photographed over an eighteen month period, which began as a dwelling decorated soley in the Lesotho litema pattern and gradually elaborated through "redecoration into multi-coloured relief borders filled in with a circular litema design"[39]. Matthews[40] also cites a modern-day practice of painting a false door or window on a wall.

"It is often given the same name as a real window (ifestile), and can even be enclosed in a painted system of light and shadow. Very often the purpose of this device is merely decorative: a pictorial expression of its aesthetic necessity in the painted scheme, but the false window or door to some sanctified place, some place bound in ritual as the indlu (dwelling) always has been, is a device of great antiquity". (1980: 19)[41].

ii. Ndebele-speakers (Transvaal Highveld)

The Ndebele living in and around the Transvaal were one of the first tribes to come into contact with the Sotho-Tswana and to adopt their rondavel building form, as well as the decorative elements of their buildings[42].

Essentially the Ndebele of the Central and Northen Transvaal comprise a group related to the Nguni-speakers of Natal, some of whom made their way to the Transvaal, following Chief Mapoch upon his arrest and removal to Pretoria for trial in 1883 for opposing the Boers[43]. Through a long period of residence among Sotho-speaking tribes the Ndebele assimilated much of Sotho-Tswana culture particularly of the Lake, Maune, Moktlane and Hwaduba tribes of the North, while the Ndzundza also known as the Mapoch, and the Manula further south, retained more Nguni characteristics[44]. The name Mapoche or Mapogga is often given to Ndebele art and refers to the richly decorated village outside Pretoria named after Chief Mapoch, where his followers settled[45].

Contact with Sotho culture caused Ndebele painters to initially imitate litema patterning, however the Ndebele subsequently developed unique and essentially geometric designs in contrast to more organic Sotho patterning. Much of Ndebele painting is done in an 'all-over' manner, covering large wall surfaces[46]. The main wall on which the painting is done is usually the lapa wall, a low front courtyard wall, which is often gabled and includes ornamental or decorative platforms,as well as clay benches built in the front of the wall. Traditionally the Ndebele men construct the dwelling while the women do the painting.

While modern Ndebele painting is associated with bright, bold colours and motifs of a strong geometric nature, the basis of Ndebele design is essentially linear and monochromatic[47]. The traditional colour range was limited to three tones, (dark, medium and light) obtained from natural pigments, with colours ranging from ochres and browns, to slaked lime white backgrounds and black obtained from charcoal[48].

Berman[49] identifies three distinct stylistic and colouristic phases in Ndebele painting which often overlap chronologically. The first phase is characterised by the repetition of simple geometric forms, the chevron, the triangle and divisions of the rectangle, with a mono-chromatic use of blacks, greys and whites often applied in parallel lines of tone which give a graphic resemblance to the inscisions of litema patterns (Plate 2.20). These graphic lines and chevron motifs also resemble the lines of beads in Ndebele bead work.

The second phase Berman describes as symbolic, introducing more complex images symbolizing plants, animals and other environmental elements. It was during this phase (which ran concurrently with the third phase) that a move away from monochromatic to polychromatic format took place. The colour blue was obtained from soap, and green from copper-oxide found in mine dumps near Premier mines[50].

Phase three[51] is characterised by the use of semi-realistic decorative images, especially of modern urban manufactured artefacts and architecture; for example, the stylised images of wrought-iron gates, razor blades, numerals, letters, tea-pots,

clocks, lights, and brick-wall patterns[52]. Berman[53] describes "fanciful interpretations of buildings, with finials and domes, hanging lights and ornamental balustrades"[54]. Although these designs on Ndebele dwellings appear ornamental and "fanciful", they also reflect an industrial reality, images of factories or mine shafts seen around areas such as Pretoria or Brakpan, where many of the muralists' husbands worked as migrant labourers. Similar depictions of urban insignia are found in Ndebele beadwork, for example on aprons and blankets (Plate 2.23). This final phase of Ndebele mural painting is completely polychromatic, making use of synthetic commercial paints such as enamal or PVA, which have almost totally replaced natural pigments (Plate 2.21 - Plate 2.26).

The importance of the transient nature of these mural designs should not be overlooked. Ndebele designs , as intricate as they are, are all the more dynamic for their changeability, as well as in the variety of images taken from the surrounding environment. Originally most of the designs could only be painted in the dry winter months, later to be washed off by summer rains, and faded by sunlight. Thus it was an important seasonal activity to repaint the walls[56]. With the introduction of more durable synthetic paints this intrinsic feature has gradually disappeared. However , the freedom of individual aesthetic expression afforded by new materials and an urban iconography has not reduced the dynamism. Berman[57] suggests that Ndebele aesthetic development has been retarded because of new influences and materials , while Matthews remarks that Ndebele murals with

synthetic paint on smooth plastered walls have the "effect of a stage prop stranded in the veld"[58].

"To the purist, this eclectic transition in which new and untraditional forms are used may seem to destroy the beauty of the classic geometric designs; and it is true that an inferior artist will incorporate the new objects in an imitative and unattractive way. On the other hand it is also true that many good muralists show a remarkable knack of absorbing the European forms into their standard patterns with a remarkable sense of aesthetic refinement. In their work the combination of the new and the traditional does not produce an uncomfortable duality." (Battiss 1967: 20)[59].

iii. Xhosa-speakers (Eastern Cape; Transkei)

Xhosa-speakers are related to the Zulu and Swazi Nguni-speakers and are known as the Cape Nguni. The Cape Nguni consist of various groups including the Gcaleka, Ngqika, Bomvana, Mpondomise, Thembu and Mpondo, who live in the Transkei, Ciskei and other regions of the Cape Province[60].

Mural painting amongst the Xhosa-speakers of the Transkei has been very sparsely documented, compared to the Ndebele. An important thesis by T. Matthews[61] reveals that a vital and prolific painting tradition exists among the Xhosa, particularly of the Eastern Cape.A tradition which also furnishes details concerning Xhosa plant and flower symbolism. Matthews assembled over 400 photographs as evidence that what is possibly the richest mural art in South Africa, is found west of the Ciskei between the Fish and Bushman Rivers in the Eastern Cape[62].

The stylistic tendencies of Xhosa mural painting include both geometric and naturalistic modes of representation. Traditionally the colours used by the Xhosa are red and yellow oxides, white and grey, with black seldom used unless derived from synthetic

sources, such as the black (called mashala) used in Orange Free State Sotho murals which is obtained from motor car batteries. Yellow is derived from natural clay pigment, while red is made from grinding the dampenend top of a slab of hardened clay, called imbhola. Colour symbolism is important in Xhosa painting, suggesting that other mural forms, such as those of the Sotho and the Ndebele may place an emphasis on symbolic colour. Amongst most Southern groups white almost universally symbolises the spiritual impulse. Xhosa sangomas wear white, symbolising contact with ancestral spirits. Red in Xhosa painting symbolises the life of the body and the rhythms of nature, and fertility,that is, the physical impulse as apposed to the white of the spiritual impulse. Red is also equated with the earth and with the colour of blood, as a symbol of sacrifice and/or purification. Xhosa names for colours used in painting are: chalk white, ikalika umhlope; black, imnyama; grey, ingwevu; red oxide, imbhola imbomvu; and yellow oxide, imtubi[63].

Murals are usually painted by Xhosa women (as is the case with other black South African cultures). Painting is a collective activity involving numbers of women under the guidance of a head-painter. Women also engage in other artistic activities such as beadwork and claywork, almost to the total exclusion of men, although there are instances cited by Walton[64] of murals painted by men in the vicinity of the farm mission station 'Farmers Field' near Salem in the Eastern Cape. Here the outsides of rondawels have simple patterns and the interior walls are decorated with plants and in some instaces a combination of plant and human figures[65].

The nature of Xhosa mural painting unlike Ndebele painting, is not generally overall, but consists of painted dados,window and door borders, cornices and ornamental entrances, accentuating the main architectural features rather than covering the entire wall surface. (Plate 2.29 - Plate 2.30) In areas around the Drakensberg, where intermarriage has occured between Sotho- and Nguni-speakers, litema patterns are integrated with painted decoration.

Matthews emphasises the symbolic nature of Xhosa mural painting, for example, the use made of contrasting light and dark, interior and exterior, and the transformation from one to the other. White is frequently used around doors and windows as a protective function to ward off evil spirits . The Xhosa word for white being umhlope meaning pure and innocent. White borders may consist of simple thick bands or stepped geometrical borders[66].

In comparing Ndebele and Xhosa painting Matthews asserts that Ndebele painting is extremely stylistic and formalised while Xhosa painting speaks in a 'vernacular' for all to understand and enjoy, through the use of readily understood organic images such as seeds, flowers and trees. This plant symbolism is a central feature of Xhosa murals and links Xhosa art to the almost universal occurance of plant symbolism in other rural societies:

" That special feeling for the plant world which is so widespread in primitive cultures is due largely to the intimate dependence of these cultures on the environment, to the extent that the environment largely determines the culture." (Matthews 1971: 56)[67].

Examples of mural motifs photographed by Matthews show plant and tree forms such as the gladiolus, rose bush, poppy, aloe, pepper tree, oak tree and prickly pear, as well as maize forms. All are

depicted semi-naturalistically. Spikey and thorny plants found in the Eastern Cape frequently occur in decorative mural motifs in the Grahamstown district. (Plate 2.29 -Plate 2.33) Tree motifs are also common in this area, not only as painted additions, but as symbolic and architectonic elements where actual tree trunks and branches are integrated into the mural and the wall's construction.

Combined with plant and tree forms are chevron and zigzag patterns called izikwere used to depict rivers, rocky mountainous ground or stones. (Izikwere are also found in Xhosa beadwork.) That the motifs on the walls are not meant to be realistic is evidenced by their scale, which is usually very large. (Plate 2.33a)

"As fertility symbols, the monumental plant and flower painting of Xhosa mural art (are) frequently invested with anthropomorphic connotations. They take on human scale and the parts of the plant are laid out like parts of the body, with legs, arms, and large circularheads of plants rising from necks and shoulders." (Matthews 1971: 76)[68].

Where a leaf is enlarged to cover an entire wall, or where the entire plant surrounds a window or encompasses a corner of the dwelling (Plate 2.31 b), the works are symbolic of a continuity between nature and the man-made environment, "...dwellings are decorated with the surrounding growth and brought into accord with nature"[69].

The frequent occurance of symmetry in Xhosa, Sotho and Ndebele mural painting is demonstrated by Matthews who cites an example of a Xhosa painter who, while drawing an explanation of her painting on the ground, drew similtaneously with both hands. According to F. Boas[70] and R. Layton[71] bi-lateral symmetry is a

common feature in rural art, motifs usually having a vertical axis as a central organisational element. Split-representation, an extreme form of bi-lateral symmetry is found, for example, in North American Indian art[72]. Boas sees symmetry as a universal feature of most art, even the simplest decorative art. He cites examples of Australian Aboriginal designs and complex beadwork patterns of British Columbian Indians as examples of this stylistic phenomenon[73]. He goes on to explain:

"Symmetrical motions of the arms and hands are physiologically determined. The right and left are apt to move symmetrically and the motions of the same arm or of both are often performed rhythmically and symmetrically from right to left and from left to right. I am inclined to consider this condition as one of the fundemental determinants in importance equal to the view of the symmetry of the human body and that of animals; not that the designs are made by right or left hand, rather that the sensation of the motions of right and left lead to a feeling of symmetry. " (Boas 1927: 33)[74].

Mural styles distinct from those of the Lesotho, Ndebele and Xhosa traditions have developed in the Southern Transvaal and in the Orange FreeState, largely as a result of different black groups settling in close proximity, but without a dominant tribal influence. Examples in the Transvaal include Swazi and Zulu designs distinguished by large areas of red oxide on a white dun ground with designs based on enlarged playing-card motifs as well as geometricised leaf and flower patterns. A Swazi dwelling near Benoni illustrated by Matthews, has on one side strong diamond playing-card motifs, while on the lateral wall the diamond pattern is developed more freely. (Plate 2.27) A different Swazi dwelling in the same area displays large heart-shapes, while a Zulu dwelling complex near Pretoria depicts large leaf and flower motifs in white, red oxide and dun, reminiscent of Xhosa mural art. Examples such as these show a hybridisation of images from

urban life and a cross fertilization of imagery , similar to those found in urban areas of the Orange Free State[75]. Between Bloemfontein and Kroonstad, Zulu and Xhosa murals reveal influences of Sotho mural styles. In particular, Matthews cites a dwelling painted by a Xhosa woman using a moulded relief pattern with inlaid stones and litema lines in the manner of South Sotho murals. The four triangles of the corner of the house are finished by a surmounted frieze of stylised flowers, closer in style to traditional Xhosa painting[76].

Nowhere in Lesotho, Transkei or Zululand is mural painting as diversified as in areas surrounding towns, where the process of detribalization and urbanisation has stimulated new images and painting techniques. This is particualrly significant with regard to Zulu dwellings, as it would appear that traditionally Zulu-speakers have little or no mural painting tradition. (Largely due to their traditional bee-hive shaped dwellings not having solid mud walls.) The presence of Zulu, Swazi, Pedi, Shangaan and Ndebele speaking people in areas like the Transvaal, has stimulated a wide range of cultural cross-fertilization of a variety of decorative themes, styles and techniques.

CHAPTER 3

EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY URBAN BLACK ART IN SOUTH AFRICA

3:1 Introduction

The outline of aspects of rural art in the previous chapter has shown that traditions of art production exist amongst most of the different black cultures in South Africa, and that some of these can be traced back to the seventeenth century[1]. Although there is no archaeological evidence to suggest an art tradition as ancient as those in other parts of black Africa, it is possible to regard artistic forms such as figurative woodcarving as the continuation and extension of a long-standing tradition[2]. There is no unifying style, like that found in the art of the Yoruba of Nigeria, which defines rural black South African art. There is, rather, a continuity of diverse expressions which originated amongst inter alia the Nguni, Sotho, Tsonga and Venda speakers in South Africa and manifested themselves as distinct art forms before the difeqane wars.

The evolution of urban black art in South Africa is indistinct. Few attempts have been made to understand or explain the division between rural black South African cultures considered to be devoid of artistic tradition, and those cultures which produce individual urban artists. This so-called 'lacuna' in traditional art is often presented as a reason for the freshness of urban black art. M. Slack's opening speech in 1984 at the University of Zululand exhibition of contemporary African art referred to it as a "good thing" that "no real tradition of painting or sculpture"

existed as this was "a great advantage...for the future of Black art...". That is, the supposed lack of traditional art represented "a wonderful opportunity for Black South Africans to produce visual arts completely and uniquely their own."[3].

Ambivalent attitudes towards the artistic influence of the European also exist. On the one hand the European is seen as a corruptive influence whereby,

"...we come to accept the aboriginal art as something belonging to the past and moreover our continual dissapointment in never being able to find anything exciting in contemporary art products of the Bantu led us to expect nothing but the decay of Bantu work though contact with disruptive European attitude." (Battiss 1952:74)[4].;

on the other hand the European is seen as a benefactor, providing fresh impetus from which an inert tradition could spring to life:

"It might be denied that creative artistic talent existed in these African peoples [South African] at all. On the other hand, they may have possessed an impulse to create which had simply remained dormant for a very long time. For something very interesting and unexpected happened when the Africans came into more permanent contact with Europeans: there began to emerge among them at first gradually, but later with increasing power and imagination, new, fresh forms of plastic art." (Battiss 1967:19)[5].

This chapter considers the beginings of urban black art in the early twentieth century in the form of paintings made by four individual and isolated artists - Koenakeefe Mohl, Gerard Bhengu, George Pemba and Gerard Sekoto. Each of these artists grew up in a rural environment, and participated in traditional childhood activities such as moulding animals out of the local clay. They were all educated at mission schools where their talent for drawing or clay modelling became apparent. Parental discouragement (except in Pemba's case) did little to deter their respective careers in art. With little or no formal training each

of these artists began working in a professional capacity in the 1930's, having moved to locations near urban areas. Their work exemplifies the emergence of an urban art distinguished from rural art for a number of reasons. These include new socio-economic influences, brought about by living on the outskirts of towns and cities, the introduction of new subject matter encompassing local and figurative content (presented in a pseudo-naturalistic mode of representation) and the adoption of techniques and materials commonly associated with European art. In this sense these artists fall into the group defined by Graburn as 'Popular Art', whereby artists absorb influences of the surrounding dominant Western cultures. However while the resultant art may adopt art forms taken from European traditions, it nevertheless expresses feelings unique to the social context of the urban black artist.

The second part of this chapter outlines the major influence of black art schools on the development of black art, at Polly Street Art Centre in Johannesburg in the 1950's and Rorke's Drift Art Centre (Evangelical Lutheran Church Art and Craft Centre) in Kwazulu in the 1960's.

3:2 Four Urban Painters

i. JOHN KOENAKEEFE MOHL (1906-1986)

Mohl was born in 1906, in Dinokana, near Zeerust at Serowe in what was Bechuanaland. His father was a sculptor of traditional objects such as chairs and mealie-stampers. As a child he modelled animal figures out of the local clay, "All the boys used to do it but I was a genius, I was above them all"[1]. At school Mohl developed an interest in art, despite discouragement from his teachers. Recognition of his artistic talents came from African and European friends of his grandfather , however, Mohl was sent to Moeding Training Institute (later Tigerkloof Training School) to become a teacher. The principal of the training college, a Father Hale, later succeeded in persuading Mohl's grandfather to send him to an art school in Windhoek, where he was taught by a French teacher, Miss Collac[2]. After three years of studying painting, in Windhoek and then in Dusseldorf, Germany, with assistance from the London Missionary Society and the Lutheran Church, Mohl returned to Bechuanaland, and settled in Sophiatown, Johannesburg[2a].

In 1936 Mohl submitted twelve pictures to the Empire Exhibition held at the Showground at Milner Park, Johannesburg. Two of these paintings were a portrait, Chief Tshekedi, Paramount Chief of Bechuanaland, and a group study, Father's Beloved Son[3]. Mohl's paintings attracted the interest of the British Ministry of Information and works were also bought by private American and European art collectors[4]. In 1941 a Bloemfontein one-person exhibition of Mohl's work elicited the praise of Mr. C. R.

× Moses Tladi (1906 – ?) & Gerard Sekoto both had work on the 20th SA Academy Exhibition, 1939
On this exhi Mohl had 102. Snow morning, Sophiatown

Moikangoa in the African Press[5]. A year later his painting Snow Falling in Sophiatown was accepted by the South African Academy for exhibition at the Duncan Hall in Johannesburg[6]. Mohl was the first black landscape painter to be accepted by this Academy[7]. In 1943 Mohl was again the only black artist to have work accepted for the Academy exhibition. His entry, an oil painting entitled Magaliesberg in Midwinter, (Plate 3.1) was described by S. Job in a letter to The Bantu World in October 1943:

"This work is a wonderful picture of natural scenery. In the foreground there is a road cutting through the hills, immediately disappearing into a downslope: straight across at a distance one sees another tablelike hill a homestead with smoking chimneys on top of a hill, and a small footpath leading to the homestead. Beyond that the misty Magaliesberg mountains come prominently in view in their majestic grandeur."[8]

Job also suggested that the South African Native College at Fort Hare consider employing Mohl to initiate a much needed painting course.

Mohl is cited by H. I. E.Dhlomo as a pioneer in black art in South Africa[9]. In the 1940's he was respected by African intellectuals, writers and artists such as Dhlomo and Gerard Sekoto for his efforts in promoting the cause of art in black South African circles. An article in The Bantu World in 1943[10], compares Mohl to the writer Solomon Plaatjie, describing him as sharing Mochuana (Tswana) origins and the "graceful humility of the conqueror of the translation of Shakespears's 'Julius Caesar' into Sechuana".

In 1944 Mohl opened The White Studio[11] art school in Sophiatown, providing opportunities for black art students to pursue their vocation and promoting a knowledge of fine art amongst the local community. In 1944 Mohl[12] stressed that much black talent lay

buried and that it was the task of blacks themselves to "unearth it, train it and enable it to make full contribution to the culture of our country". The White Studio, a small cream-coloured room set behind Mohl's house at 24 Annadale Street in Sophiatown, also provided exhibition space for Mohl and his students to show work to the public. The students, who included labourers and nurses, received art classes at night and at week-ends. This left Mohl time during the day for his own painting, from which, together with teaching, he appears to have made a living[13]. Mohl was forced to close his studio in the late 50s by the introduction of a zoning law prohibiting the operating of a business in a residential area. Later he went on to establish the Apollo Gallery with the help of a Belgian, Frank van Melten, in whose name the gallery was registered[14].

Mohl's paintings from the 1940's deal almost exclusively with landscape as an expressive means, exploring the quality of oil paint to convey atmospheric affects. The treatment of water scenes which earned Mohl respect during the 1940's is best revealed in Pond Scene and in An Evening on the Vaal River, the later depicting silvery river water, reflecting the dark shadows of surrounding trees. A Quiet Evening at Wemmer Pan, Pond Scene, An Evening on the Vaal River, and Stream Through Black Soil all combine the stylistic modes of naturalism and impressionism. A Quiet Evening at Wemmer Pan is of a pool of water at sunset at a Witwatersrand mine. The theme centres around the 'pan' with discarded mine headgear . Mohl conveys a mood of stillness, using naturalistic colours and the atmospheric affects of light and shade on earth and water[15].

As a black artist in the 1940's, Mohl experienced frustration in trying on the one hand, to encourage the black community to appreciate the value of painting as 'fine art', and on the other to enlighten the outside world as to the emotional and intellectual capabilities of creative black individuals such as himself.

"I wanted the world to realize that black people are human beings and that among them good workers can be found, good artists, and in addition to that I wanted to lecture indirectly or directly to my people of the importance of this type of thing, which of course to them is just a thing. You see there is no difference to them, I mean the ordinary African, between a photograph and a picture. It shouldn't be terribly expensive and if you say a painting is about one hundred rand they get shocked and say, 'What do you mean? What are you selling? Are you selling ten oxen or ten cows?' You see now, I wanted to teach them that this thing is of great importance. It is a different culture from photography, from Camera work, and at the same time I wanted to satisfy my desire".(Mohl 1975, interviewed in Couzens 1985:253)[16].

Mohl's concern, rooted in sociological aspects of art appreciation and education, was to bridge the cultural gap between a rural black suspicion of the practical uselessness of art and his sophisticated understanding of the innate (aesthetic and sublime) qualities embodied in a work of 'fine art'. The latter being an attitude born essentially of a Westernized view point. Mohl's preoccupation with the aesthetic value of art is expressed through a recurring reference to the beauty of nature, by means of the atmospheric affects that pervade his paintings. A vision aligned to a romantic apprehension of the mystery of nature: "Nature is beauty, you see. Near sunset you find that beauty cannot be exhausted." His use of landscape is strongly defended in a report in <u>The Bantu World</u> of 1943:

"He was once approached and advised not to concentrate on landscape painting but to paint figures of his people in poverty and misery. Landscape, he was advised, had become a field where Europeans had specialized and they had advanced very far in perfecting its painting". To which Mohl replied: "In a humble

voice and manner humbler still ... 'But I am an African and when God made Africa, He also created beautiful landscapes for Africans to admire and paint". (Bantu World 1943)[18].

In a sense Mohl's landscapes may be seen as metaphors for freedom, amidst the oppression of black townships. The nineteenth century English Romantic painters , John Constable and William Mallard Turner similarly, turned to landscape as a means of negating the oppression of an expanding industrial reality.

"John Koenakeefe Mohl reminds us that the African is in prison. His realistic, idealistic and impressionist inclinations represent a search for something deeper and greater; the search that is shaping the thinking of the new African and the thoughts that motivate their search are faithfully depicted by Mohl on the canvas." (Bantu World 1943)[19].

As a spokesman for black art education, appreciation and criticism, Mohl provides important insights into the development of black art in South Africa. His opinions are recorded in numerous magazines and newspaper interviews, and have many parallels with black literature of the period. Couzens points out that:

"There was the idea of 'genius'. There was also the idea that black artists can prove to the world in general or white South Africans in particular that black artists are capable of anything other artists can do, at the same time as having a didactic role as regards blacks themselves".(Couzens 1985:253)[20].

Mohl was one of the first professional oil painters in the history of black art in South Africa. Although he was a prolific and dedicated artist, his works are difficult to locate, being mainly in private collections. His work spans from the 1930's into the 1970's with numerous group exhibitions. From the 50s his work reveals a more intensified interest in township life. However, where his landscapes include human figures, the human element is secondary to the atmospheric affects. Paintings such as Miners at Dawn (circa 1970's) and Night, which depict miners

at work, emphasise naturalistic light-effects , with impressionist brush strokes and bright colours[21]. Mohl has consistently been preoccupied with life on the outskirts of the city; where small figures of black people are set against urban or rural landscapes, for example in the paintings, Rain, and Snow (circa 1970's) and Winter Dawn (1963) (Plate 3.1a.). In this sense his work conveys simultaneous facets of town and country life, rarely seen in other artists work; the counter-positions of the two black cultural realities, one rooted in the rural past, in for example Crushing Corn (n/d) (Plate 3.1b.a), Ploughing (1956) (Plate 3.1b.b) and the other in the urban present, in Winter Dawn (1963) (Plate 3.1a.) and Sophiatown: corner Rey and Edward Streets (n/d) (Plate 3.1c.).

In 1965 Mohl exhibited at the Apollo Gallery in Johannesburg, and at the Picadilly Gallery in London, with black painters , Goodlas Gwabe, Ben Macala, Louis Maqhubela, Andrew Motjuoadi, Gerard Sekoto, Durant Sihlahi and sculptors, Sydney Kumalo, Solomon Maphiri and Lucas Sithole. Many of these artists, unlike Mohl, grew out of the post-1950's generation, afforded the encouragement of the Polly Street Art Center in Johannesburg founded by Cecil Skotnes. In the 1970's Mohl participated in group exhibitions representing township life, particularly in the Transvaal. One such exhibition, the Soweto African Arts Project in 1970 in Johannesburg, organized by the black poet and critic Sipho Sepamla , presented papers by Skotnes and Mohl on the issue of black art and artists in the 1970's. Mohl, Sepamla and Skotnes have all been fundamental in voicing the concerns of black education in the arts. In initiating this exhibition, Sepamla

again raised the concerns Mohl had expressed thirty years earlier, regarding the need for contact between both black artists, and between artists and the black public, and for organised discussion on issues in black art. Some of these problems were identified with the lack of a community arts centre for blacks in the Witwatersrand in the 1970's. Sepamla subsequently helped co- ordinate the FUBA (Federated Union of Black Artists) arts project, founded in 1978, in Jeppe Town, Johannesburg[22].

In the 1940's Mohl had already spoken of the social role black South African art and artists could play, in shaping and generating reform in black and white attitudes toward black painting, and towards blacks as people. His views are summed up in his words to Sekoto before that artist's permanent departure for Paris in 1948:

"South Africa or Africa needs artists badly, you see, to paint our own people, our life, our way of living, not speaking in the spirit of apartheid or submission, but there are no artists here and there are no black artists.(Couzens 1985:252)[23].

(See Plates 3.1-3.)

A list of exhibitions and awards of Mohl's work is as follows:

Exhibitions

1936 Johannesburg (Empire Exhibition).
1941 Bloemfontein (solo).
1942 Duncan Hall, Johannesburg (Transvaal Academy).
1943 Transvaal Art Society, City Hall, Johannesburg (solo);
Art Society Room, Stuttafords Building, Johannesburg;
Duncan Hall, Johannesburg (SA Academy).
1946 Johannesburg Art Gallery (SA Academy).
1948 Herbert Evans Art Gallery, Johannesburg (solo);
Johannesburg Art Gallery (SA Academy).
1957 Christ the King Church, Sophiatown (solo).
1963 Apollo Art Gallery, Johannesburg (solo).
1965 Apollo Art Gallery, Johannesburg (group);
Piccadilly Gallery, London, UK.

1970 Gallery Elysia, Johannesburg (Africa Art Project - group); YMCA, Dube, Soweto (Africa Art Project).

Awards

1943 Academy Award[24].

ii. GERARD BHENGU (1910-)

Bhengu was born in 1910 at Centecow Mission, near Creighton in Natal. No one in his family is recorded as being interested in art, although his father, a farm worker at the mission, was interested in music[25]. Bhengu's childhood artistic activities included modelling clay animals and drawing charcoal images on the walls of the family dwelling. He was educated at the Roman Catholic Mission School of Esibomvuini (Esibomvwini) at Centecow, Creighton. In 1925, aged fifteen, Bhengu left school with a Standard V certificate, in order to assist his mother financially[26].

Unique amongst the artists discussed in this chapter, Bhengu's career has been regularly aided by white patrons, which has afforded him the opportunity of working as a full-time artist. His career began in 1926, assisted by Dr Max Kohler, a German doctor; later patrons and sponsors included Bishop Fleischer of Ixopo Mariannhill Mission in 1932; Dr D. McMalcolm and S.Dent from 1934 to 1937; and Dr Killie Campbell from 1942. Bhengu also executed a commission in 1959 for a black herbalist Edward Gwazindoda Tembe[27]. Although the motives of his patrons have been at variance, the interest taken in Bhengu's work reflected a genuine regard for his talent in depicting scenes from tribal life, together with a view to exploiting his works for sale to a white market.

In 1920, Bhengu met Dr Max Kohler at Ixopo Seminary during treatment for tuberculosis . He offered the doctor drawings in return for medical treatment. Kohler recognising his talent employed him from 1926 to 1931 primarily to illustrate the history and customs of the Xhosa Bhaca tribe. Kohler who was researching rural African customs, including traditional medical and healing practices, was also interested in demonstrating to colleagues in Europe that an 'African' from the 'bush' was capable of producing art works which, by European standards, could be regarded as 'art'[28]. Kohler was responsible in this regard, for encouraging naturalism in Bhengu's drawing and painting style. He provided him with reproductions of European old masters, paintings of madonnas, and European landscape scenes. He also exposed Bhengu to a variety of commercially reproduced prints such as magazine advertisements[29]. K.Schlosser[30] records how Bhengu learnt to modulate flesh tones by copying faces on Quaker oats cartons, a technique later applied to black portraits. These formative years in Bhengu's career undoubtably had a strong impact on his understanding of two-dimensional representation, especially in his naturalistic treatment of the human figure, later referred to by E. J. de Jager[31] as photographic in quality. De Jager also regards Bhengu's style as "completely unspoiled by the influence of any contemporary trends in art", yet these very European influences determined the illustrative and photographic tendency in his work. Bhengu's style of drawing figures and faces is reminiscent of late 1920's and 1930's Western poster and advertising styles.

While working for Kohler, Bhengu produced three self-portraits which Schlosser[32] sees as significant of the artists' personal cognition of a shift from rural to urban identity. In Self Portrait (Plate 3.2 a) dated 1927, Bhengu depicts himself standing in front of a rural landscape, dressed in smart white shorts, shirt, striped jacket,and hat. In his hand he shows a drawing he is working on, of a woman in tribal dress, carrying a traditional water pot on her head. The artist stands against a dark, threatening mountain range which seperates him from a small, distant rural village. The painting reveals Bhengu's pride in being an artist and an urban black youth. His painting technique is still naive but there is an attempt at clarity of form and naturalism. In a second self portrait Bhengu is shown as a Zither Player, dressed as an urban man, with buckled belt and wrist watch, while a third self portrait depicts the artist as a strolling musician, in patched clothing. Schlosser[33] suggests that the first of these two portraits indicates Bhengu's success in urban society, and the second is symbolic of the disillusionment he suffered during his years of unemployment between 1937 and 1942.

In 1932 Bhengu left the employment of Kohler, and went to work for Bishop Fleischer at Ixopo, Marionnhill. Fleischer commissioned a series of paintings of scenes from the Bible in the style of Italian masters. However, Bhengu was dismissed in the same year reputedly for socializing instead of working[34].

From 1934 to 1937, Bhengu studied at Edendale Training College, Edendale, under the sponsership of Dr. D. M. McMalcolm, Chief Inspector of Native Education, Natal, and S. R. Dent the District

Inspector of Native Education, Natal.He received a general education, but no art training as it was felt that this might corrupt his unsophisticated style. Bhengu's pictures were sold in payment for his education, board and lodging, with a percentage of the money placed in the artists' savings account. Works of this period include illustrations for school text books, and for Rolfe Dhlomo's book, Izikhali Zanamuhla[35].

In 1936 Bhengu was commissioned to paint a mural frieze commemorating black development from village to university as part of the fiftieth anniversary celebrations of the Department of Native Affairs, in Johannesburg. Despite encouragement from Dhlomo, Bhengu seems to have been unable to cope with the project and was eventually dismissed by the two inspectors for failing to finish the mural. He returned to Natal[36].

In 1942 Dr Killie Campbell commissioned four large paintings from Bhengu, entitled, Feast of The First Fruit, for her private museum in Durban. Only two were completed: Bhaca women singing and dancing at First Fruit Ceremony and Driving the bull into the homestead (Also called Catching the Bull) (Plates 3.2a.a/b)[37]. However Dr Campbell continued to support Bhengu, and in the same year organized a mural commission for the recreation room of the black volunteer recruits' of World War II in the Wesleyan Methodist Institute, Grey Street, Durban. Collectively titled Welcome Soldiers Rest A While, the murals are recorded by Campbell as being the artist's finest works, despite the rapid deterioration in paint quality which left Schlosser unimpressed in 1953 and 1959[38]. The works no longer exist and apart from the description given by Schlosser in 1971[39] and incomplete

photographic reproductions in the Killie Campbell Museum in Durban, there is no documentation of this work. A complete analysis of the ten murals is not possible here, but a brief description follows.

The paintings can be divided into two groups of five: numbers 1 to 5 consist of scenes from rural black life combined with allegorical depictions of political and divine personages, including Hitler, Mussolini, angels and devils, and Zulu ancestor spirits; paintings number 6 to 10 depict scenes from black rural and urban life. All the paintings are illustrative with attention to naturalistic details and vary in size from between 60cm-115cm in height, and 89cm-160cm in length. The scenes are set in panoramic landscapes with large expanses of sky and land, animated by small, black figures (Plates 3.3 & 3.4). The works' didactic purpose is established by the depiction of divine beings, who serve as messengers to the earthly dwellers. Of the various interpretations of the murals' overall narrative, (the original images being dictated in part to Bhengu by a white Officer named Hulley) reference is made to a rebirth of the Zulu nation, which Bhengu claims came to him in a vision[40]. The Zulu nation is placed on a par with the other great nations, allied against Germany and Italy in World War II, as shown in painting 3 entitled Umkosi Wenkosi Yamakosi, (Proclamation of the Paramount Chiefs). England and Zululand are depicted together in the left section of the painting, while Germany, Italy, and the Japanese are placed in the right half. An angel moves towards the gaudily coloured faces of Hitler, Mussolini and a Japanese soldier, pointing a sword towards a high tower on which is a shattered

Swastika. According to Bhengu the angel destroys the power of Germany and her allies. The propoganda in this painting speaks for itself; the power and salvation of the Zulu nation requires its participation in the war. The Church will assist England and her allies, which are "good" as opposed to the "evil" Germany. Paintings 1;4;8 and 9 convey a secondary theme of the affects of Western influences on Africa, (in this case Zululand). The corruption of money, Western clothing styles, and alcohol, are contrasted with the beneficial Church, medical-care services, and technological aids such as ploughs and motor-cars[41].

It is clear that by 1942 Bhengu was confident in depicting the human form in a variety of positions, demonstrated by the charcoal and water-colour illustrations for Kohler's ethnological surveys, (published circa 1941-2), entitled Marriage Customs in Southern Natal and The Isangoma Diviner and by the paintings for the Grey Street murals[42]. Bhengu's use of charcoal is particularly effective in graphic descriptions of Zulu healing practices, and in depictions of mythological creatures from traditional folklore, for example 'uTokoloshe',and 'Umthakathi feeding and riding his familiar baboon'in The Isangoma Diviner. (Plates 3.5 & 3.6)

His illustrative and imaginative skill was taken further in one of the two billboard advertisements made for the Tsonga herbalist E. G. Tembe in 1959, showing scenes from the life of the famed Tsonga herbalist Mabele Made, to whom Tembe claimed to be related. The great izinyanga (healer) is depicted surrounded by real and fictitious wild animals, in a wooded landscape where he demonstrates his ability to bewitch lightning. The lightning

magically assumes the shape of a large green and yellow anthropomorphic snake, through which Made controls all animal and human life (Plate 3.7)[43].

From 1940 until 1959 Bhengu worked for the firm Payne Brothers in Durban, where he became something of a living artistic exhibit[44]. In 1951 a window poster which advertised him as the company's resident artist read,"Visit the Exhibition of paintings and see the celebrated Zulu Artist"[45]. During these years Bhengu produced popular portraits of tribal Zulu men and women for sale to a tourist market. The above advertisement was surrounded by examples of his sepia wash portraits of black men and women in tribal dress. (Plates 3.8 & 3.9). From this point onwards Bhengu's work diminished in originality, with portrait motifs being repeated with only slight variations of detail, such as necklaces, animal-skin clothing, tribal headrings and hair styles. Bhengu adopted a formula for depicting the 'Zulu' which like the tourist attraction of the 'Zulu rickshaw boy', catered for the exotic expectations of European visitors to South Africa in the 1940's and 1950's. To this end there is a certain sentimentality in Bhengu's work and in its appreciation:

"His human studies, specially portraits reveal an exceptional understanding of his people, and humanity in general. Portraying virtually every human quality. There is the sincerity of the child in his children's studies; the vitality, mischief, humour and even arrogance of his young girls and boys;joie de vivre, maternal love, sacrifice, faith and despair, humour and pride which radiate from his adult portraits." (de Jager 1975:)[46].

Bhengu is cited by Dhlomo[47] as victim of what he calls that 'insidious doctrine' whereby he, like other black artists , is encouraged to be as 'natural' as possible, an attitude which has done all the more damage to black art because the "protagonists

of this pernicious doctrine are the so-called friends of the African." To this end the ethnocentric idea of 'natural African genius' reveals similarities of distortion to that of the commercial value placed on black art as pointed out by G.Younge :

"In South Africa ..." commercialism "...takes on an extra dimension, in that economic exploitation of black artists is justified on the grounds of the supposed inferiority of African culture (note for instance the derogatory nuance in the term 'primitive'). This leads to the promotion of forms of black art which are orientated towards 'ethnic' and 'tribal' standards." (1979)[48].

(See Plates 3.2 - 3.9).

A list of exhibitions and commissions of Bhengu's work is as follows:

Exhibitions

1940-1959 Exhibitions at Payne Brothers Department Store, Durban.

Commissions

ca.1934-36 Illustrations for Izikhali Zanamuhla by Rolfe Dhlomo.
1936 Mural freize for 50th anniversary celebrations of Department of Native Affairs in Johannesburg. (never completed).
ca.1940-42 Illustrations for Marriage Customs in Southern Natal and The Isangoma Diviner by Dr.M.Kohler.
ca.1942 Four Feast of first fruits pictures commissioned by Killie-Campbell (2 completed).
1942 Frieze of 10 murals in the recreation room for black volunteer recruits at the Wesleyan Methodist Institute in Grey Street, Durban (commission organised by Killie-Campbell).
1959 Billboards commissioned by E.G.Tembe (Herbalist) (2 completed).

Collections

Africana Museum, Johannesburg; The Campbell Collections of the University of Natal, Durban; University of Fort Hare, Alice[49].

iii. GEORGE MNYALUZA MILWE PEMBA (1912-)

Pemba was born in 1912 at Hill's Kraal, Korsten village, outside Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape. At the age of eight Pemba began to paint, inspired by his older brother, Timothy, who reputedly enjoyed adorning the walls of the family house with pictures of wild animals[50]. Timothy taught Pemba to model clay oxen and to carve wooden sticks, and his father encouraged his drawing, buying him crayons and paints[51]. Pemba's father, who worked for W.M.Cuthert and Company in Port Elizabeth, would take his son's drawings to show to the staff, who in turn sent portrait photographs for Pemba to copy[52]. In 1928, when Pemba was sixteen years old, he won praise for two drawings copied from the Eastern Province Herald , exhibited at the annual show in the Feather Market Hall, Port Elizabeth. Thereafter he won a Grey Scholarship enabling him to further his post-primary education at Paterson School, Port Elizabeth. His later education consisted a teacher- training at Lovedale Training College, Lovedale.

In 1931, Pemba stayed at Fort Hare with Ethel Smyth, sister of Bishop Smyth who was warden of the men's hostels affiliated to the South Arican Native College. Pemba attended art classes with Ethel Smyth and learnt the rudiments of water-colour painting[53]. During this time the South African painter R.H.W. Shepherd (b.1909-) recommended Pemba design the cover of the book Nolishwa, by H.M.Ndawo published by Lovedale Printing Press[54]. The foreward to the book emphasised the importance of the collaboration between black author, black artist and black press. Pemba acknowledged that Lovedale Press 'turned his hobby into a paying concern'[55]. He worked at Lovedale Press for the following

five years, during which time he completed a teacher-training course, illustrated brochures for the South African Institute of Race Relations and text books for the Johannesburg Bureau of Literature for Adult Education[56]. and pursued his own painting. R.M.Agar O'Connel's book Iintsomi:Bantu Folk Stories, Lovedale Press[57]., (Plates 3.10,a & b), and an African version of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress published in London, were both illustrated by Pemba in the 1930's[58]..

In 1931, encouraged by Professor D.D.T,Jabavu (of whom he painted a portrait) and Professor de Jager, Pemba went to Fort Hare University College where he studied painting for two weeks. In 1937 he received a Bantu Welfare Trust grant enabling him to spend five months studying painting at Rhodes University under Professor C. Winter-Moore[59]..

Like most other black South African artists Pemba has had to paint in his spare time while supporting himself by doing other forms of work including teaching, commercial art, clerical work and shopkeeping. Black playwright H.I.E.Dhlomo, who met Pemba in 1944 , recalls how he complained of the time wasted on drudgery, 'miscalled work'[60]. After several years of working as a clerk for the Native Administrative Department in Port Elizabeth, Pemba was persuaded by Sekoto and Mohl to freelance full-time as an artist[61]..

In 1944 Pemba was commissioned to paint scenes from black tribal life by the Bantu Welfare Trust, an organisation which was important in the 1940's for promoting black South African art, literature, and music as well as assisting blacks to study

overseas[61a]. While recording the indigenous culture of the Xhosa in water-colours, as part of the Bantu Welfare Trust project, Pemba confirmed to Dhlomo his belief in tribal life as a worthy subject for great art. The Natal artist Barbara Tyrell (b. 1912) also developed an interest in illustrating tribal life and costume, particularly of black people in Natal in the 1940's. Pemba was introduced to her water-colour illustrations in 1947 when, together with the three other Natal artists (Bhengu, Ntuli and Muguni), Pemba and Tyrell exhibited[62] at a beadwork and painting exhibition organized by Dr Killie Campbell[63]. In Pemba's water-colours (dated 1970's) of indigenous Xhosa custom and tribal dress, now in the University of Zululand collection, it is possible to discern stylistic similarities to Tyrell's illustrations, which have been widely exhibited and reproduced in books on tribal black South African costume. Examples of Pemba's work such as A beaded girl on her way to a party (1974) (Plate 3.11 b (left)) and A Xhosa married woman (1973) (Plate 3.11 b(middle)),may be compared to Tyrell's Ndebele Bride (Plate 3.11 a)[64].

Pemba's work has largely been promoted by Prof.de Jager at the University of Fort Hare as well as by the University of Zululand. He has exhibited widely within South Africa and has sold his work to numerous overseas collectors. In 1979 he was awarded an honoury Master's degree by the University of Fort Hare[65]. Despite this, Pemba is relatively unknown in South Africa. Like Mohl and Bhengu, he is a pioneer in black South African painting, and is essentially self-taught, learning by trial and error and with some guidance from other black artists. Pemba's meeting with

Sekoto led to a significant development in his painting, and a change to oil painting[66]. Contact in the 1940's with Sekoto and Dhlomo developed his artistic initiative and Dhlomo regarded Pemba as one of the 'progressive '[67] black fine artists of his day[68].

As a painter of his people Pemba draws his subjects both from rural scenes and urban township life, making group studies or simple portraits of men, women and children. His own comments on his work are characterised by modesty and humility,"I am not looking for acknowledgement.. I am just painting for myself and my people"[69]. His painting, whether of urban subjects, rural landscapes or historical subjects (such as tribal chiefs like Tshaka and Moshoeshoe) is influenced by his language and cultural origins as a Xhosa. However, he is clear that he paints not as a Xhosa only, but as an 'urban Black artist' and it is for his viewers to judge whether or not his art is representative of a wider South African context[70]. Dhlomo wrote in 1944, that while Pemba saw his role clearly as a painter of his people, he nevertheless "... also believed that an artist must be well-versed in the political, social and economical problems of the contemporary African scene so that he can express the feelings, aspirations and will of the people". In this sense Pemba's work refers to social life, rather than to politics[71].

De Jager[72] remarks that Pemba's work is completely uninfluenced by modern artistic trends. Although the artist has developed a style unique to his use of oil paint, such a generalization is debatable. His work in fact reveals a tendency towards European oil painting styles of the nineteenth century, particularly

Naturalism. Initially he was influenced by Sekoto's handling of oil paint, with a use of strong, broad brush marks, bright colours, and sharp tonal contrasts. This use of tonal contrast is possibly also a residue of water-colour technique, as for example in Xhosa Poet Mqhayi (1939) (Plate 3.12 a). Characteristic water-colours, with strong tonal contrasts and a naturalistic style include Portrait of Older Woman Sitting (n/d) (Plate 3.13 a), Old Man with Pipe (n/d) (Plate 3.13 b) and Portrait of Xhenu (n/d). Portrait of Older Woman Sitting depicts an old black woman,wearing simple Western-type clothing, with contrasts of light and shade on her face, scarf and dress. Tonal contrasts and the painterly treatment of the face and hands is reminiscent of Van Gogh's Potato Eaters (1885). Broad brush strokes with a minimum of colour, convey the subject with uncompromising honesty and simplicity. In water-colour and oil paint Pemba's creates a 'photographic' quality, reducing forms to simplified planes of light and dark with few in-between tones.

Oil paintings of group figure studies such as Dancing Women,(n/d) (Plate3.13 b), Nongase (n/d),Fruit Vendor" (1968) (Plate 3.14 a), Hospital Scene (1969) (Plate 3.14 b),At the Clinic (n/d), Gambling Youths (1975) (Plate 3.15 b) and the Newspaper Vendor (n/d), combine expressionist colour with naturalistic style. While Pemba's treatment of his subjects excludes expressionistic distortions of form, his colour is non-representational, favouring bright reds, blues, greens, and yellow as well as warm browns. The mood of these paintings is conveyed through this use of colour .Fruit Vendor exemplifies Pemba's later use of intense hues and rich pallet. A female fruit-vendor pushes her laden cart

down an ochre road, crossed with the long blue shadows of cypress trees, past red-roofed cottages set against yellow wheat fields, on the outskirts of town. The colourful fruit on the cart, the venvor's blue head-scarf, red jersey and white apron, have Pemba's characteristic decorative colour and bright light, comparable with the landscapes and figures in Maggie Laubser's paintings (1886-1973).

At the Clinic, Hospital Scene and Gambling Youths represent Pemba's scenes of city life, recording, for example, the social activities of black youths,wearing city fashions playing dice on a street pavement, or scenes at hospitals and clinics. At the Clinic depicts black patients seated on wooden benches in a bare waiting- room. A sympathetic note is added by a woman breast-feeding a baby and an old man smoking a pipe oblivious of a NO SMOKING notice on the wall. Portrayals such as these exemplify Pemba's compassion, and in the words of M.Tyala[73], his desire,"to plough back into the black community that which has made him head and shoulders above most black artists; that which has earned him a reputation as probably the most notable black painter south of the Orange River."

"In addition to sketches of primitive life, he is recording the urbanization of the African people with an intimacy and knowledge such as few Europeans could possess, Some of his pictures of African preachers in church or roadway, of African young men at factory doors, of 'gramaphone dances', of demure maidens come to town, and even of shebeens, are remarkable for their fidelity to life and artistic power."(Shepherd 1952:10)[74].

The only place blacks have of seeing Pemba's work is at his home and at occasional township exhibitions. He admits (like most black South African artists) that he paints for a white market which accordingly has both an appreciation of his work and the

money with which to buy it. While Pemba is interested in politics, he has chosen not to allow political issues to affect his work . His political concerns incline towards the problem of education in black schools[75]. He reaffirms the enormous wealth of talent wasted in the townships, mainly because children and adults fail to get the chance to develop artistically and advocates strongly that art education be offered in black schools. "It is only a solitary self-made man like myself who gets on by trial and error who ever gets any recognition"[76].

Concern over artistic ignorance and the lack of art education facilities within the Port Elizabeth black community, has led Pemba to argue for the establishment of black cultural centres within the townships.

"This is an area that requires immediate attention. The lack of art appreciation among black people is disturbing. You cannot tell them anything about music but art is like a foreign language".[77]

Speaking further of the new concerns of young black artists' subject matter he states that:

"Some youngsters, however, are showing glimpses of creativity. But then their only speciality is revolutionary material. They are not drawn so much towards portraits and other aspects of painting. They are concentrating solely on works that depict the present political climate, works that reflect the current ideological struggle".[78]

Pemba lives and works in New Brighton township ,Port Elizabeth, where he continues to paint scenes from life around him, as well as drawing on images from Xhosa history. More than ever, Pemba is aware of the importance of art in reflecting the past and present,and in shaping identities of black South African people. (See Plates 3.10 - 3.15).

A list of exhibitions, awards, commissions and collections of Pemba's work up to 1980 is as follows:

Exhibitions

1945 Johannesburg Art Gallery (SA Academy).
1947 Exhibited in a beadwork and painting exhibition with Gerard Bhengu, Hezekiel Ntuli, Jabulani Ntuli and Barbara Tyrell, organised by Killie-Campbell.
1948 Old Mutual Building, Port Elizabeth (solo).
1951 University of Fort Hare, Alice (Graduation Ceremony Exhibition).
1960s Rink Street, Port Elizabeth (solo).

Awards

1937 May Esther Bedford Competition (first prize).
1979 University of Fort Hare (honorary degree).

Commissions

1944 Bantu Welfare Trust (Scenes of black tribal life).
1930s Cover for Nolishwa by H.M. Ndawo (Lovedale Press);
Illustrations for Iintsomi: Bantu Folk Stories by R.M.Agar O'Connel (Lovedale Press);
Illustrations for an African version of Bunyan's Pilgrims Progress;
Portrait of Prof.D.D.T.Jabavu.

Collections

The Cambell Collections of the University of Natal, Durban; University of Fort Hare, Alice; University of Zululand[79].

iv. GERARD SEKOTO (1913 -)

Sekoto was born in 1913 at Botshabelo Lutheran mission station in the Middelburg district of the Northern Transvaal. His father was a teacher at the mission school which gave Sekoto access to books, pictures, and materials for drawing and painting. Thus, while participating in traditional animal clay-modelling, Sekoto also developed a talent for two dimensional representation, drawing scenes from life at the mission, including architectural and human studies[80].

In 1927 Sekoto went to Botshabelo Teacher Training College, in Middleburg. Thereafter he studied at the Diocesan College, in Pietersberg in the Transvaal, and was taught water-colour painting by a teacher who recognized his artistic talent[81]. In 1934 he moved to the Anglican Teachers Training College, 'Gracedieu'. Here he met Ernst Mancoba, a Xhosa-speaking woodcarver whose work concentrated on ecclesiastical subjects. Mancoba took an interest in Sekoto's talent and pursuaded him to consider a career in art.[82]

Mancoba and Sekoto both moved to Sophiatown outside Johannesburg in 1939. They attended art classes with Reverend Roger Castle who taught black students in his spare time at St. Peter's School in Rosettenville, Johannesburg. Sekoto first exhibited in 1939, with a group of Castle's students at the Gainsborough Galleries in Johannesburg, gaining the attention of white art patrons and artists[83]. In the same year the South African Academy invited him to exhibit two water-colour paintings[84], The Barber's Shop and Gerty Street (the street in which Sekoto had initially stayed with his cousin Fred Norman in Sophia Town), and Walter Battiss asked him to exhibit with the New Group. The New Group was formed in 1937 by a group of artists whose aim was to promote modernist 'progressive' trends in art, opposing a certain conservativism in South African art. Gregoire Boonzaier and Terrence McCaw[85] two of the founder members, were according to Berman,

"... outspoken in their contempt for the current condition of South African art and went on record in the Cape Times of 16 February 1938 with the statement that the New Group would 'kick against junk', their slogan being 'No Schoolgirl Junk'." (1983 :308)[86].

Certain members identified with a more radical political orientation, for example Boonzaier openly stated his involvement in the "left- movement"[87]. Members of the New Group who knew and supported Sekoto included Walter Battiss, Lippy Lipshitz, Alexis Preller and Judith Gluckman, (the latter introduced Sekoto to the technique of painting with oils on canvas.)[88] Sekoto became the only black member of this 'radical' association of South African artists in the 1940's.

In 1942, Sekoto moved to District Six in Cape Town. The environment of the Malay quarter and District Six[89], with its picturesque architecture and streets , shops and cafes, 'local characters', women, children, fruit and fish vendors and 'skollies' (vagrants), provided Sekoto with vibrant and colourful subjects. Here his vigorous style developed , a style which L. Lipshitz compared with twentieth century Mexican painters, recalling the emblazoned "...'sun blast' tints of Mexican masters like Riviera and Orozco"[89a]. This comparison is valid in terms of Sekoto's colour and style, rather than subject matter. His use of expressionistic form and his reference to the daily life of the urban black South Africans makes him comparable to the later Mexican artist Siqueiros and his followers in the 1930's who saw themselves as exponents of art for the Mexican 'people'[90]. Unlike Siqueiros however, Sekoto never used art to a political end. His painting depicts the 'new African' and detribalised black masses in "native location street scenes"[91].

"Sekoto is primarily concerned with these townsmen, with the impact of the so-called civilization on them; with the African workers of the streets and factories, with the labourers, servants, lorry drivers and location dwellers. Sekoto unlike Preller and Irma Stern (the interested European), is more at home

as a painter in Sophia Town, in Langa, than in a Mapoga village."(Lipshitz 1951:20-21)[92].

Unlike the other three artists discussed in this chapter namely, Mohl, Bhengu and Pemba, Sekoto made the life of township blacks his major subject. Furthermore his style is not in a naturalist mode, but leans towards 'expressionism'.

His preoccupation with township life earned his painting, and that of black artists to follow in the 1950's and 1960's (see Chapter 4), the label 'township art', a term which is as exclusionist as the term 'tribal art'. Painters living in South African townships are not necessarily interested in depicting only township scenes, and a distinction should be made between the subject matter of so- called 'township art', and/or the locality of the artists place of residence. Not all urban black artists are 'township' artists. The term may be taken to apply to a particular genre of urban black art. What is relevant is Sekoto's presentation of township life as valid material for South African art, and the acceptance of it as such within certain white art circles, which made Sekoto unique in the 1940's. Lipshitz saw Sekoto as unique by virtue of his being black and an artist, "No European can possibly possess and master the same intricate and peculiar knowledge of South African Bantu life and type..." and heralded Sekoto as "...the only Bantu artist who can paint sincerely and vividly the life and struggles of his people without glamour and varnish."[93].

Sekoto's stylistic importance lies in his rejection of Naturalism. In expressing a personalised vision of urban black life, he presented his subjects in an expressionistic mode hitherto not encountered in black South African art. Having no

entree to academic formalism or inclination for romanticising his subjects, Sekoto rather developed the formal qualities of paint, form and colour . The modification of form and colour, together with the gestural brush mark were compared by Sekoto to the grace and rhythym of notes in music, and were regarded as more important than the subject matter[94]. It is therefore all the more ironical that Sekoto's painting captured the white public's attention for its township content. Certain art 'critics' however, continued to deny that an 'African' was capable of artistic professionalism, and a newspaper review of 1939 referred to Sekoto's paintings at the South African Academy as "... striking painting by a native house boy"[95].

Sekoto painted subjects which he found personally moving, often of a cheerful and humorous nature, such as Sixpence a Peep (circa 1940's)(Plate 3.20 b),and The Proud Father. Paintings of street scenes (Plates 3.16 & 3.18) which at times depict the deprivation and squalor of township high-density living, were not necessarily meant as conscious socio-political statements. In his own words, "the point was not that of provoking" and, "When I handled a picture I really wanted a brightness, light."[96] It is an oversimplification to maintain that Sekoto was impartial to his subject matter. It was the opinion of Ahmed Osman, an aquaintance of Sekoto's from District Six, that in spite of his political detachment, Sekoto felt a sense of political inequality and dissatisfaction which partially precipitated his move to Paris in 1948[97].

Before leaving for Paris Sekoto exhibited at the Argus Galleries, in Cape Town, at the Gainsborough Galleries in Johannesburg and

at the Christie Gallery in Pretoria. In 1947 he held a one-man exhibition in Pretoria which included the paintings, Self Portrait, The Song of the Pick (Plate 3.17) and Sixpence a Peep (Plate 3.20 b). Success in certain art circles however, did not mean that Sekoto compromised his art, he continued to be responsive to what Jordan Ngubane described as " progressive influences in Western art."[98]. Ngubane continues,

"This has not driven him to the false position where he has to pander to the vulgar tastes of some of those who patronize art in this country. He has consistently refused to see the African as a picturesque creature. To him the acquisition of more skill has meant he must paint with deeper feeling for and active sympathy with that African whose soul is daily being crushed and bruised in his own Africa." (Inkundla Ya Bantu:1949)[99].

Sekoto left South Africa to live permanently in Paris in 1948. Prior to his departure he expressed to Mohl his need to live in Europe saying,"I must get to Paris, I must get to Paris...a man's place is where a man is free, where a man finds freedom."[100]. Funded in part by the Bantu Welfare Trust, Sekoto left to improve his painting technique and widen his horizons in the city he regarded as most free from racial and artistic prejudice[101]. At the time of his departure certain South African artists and critics viewed his move with doubt, fearing he would lose the incentive to paint once he was removed from his African source[102]. Lipshitz stated that,

"Fortunately he was able to meditate and to struggle with his problems as an African and painter and absorb himself in his subjects, creating a body of compelling works before leaving for Paris in 1948." (1951:21)[103].

Initially Sekoto struggled to make a living in Paris, supplementing his meagre income by singing African folksongs in night-clubs and cafes. He painted by day in a small dark hotel room on rue des Saints Peres. In 1949, undernourished and

depressed Sekoto suffered a nervous breakdown. In the same year Sekoto's work was included in an exhibition of South African art at the Tate Gallery in London, where he was the only black artist represented[104]. This exhibition (which travelled to Amsterdam, Brussels and to the National Gallery in Washington) ,and subsequent exhibitions in Europe and America, helped to establish Sekoto's reputation and made him one of the first individual black African artists to be internationally recognised[105].

Sekoto's post-1950 paintings are considered by E. Berman and D. Lewis to be lacking in the immediacy and perceptiveness of his earlier South African works[106]. His later works have a tendency towards being cliched and decorative, possibly as result of the fashionable stylistic influences of abstract painting in France[107].

"Aesthetically he became a 'displaced person' teetering between two disparate cultures. Though he continued to paint African subject matter his memory of Africa was distorted by immediate experience (Battiss has described such paintings as 'quotations'); the former reality was displaced by and idealized dream of home and the conviction of emotional identification receded from his work." (Berman 1983:416-417)[108].

The paintings Mother and Child (n/d),Children at Prayer (n/d), The Wedding Dance (n/d), Basuto Women (c.1952/3) (Plate 3.21a.a) and Women in the Fields (c.1952/3) (Plate 3.21a.b) from Sekoto's Paris phase, are marked by, what Battiss refers to as a "straining of memory"[109]. Head of a Mapogga (n/d) (Plate 3.21 a), shows the influence of West African masks, with a flattening of the 3- dimensional forms into pattern and linear notation, producing a decorative quality. Negro Clarinetist (n/d) (Plate3.21 b) examplifies Sekoto's subjects taken from Parisian city life, which include street scenes and jazz musicians .

"These studies are often executed in deep blues accented by touches of yellow and orange. Dark blue combined with an impasto technique and dramatic colour contrasts of light and dark results in strong and forceful pictures. Some elements suggest a relationship to traditional African sculpture; for example, the bulging, heavy-lidded eyes can be related to various African styles, and the fleshy noses with clearly demarcated nostrils are similar to those found in Yoruba and Benin work." (Mount 1971:169)[110].

Although much of Sekoto's work in Paris reveals styles derivative of European painting, he has asserted that living away from South Africa has had the beneficial affect of bringing him into closer contact with African styles of art.

"Today I can express myself in Paris in a style purely African, but I am ready to come back to my native land to stimulate my artistic origins in a country so rich in subjects so fertile for inspiration of the artist." (Sekoto, 1961:2)[111].

Sekoto has chosen to remain in Paris , although he would like to return to South Africa should the political situation change. Self-imposed exile has been the fate of many black South African artists and intellectuals (Mancoba left for Paris shortly before Sekoto), who have experienced, in Couzens words, "..one of the two options which, tragically were becoming mutually exclusive in post-war South Africa: exile and 'freedom' or staying close to one's inspiration and 'oppression'."[112].

To some extent Sekoto has maintained a position as a South African artist. Prior to his departure he was emphatic that wherever he painted, his roots as an African and his back-ground in South Africa would not be denied.

(See Plates 3.16 - 3.21).

A list of exhibitions, awards, and collections of Sekoto's work up to 1980 is as follows:

Exhibitions

1939 Selbourne Hall, Johannesburg (SA Academy);
Pretoria (solo);
Gainsborough Gallery, Johannesburg.
1940 Selbourne Hall, Johannesburg (SA Academy).
1941 Duncan Hall, Johannesburg (SA Academy).
1942 Gainsborough Gallery, Johannesburg;
Duncan Hall, Johannesburg (SA Academy).
1944 (New Group).
1945 Cape Town (two-person exhibition with sculptor Louis Maurice).
1947 Vincent Gallery, Pretoria;
Gainsborough Gallery, Johannesburg;
Christi's, Pretoria.
1948-49 Tate Gallery, London, UK;
Netherlands; Belgium; France; Canada; USA;
SA National Gallery (Exhibition of Contemporary SA Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture);
Paris, France (Exposition de la France d'Outremer).
1949 Galerie Else-Clausen, Paris, France (solo).
1950 Vincent Gallery, Pretoria.
1951 Stockholm, Sweden.
1952 The Castle, Cape Town (Van Riebeek Tercentenary Exhibition).
1953 Bulawayo, Rhodesia (Rhodes Centenary Exhibition).
1954 I.D. Booksellers, Cape Town.
1955 Petit Palais, France (group).
1956 Galerie Art Premier.
1960 (Salon d'Automne);
Lawrence Adler Galleries, Johannesburg (The Year's Findings).
1961 Galleria Santo Stefano, Venice, Italy.
1963 Durban Art Museum (Art SA Today).
1964 Nemours, France (African paintings).
1966 Senegal (First Festival of Negro Artists);
Pretoria (Republic Festival Exhibition).
1967 Theatre Daniel Sorano, Senegal.
1968 SA Association of Arts, Pretoria;
Senegalese Embassy, Paris , France;
Galerie Marthe Nochy, Paris, France.
1969 CH. Colin, Paris, France.
1970 Galleri BB, Denmark;
Gallery Randers, Stockholm, Sweden.
1973 Galerie du Marais, Paris, France.
1975 Atlantic Gallery, Burg Street, Cape Town.
1978 Galerie Art Premier, Paris , France.
1980 Maison d L'Afrique, Paris, France.

Awards and Honours

1937 May Esther Bedford Competition (art section -second prize).
1948 Sekoto's painting used on poster for the Exhibition of SA Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture held at the Tate Gallery, London, UK.
1958 Sekoto's poster chosen for the Second Congress of Negro Writers and Artists in Rome.
1964 Exhibition of African Art, Nemours, France (awarded prize).

1968 XIX Prix International de Peinture de Deauville (Diplome Officiel).

Collections

Johannesburg Art Gallery; Pretoria Art Museum; University of Fort Hare, Alice; University of South Africa (UNISA), Pretoria; William Humpherys Art Gallery, Kimberely; University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.[113]

3:3 Polly Street Art Centre, Johannesburg (1948-1960)

Artists from the Polly Street Art Centre represent a flowering of 'township art' in the 1960's and 1970's, although not all the artists of the Polly Street school worked within the township genre. Those artists who refer to township subjects and may therefore be considered 'township' artists, include Ephraim Ngatane, Julian Motau, Winston Saoli and Durant Sihlali; while artists such as Sydney Kumalo, Lucas Sithole and Ezrom Legae are concerned with different subject matter. (See Chapter 4)

Polly Street Art Centre began as 'back-yard' literacy classes for black adults, co-ordinated by a committee under the auspices of the Johannesburg Municipality in 1948[1].

"In 1948 the Johannesburg Local Committee for Non-European Adult Education was instituted to act as a co-ordinating body between the various literacy groups and the Union Education Department. This committee consisted of members of educational, religious and cultural bodies, and included an ex-officio Welfare officer representing the Non-European Affairs Department (NEAD) of the Johannesburg City Council." (Berman 1983:338)[2].

Craft classes were introduced to the centre by Ms. E.K. Lorimer in 1948, and in 1952 artist Cecil Skotnes was appointed Cultural Officer. White artists who taught with Skotnes at Polly Street included Egon Guenther, Fred Schimmel, Gideon Uys, Larry Scully, Edoardo Villa and Mary Duxbury, resulting in what was to become one of South Africa's earliest black art schools. Skotnes and his

colleagues initiated in Berman's words, "... the seminal source of a minor cultural revolution - the launching-pad for the first large scale venture of urban black South Africans into the plastic arts."[3]. In the process the centre produced (apart from Mohl and Sekoto), the Transvaal's first group of professional urban black artists[4].

After Skotnes' appointment (and with increasing numbers of students) an approach evolved whereby teaching was kept to a minimum , a philosophy similar to that of Desfosses' in Zaire. Students were encouraged to explore a range of techniques, styles and subjects with no set curriculum. In addition, Western techniques were combined with a fresh inquiry into appropriate African art forms. Engagement with indigenous art forms included reviewing the sculptural traditions of Pedi and Tsonga-Shangaan woodcarving, Ndebele and Nguni beadwork, pottery, basket work and mural painting, as well as examining Central and West African sculptural forms and their subsequent absorption into Western art in twentieth century Cubism[5]. Guenther, who supported Skotnes' philosophy maintained that every ethnic group has its own cultural heritage which will naturally assert itself despite the immediate surroundings in which a displaced group might grow and develop. In this regard he saw Skotnes and himself as "encouraging the flowering of the Africans' own cultural heritage."[6]. Initially the students were taught water-colour painting. However, the discipline of sculpture later emerged as an important expressional means.

" Initially, Cecil Skotnes set out to promote an indigenous African artistic idiom among his students. He introduced them to Cubist forms since these coincided with his knowledge of traditional African sculptural conventions. But preconceived

aesthetic attitudes proved artificial and painting activity gave way spontaneously to a sculptural bias when he discovered the tendency of most students to handle sculptural media more effectively than paint." (Berman 1983: 339)[7].

Three major sculptors who studied at Polly Street are Sydney Kumalo, Ezrom Legae and Lucas Sithole.

Sculpture however, was not taught to the exclusion of painting, and those artists who excelled in drawing and painting were Ezrom Legae, Louis Maqhubela and Ephraim Ngatane. Other black painters from the Transvaal who became attached to Polly Steet were the Chiawelo Group of Soweto, consisting of Durant Sihlali, Keith Sibiya, Samual Motsoene and Alfus Kubeka . Unlike the wet-on-wet method of water-colour painting used by Polly Street painters, the Chiawelo group prefered a more controlled use of water-colour, exemplified in the academic naturalism of Sihlali's township scenes[8].

Polly Street has become synonymous with the rise of the urban black art movement which began in the 1950's. In the post-war years there were also other organisations concerned with the upgrading of urban black culture, such as The Johannesburg African Musical Society and the Durban International Club, as well as independent contributions by teachers such as the Reverend Roger Castle. However, many of the efforts of white enthusiasts in this direction were regarded with apprehension and suspicion in black 'avant-garde' circles. Dhlomo, as a black playwrite, art and literary critic[9], deplored the fact that so few organizations offered sound technical guidance in the Fine Arts, or pointed black artists away from tribal arts and crafts. European benefactors in this sense inhibited black cultural

growth towards a detribalized and urbanized identity. With regard to The Johannesburg Musical Society Dhlomo wrote:

"African cultural observers are not sure what to make of it. They note that prominent African creative artists are not included: that the movement is connected with government, and therefore political agencies. That the tendency seems to concentrate on disintegrating tribal cultural patterns and not on the active work of modern African creative artists. These observers are afraid of the introduction of isolation into Bantu art and culture. They do not want to see African art fossilized and narrowed down to strictly tribalistic patterns and philosophies. They also believe that it is the African creative artist himself who must lead all the cultural movements of his people." (Ilanga Lase Natal 1957)[10].

Dhlomo suggested the formation of a society of black artists, writers and musicians independent of European agencies, as a way of combating the prevailing attitudes to black art.

As a 'European' teaching co-operative Polly Street might have been similarly judged ; that it was not, and that black art students related to Skotnes' teaching philosophy was part of the centre's success. Polly Street was unique as the first art school exclusively for blacks in the history of South African art.

In the 1950's two important group projects were undertaken by Polly Street for the interior design of Roman Catholic township churches, Saint Peter Claver in Kroonstad Location (c.1954) and Saint Martin de Porres in Orlando Location (c.1955), both outside Johannesburg. The importance of these projects was three fold. They brought art into the public service of township communities, provided the student-artists with professional experience and in turn drew attention to the school's activities[11].

The church of Saint Peter Claver was designed by the Dutch architect Jan van Gemert who, together with Bishop van Velsen and Skotnes felt that the motifs used in the church interior should

link symbols from African and Western cultures[11a]. This gave the students, and Sydney Kumalo in particular, a chance to interpret Christian themes in neo-African styles which conformed with Skotnes' interest in the integration of indigenous elements and Western technique. The completed design consisted of a painted panel along the apex of the ceiling, cement sculptural reliefs of the Stations of the Cross and three figurative wood carvings of the Virgin Mary, Christ and the altar Crucifix. These works were executed by Kumalo with the help of assistants; except for the Crucifix which was carved by John Hlaswayo. Carved wooden candelabra were designed by van Gemert and decorated with designs burnt into the wood using traditional poker-work technique[12].

A full description and discussion of the Kroonstad church interior is given by Susana van Rensburg in her study on black artists in the Transvaal, Sydney Kumalo en ander Bantoekunstenaars van Transvaal[13]. Kumalo and his assistants were familiarized with Christian liturgical symbolism which was then integrated with traditional African art forms and designs in the ceiling panel. Skotnes' design -style in Panel 1 appears to have influenced Kumalo's designs for the other seven panels, encouraging the use of African images, for example the fish in Panel 1 derived from Ashanti gold weights, and the animal mask in Panel 5 from Congo or Baule masks[14]. Examining local examples of African art suggested formal solutions for the geometric motifs, and the decorative painted strips in Panels 3 and 5 are evocative of the carved ridges and furrows of Nguni headrests and Sotho litema wall designs.

The ceiling panel which was designed and executed by Kumalo (except for Panel 1 by Skotnes), was organised into eight sections each consisting of a main figurative or representational motif set within a geometric schema of black, white, ochre and blue, surrounded by symbols and geometricised shapes. Brief descriptions of the individual panels are as follows : Panel 1 (Plate 3.23 a) incorporates the Christian fish symbol with an Ashanti gold weight design , surrounded by images of the sun and a bird. Panel 2 consists of a central motif of a crocodile, derived from Venda cosmological symbolism[15], surrounded by images of a crab, maize, a succulent plant, a bird, an African comb and head rest and the numerals 'V' and '5'. Panel 3 (Plate 3.23 b) has two lions as the main motif, surrounded by abstract calligraphic and geometric patterns. Panel 4 (Plate 3.24 a) contains the central motif of an elephant, which van Rensburg compares to Bechuana elephant woodcarvings. The elephant is surrounded by symbols of the Last Supper, notably the grape vine and husks of corn (which become the consecrated wafer) and the chalice of the Catholic Eucharist. A second, smaller, elephant is also incorporated in the design, the purpose of which may simply be decorative. Panel 5 (Plate 3.24 b) consists of a stylized African mask surrounded by decorations complementing Panel 3. Finally , Panel 7 contains two central motifs, a maize plant and a bull. The maize plant appears to be withered on the right side, while the left is healthy, an image which is possibly derived from Xhosa mural symbolism. The bull motif is reminiscent of the traditional clay oxen made by children in many black South African rural societies.

Encouraged by the success of the Saint Peter Claver Church project, van Gemert, organized a commission for the decoration of the interior of Saint Martin de Porres. This project was co-ordinated by Kumalo himself, who was now a full-time teaching assistant at Polly Street. The interior was similar in concept and design to the Kroonstad church, with ceiling panels and relief Stations of the Cross and altar Crucifix ; however the project involved more of the centre's students ,including Ephraim Ngatane, Ben Arnold, Morning Star and Louis Maqhubela[16]. Kumalo worked on the Stations of the Cross and the altar Crucifix, and designed and supervised the painting of the ceiling panels. (Plate 3.22 b)

Kumalo's talent for the medium of sculpture rather than painting became aparent in his two sets of Stations of the Cross for these projects. He was attempting to find a personal sculptural style at this time and was concerned with resolving compositional problems presented by working with relief sclupture. (The latter were inovative in black South African sculpture in the use of a cement medium which, according to Skotnes, evolved essentially out of the practical necessity of transporting the completed relief panels from the Polly Street studio to the church.)[17]. A further commission for reliefs for Stations of the Cross, executed in the Roman Catholic Church of The Lady of the Rosary in Thabong location in Welkom, shows a refining of the artist's style with stylized cubistic treatment of the human form approaching that of his mature free-standing sculptural works[18].

In 1958 Kumalo was appointed official Art Organizer at the centre, and with the continued assistance of Skotnes, Guenther

and Villa, became the first professional full-time urban black sculptor in the Transvaal[19]. (See Chapter 4) He also started art workshops in Soweto[20].

The Polly Street Art Centre closed in 1960, with activities moving to Jubilee Social Centre, Johannesburg. Ezrom Legae replaced Kumalo as Art Organizer in 1964.

Polly Street Art Centre as an art school had no set programme of teaching methods, nor defined goals as to the function, direction or development of art amongst urban black South Africans, beyond the concept of 'art for art's' sake, and possible commercial profits for the individual black artists involved. Collaboration between white artists as teachers and black art students provided an atmosphere conducive to the stimulation and growth of a new professionalism in urban black art in Johannesburg, which also created new opportunities for the teaching and promotion of art within the townships.

3:4 Rorke's Drift Art Centre, (E.L.C. (Evangelical Lutheran Church) Art and Craft Centre), KwaZulu (1962-1982)

The E.L.C. Art and Craft Centre at Rorke's Drift in KwaZulu, after the Polly Street Art Centre, is recognisable as a second major force in the development of twentieth century black South African art, with most of the prominent artists up to c. 1980 being students of these institutions. (See Chapter 4) Like Polly Street, Rorke's Drift (as it is known) began with modest intentions, however, by 1961 under the guidance of Peder Gowenius, clear objectives regarding the social role of art in a changing South African society had been established.

The centre originated with the Swedish artist Berthe Hansson who visited the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Bishop, Helge Fosseus in Roodeport in 1959 to discuss the possibility of starting an art centre in KwaZulu[1]. Subsequently, in 1960, Hansson and a group of Swedish women formed The Committee to Support African Art and Handicrafts in South Africa, and by 1961 had raised enough money to bring textile designers Ulla and Peder Gowenius to KwaZulu. Initially the Gowenius' were to report to the committee on the viability of founding an art centre. During the first half of 1962 the Gowenius' established remedial craft workshops at Ceza Hospital in the Mahlabatini District; and weaving workshops at Umpumulo, which they later relocated at the Oskarsberg Mission Station at Rorke's Drift near the Buffalo River. Here the Gowenius' established the ELC Art and Craft Centre in empty mission buildings, with the support committee providing a nominal salary of R70.00 per month. Starting capital for the art centre came from the proceeds of Ceza Hospital craftwork sold at an

exhibition in Sweden in 1962. In order to finance the art school the Gowenius' started weaving workshops, the profit from which kept the school going. In 1964 some financial assistance was also received from the Church of Sweden Mission, in the form of salaries for the Gowenius' and other teachers. In 1968 the Gowenius' left Rorke's Drift to work in Lesotho (1968 to 1970) and Botswana (1971 to 1978)[2].

What had started as weaving workshops attended by local women , developed into a centre offering courses to black adults in tapestry weaving, textile printing, pottery, Fine Art and graphic art. From 1968 to 1982 the centre offered four courses: a two year Fine Art course, a one year Domestic Science course, a one to six month Craft course involving district workshops, and a two year Art and Crafts Advisor course in occupational work[3].

The list of artists involved in teaching at Rorke's Drift until the closure of the Fine Art school in 1982, is extensive. In 1966 Kirstin Ollson began ceramic workshops teaching throwing and glazing techniques, and Lillinor and Ulla Granath arrived to assist in the weaving section in the same year. By 1967 the first graphic art graduate, Azaria Mbatha , began teaching printmaking. In 1968 the Danish ceramist Peter Tydberg joined the ceramic section, assisted in 1969 by Anne and Ule Nielson. In 1970 Malin and Otto Lundbohm arrived from Sweden to take over the art centre, and extended the textile design, painting and printmaking courses. Ulla and Lillinor Granath arrived in 1973, contributing to the administration of the centre, with Lillinor introducing fabric weaving for dress-making. From 1975 Eric Mbatha taught at the centre, specialising in ceramics. From 1973 to 1979 the Fine

Art course developed under the assistance of the Reverend Carol and Gabrielle Ellerston from the University of Minnesota , succeeded by Professor Karl Bethke on sabbatical leave from the same university. From 1976 to 1978 the Dutch printmakers Jules and Ada van de Vijver provided the centre with teaching and technical expertise, improving the quality of printmaking. The first white South Africans, Keith and Antoinette van Winkel taught at the centre from 1979 to 1981, and in 1979 Jay Johnson arrived from the University of Minnesota to teach Fine Art for a year. In 1981 Malin Lundbohm returned to Rorke's Drift but a year later the Fine Art school was closed due to lack of financial resourses and difficulty in finding teachers[4].

Rorke's Drift art centre is primarily associated with the tapesties produced by Zulu women, for which it is internationally renowned. It was the Gowenius' recognition, as Berman puts it ,of "the traditional Zulu genius for story telling, which prompted them to encourage the application and development of visual narrative skills in the design and manufacture of pictorial tapestries."[5] In terms of Fine Art, Rorke's Drift is responsible for producing some of South Africa's finest graphic printmakers, who like the weavers have put 'narrative skills' to the service of telling past and present Zulu history in woodcuts and linoleum prints, and etchings. Many of the printmakers, although initially sharing stylistic characteristics similar to certain forms of European 'folk art'[6], have gone on to develop individually, Azaria Mbatha, Eric Mbatha, John Muafangejo, Charles Nkosi, Caiphas Nxumalo, Albert Ndovu, Cyprian Shilakoe, Vuminkosi Zulu and Bongiwe Dhlomo, for example. (See Chapter 4)

From the start the Gowenius' were in conflict with the methods of the Department of Bantu Education ,and sought to prove the potential of black artists by giving adequate training. Their educational aims are outlined by Peder Gowenius in This is Our Life[7]. an account of the weaving factory set up by the Gowenius' in Oodi in Botswana, subsequent to their departure from KwaZulu. Gowenius expressed concern over the misuse of concepts of 'development' and 'education' in so-called developing countries where emphasis is placed on providing employment, technical expertise and infrastructure without attention given to the training of locals to take over jobs held by foreign experts[8]. His ideological orientation is more overtly expressed in a book written while at Rorke's Drift, titled Power to the People illustrating the history of oppressed people in South Africa in cartoon form[9].

"How do we make oppressed people aware of their situation, of their own strength, creating an interest in their future and a commitment to the concepts of self-reliance, freedom and independence?" (Gowenius 1977:Introduction)[10].

For a reply Gowenius turned to Amilcar Cabral, a Guinea-Bissau revolutionary who died in 1973:

"According to [Cabral] the rural masses, subjected to political domination and economic exploitation, rediscovered in their own culture (embodied in a way of life, in the means of material production and in their values and beliefs) the only force capable of preserving their identity."(Gowenius 1977: Introduction) [11].

Thus for Gowenius the aim and purpose of art was a social one. Art was seen as a means of questioning the political and social status-quo, for example, workers relationships with employers, the migrant labour system, the expected social roles of men and women, "and many questionable aspects of South Africa which many so-called educated people may not even have considered."[12]. In

addition to the educational process which steers art towards the promotion of social values, there was also the necessity for technical expertise and managerial skills.

The realisation of these aims at Rorke's Drift was hampered by difficulties with South African authorities, and also suffered a great deal from what Gowenius described as " a Church 'failing to understand'..."[13]. However, these intentions remained the basic philosophy of the centre, and were later explicitly stated in the prospectus and in exhibition catalogues published by Otto Lundbohm in 1972:

"To nurture the unique artistic heritage of Africa.
To extend this heritage with new influences so that it will find its rightful place in an evolving and changing society.
To ensure that it develops with the changing society and that its arts and crafts will find increasingly profitable outlets.
To assist in raising their standard of living by extending its teaching influence through its students and by giving local people work and an income." [14]

Rorke's Drift has produced artists, be they weavers or printmakers, whose narrative and artistic skills provide a commentary on the social, political and spiritual experiences of of blacks living in South African urban society, a commentary which ultimately is taken out of the art centre to the people. Gowenius regarded the success of the Oodi weaving workshops in Botswana as equally relevant to Rorke's Drift artists many of whom are now working independantly and include some of black South Africa's most acute social critics (See Chapter 4).

"Slowly through this fundamental educational process, the weavers have started to rediscover their own culture, the only force capable of preserving their identity. They have developed some of the confidence, self-reliance and social awareness that is required to fulfil the long term development advocated by their government [Botswana], i.e. Unity, Development, Self-Reliance and Democracy." (Gowenius 1977: Introduction)[15].

CHAPTER 4

URBAN BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN ART :1960-1980

4:1 Introduction

With the exception of a few independent artists, the first generation of urban black South African artists emerged in the Transvaal and Natal/KwaZulu in the 1960's. Two schools of black art, the Polly Street school and the Rorke's Drift school, may be said to have emerged in the 1960's and 1970's respectively. Many of these artists experienced the social upheavals which took place in South Africa at the end of the 1950's, and the beginning of the 1960's, with the demolition of Sophiatown and the development of the Soweto townships. This marked the beginning of a new phase in the struggle for cultural identity in the face of greater white domination. The sixties in South Africa heralded an era of government repression, resulting in the Sharpville riots and the treason trials and imprisonment of political leaders such as[1]. Nelson Mandela on Robben Island. (See Appendix 1)

"...one is painfully reminded here of the colossal dislocations in black life that occurred at the end of the '50s. The '60s brought in a period of political and cultural drift and the legacy and moorings of the 1950's were washed away with the ritual sacrifices of Sharpville." (Chabani Manganyi 1981: 60) [2].

Black art of this period must be seen against the trauma of social transition, of enforced removals and the destruction of small location communities which were forced to move and live in large impersonal townships like Soweto. The phenomenon of 'township art' was in a sense new by virtue of reflecting the fact that townships were new, alien and unwelcome environments.

The social and cultural unity of closely knit communities in small urban locations was broken when groups were dispersed to mass townships as Ezekiel Mphahlele recalls:

"We were disrupted and we are not moving in the same direction at all. Things tug away from the centre all the time, whereas there is a kind of convergence in places like Alexandria, Lady Selbourne, that pull towards the same centre. People wouldn't want to leave that kind of life for an insecure and unknown situation."(Manganyi 1981:8) [3].

Sixties black township culture was essentially dominated by music, and theatre, with popular song and dance groups (mbaqango or mquashiyo groups) such as Mahlathini and his Queens backed by the Makhona Tshole Band; jazz groups, The Drive, and Malomba Jazz Men founded by Philip Thabane, independent musicians such as Dollar Brand (Abdullah Ibrahim) and Kippie Moeketsi. Black musicals were created by innovative playwrights like Gibson Kente [Manana, The Jazz Prophet (1963); Sikalo (1966)] and Sam Mhangwana [Crime does not Pay (1963); Unfaithful Woman (1964); Blame Yourself (1966)][3a]. The Sixties saw the publication of some of the finest prose writing in African literature produced by black South Africans[4]. Many of the '60's and '70's writers were however banned or forced into exile. The '60s also saw the founding of The Classic, a black art and literary journal, in which Sowetan poetry first appeared, and the political exile of many black poets including Ezekiel Mphahlele, Lewis Nkosi, and Can Themba. Black poetry of the '70s became more politically orientated with poets aligning themselves with Black Consciousness[5].

Urban black culture found new expression in sculpture, painting , drawing and mixed media, and printmaking. Artists revealed a new consciousness and self-confidence in portraying both the dignity

and suffering of South African blacks. Certainly the role of black art had changed at this time and no longer fulfilled the demands of the traditional African communities. It served to convey the human predicament of those in the townships, and express the creative needs of distinctly urban individuals. Expressionism to some extent became a popular stylstic means of communicating human 'angst' and stress in the chaos of the townships. The art of both the '60s and '70s reveals a range of content including everyday township scenes, references to tribal history, and religious and mythological themes. In a sense the Polly Street school is more concerned with township scenes, speaking in a vernacular of the mundane as opposed to Rorke's Drift images of poetic imagination. The visual arts like the theatre and literature of the sixties, excluded overt political references, and with good reason. As D. Coplan explains in connection with Gibson Kente's plays: "In this post-Sharpville era of government repression, Kente carefully avoided dramatising the wider political issues underlying the suffering and frustrations of urban Africans"[6]. Many artists preferred to depict shared daily experiences, and a common reality, which appealed to social and moral responsibility. With the emergence of the Black Consciousness movement of the seventies, black poetry began to identify with a more forceful political orientation. Only later in the 1980's, however, did visual art incorporate political material, in particular art connected with progressive political organizations such as the United Democratic Front and trade union organizations, which often tended to be propagandist in nature.

The artists dealt with in this chapter represent a selected rather than comprehensive, group. Certain of the artists are chosen because they clearly represent the two main schools and are generally recognised as their most talented students; others are independent. The selection rests on qualitative criteria, on independent responses to the same subject, on their proficiency in handling respective media, and on professional exhibitions.

4:2 Sculpture

i. SYDNEY KUMALO (1935-1988)

Sydney Kumalo is recognised as South Africa's first professional black sculptor[1]., and was one of the earliest Polly Street 'graduates'. Born in Johannesburg in 1935, Kumalo attended Madibane High School up to Standard 8. His father encouraged him to develop his interest in art, and while at school he attended art classes with Sister Bybrook of Saint Cyprian's Catholic Church in Sophiatown[2]. Sister Bybrook advised Kumalo to attend the Polly Street school where he studied from 1952 with Cecil Skotnes and Egon Guenther[3]. Skotnes organised an apprenticeship for him with sculptor Edoardo Villa from 1957 to 1960, enabling him to aquire the thorough knowledge of sculptural techniques which would later distinguish his work. In 1958 Kumalo replaced Solomon Mautambalala as Skotnes' official assistant and art instructor at Polly Street. As an art instructor his personal sculptural style and technique influenced many of his students notably Lucas Sithole and Ezrom Legae[4]. Kumalo died in Soweto in 1988.

Magambalala

Kumalo sculptures are modelled out of clay and cast in bronze. Like Lucas Sithole his subjects are of human and animal forms, although he emphasises the theme of 'humanity' rather than 'nature'.

While a student at Polly Street Kumalo began to develop a mature style of his own, exemplified in three series of 13 relief panels illustrating the Stations of The Cross, executed for the Kroonstad (1954) and Orlando (c.1956) Catholic churches in

Johannesburg, and for the Catholic church in Thabong, Welkom[5]. (Plates 3.26 - 3.27). The panels were modelled directly in cement, and show a marked development in Kumalo's personal style and a growing confidence in his handling of human forms, composition, and modelling technique. Evident in these earlier works are features later to distinguish Kumalo's free-standing sculpture, namely, formal and dramatic elements derived from Cubism and Expressionism, (which Kumalo had been introduced to by Skotnes and Guenther) as well as certain stylistic traits originating in Central and West African sculpture[6]. Early works such as Praying Woman (1959) and Mask (1960) (Plate 4.1) show a formal synthesis of the above styles whereby the human figure is reduced to simplified planes and cubes, emphasising form and expressional effect rather than naturalistic detail. Kumalo's exploitation of elements commonly associated with traditional African sculpture is described by L. Watter;

"Sydney Kumalo has made an intense study of the sculpture that has been created in Africa. For the tribal artists, sculpture was a means of giving concrete form to abstract ideas about man's relation to the world and to religion. Concepts of this kind could not be conveyed through purely naturalistic methods. Stylization, emphasis and subtle transitions of proportion were required, whether there was correspondence to reality or not. A correlation of curves, planes and cubes resulted... the early sculptors emphasised symmetry and frontality on a vertical median axis that was intersected at intervals by horizontals." (Watter 1978: 67)[7].

Thus, as the same author points out, Kumalo's importance lies in his capacity to fuse aspects of traditional West African sculpture with the Western styles of Cubism and Expressionism (which in turn had been influenced by African sculpture)creating a new and wholly personal synthesis. Kumalo was sociologically a product of urban society, not bound by any particular artistic

tradition, and therefore free to extract and adapt formal elements for his own ends.

Kumalo's sculptures consist of seated and standing animal or human figures, characterised by a concentration of broad sculptural planes , curves and cubes with a solidity and sense of mass. His use of organic form in the interpretations of the human form is influenced in part by the British sculptor Henry Moore[8]. Seated Woman (1959) (Plate 4.2 a), Eagle (1962) (Plate 4.2 b) and Head of Egon Guenther (c.1966) (Plate 4.3) exemplify Kumalo's formal economy and simplification of detail. Kumalo's balanced sculptural masses also have a dynamism created by conflicting tensions within the sculpture as in St. Francis (1961) (Plate 4.5), Leopard (1961) (Plate 4.4 a) , Large Seated Woman (1964) (Plate 4.4 b) and Pregnant Woman (1968). Leopard is a good example ; the animal is secured by powerful paws, and twists in a 'whip-lash' movement, which is emphasised by the elongation of the curving body and culminates in the raised, spiked tail. The head which is lowered to the ground has the mask-like quality, common to many of Kumalo's works. St. Francis, one of the sculptor's better known sculptures, again has a dynamic formal tension created by opposing movements. St Francis stands firmly on a base raising his right hand in a gesture of blessing. The sculpture 'moves' downward and earthward, by virtue of the visual weight of the legs and the dove held to his chest, as well as upward and heavenward, as a result of the diminishing proportions of head and outstretched arm[9].

Works such as the Frog Demon (1965) (Plate 4.6 b), Madala series (c.1967) (Plate 4,7 a), Leopard II (no date) (Plate 4.7 b), and

Horse and Rider (no date) (Plate 4.6 a), show Kumalo's concern with subjects relating to Africa which give the human form a greater symbolic significance. Madala IV (Old Man) (Plate 4.7 a) depicts a venerable old man squatting on his haunches with eyes closed in inner contemplation ; Frog Demon represents a crouching mythical beast half-man, half-frog. These works both concretise concepts of a psychological nature and allude to the world of African ritual. They are massive and employ skillful anatomical distortion. Anatomical form is expressed as accentuated muscular planes and curves and rounded volumes,, with naturalism giving way to expression. Surface finish is also dramatic, with a variety of marks and textures either modelled into the clay original or scored with metal tools into the final bronze. In many instances the surface texture resembles chisel marks in wood-carving, encasing the sculpture as bark encases a tree[10].

Early in his career Kumalo's work was promoted by Egon Guenther, in his private gallery, and overseas through the art dealer Eric Estorick of Grosvenor Gallery in London[11]. Both these dealers arranged commissions for Kumalo, enabling him to make large-scale bronze sculptures. In this regard Kumalo had a unique opportunity as the process is beyond the financial and technical means of most other artists. In 1963 he was a member of the new 'Amadlozi Group' formed by Guenther, and which Kumalo named 'Amadlozi' ("the spirit of our ancestors"). This group included Sydney Kumalo, Guiseppe Cattaneo, Cecily Sash, Cecil Skotnes and Edoardo Villa, all of whose works (it was felt) reflected a certain 'Africanness' in content and spirit[12].

(See Plates 4.1 - 4.10)

A list of exhibitions, awards, commissions and collections of Kumalo's work up to 1980 is as follows:

Exhibitions:

1958 Lidchi Art Gallery, Johannesburg (group).
1959 Queens Art Gallery, Johannesburg (group).
1960 Lawrence Adler Galleries, Johannesburg (Artists of Fame and Promise).
1962 Egon Guenther Gallery, Johannesburg (solo).
1963 Durban Art Museum (Art SA Today).
1963-4 Rome, Venice, Florence and Milan, Italy (Amadlozi Group.
1964 Rembrandt Art Centre, Johannesburg;
South African National Gallery (SA Art Today).
1965 Grosvenor Gallery, London,UK (Fifty Years of Sculpture - group).
1966 Egon Guenther Gallery, Johannesburg (solo);
Venice, Italy (Biennale);
Pretoria (Republic Festival Exhibition);
Grosvenor Gallery, London, UK (two-person exhibition with Cecil Skotnes -group).
1967 Egon Guenther Gallery, Johannesburg (solo);
Grosvenor Gallery, New York, USA (group);
Johannesburg (Transvaal Academy);
Sao Paulo, Brazil (Biennale);
Durban Art Museum (Art SA Today).
1969 Camden Arts Centre, London, UK (Contemporary African Art).
1970 Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (The 51 Club Winter Art Exhibition);
Holland, Belgium, West Germany (SA Graphic Art);
Cape Town (Republic Festival Exhibition);
Lidchi Art Gallery, Johannesburg (three-person exhibition with Louis Maqhubela and Geoffrey Armstrong);
Johannesburg Art Gallery (Johannesburg Artists - Diamond Jubilee of the Johannesburg Art Gallery).
1972 Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (SA Graphics 1972)
Gallery 101, Johannesburg (group).
1973 Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg;
Triad Gallery, Johannesburg (group)
Gallery International, Cape Town (sculpture -group).
1974 National Art Gallery, Athens, Greece (Contemporary SA Art);
Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (Festival of SA Graphics and Multiples 1974).
1975 Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren, Belgium (Zulu Art);
Gallery 21, London, UK (African Art from SA);
Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (SA Sculpture by Leading Artists - solo);
Goodman-Wolman Gallery, Cape Town (Transvaal Painting and Sculpture).
1976 Canberra, Australia (SA Art - Canberra Week);
SA Association of Arts , Pretoria (solo).
1977 Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (solo).
1978 Sharp Festival, Grahamstown (Festival Art Exhibition).

1979-80 SA Association of Arts, Johannesburg (Renaissance II '79).
1980 Bonn and West Germany - tour (Art from SA/Art from Soweto; Goodman Gallery (solo).

Awards:

1960 Artists of Fame and Promise (award).
1963 Art SA Today (Philip Frame Award).
1967 Transvaal Academy (bronze medal and a travel bursary to the USA).

Commissions:

c.1954 Stations of the Cross, St Peter Claver Church, Kroonstad , Johannesburg.
c.1956 Stations of the Cross, St Martin de Porres Church, Orlando, Soweto.
ca.1950s Stations of the Cross, Catholic Church, Thabong, Welkom.
1960 State Pavilion in Milner Park, Johannesburg.
c.1963 Hotel in Kitwe, Zambia.
c.1980 The Blessing, Cape Town Civic Centre.

Collections:

Durban Art Museum; Johannesburg Art Gallery; Rembrandt van Rijn Art Foundation; Stellenbosch Town Council; South African National Gallery; Sanlam; University of Fort Hare, Alice; University of South Africa (UNISA); University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg[13].

ii. LUCAS SITHOLE (1931-)

Lucas Sithole was the next black South African to become a professional sculptor in the 1960's. He was born in 1931 in Kwa Tema Township in Springs, Transvaal (where he still lives). He was the son of a Zionist minister, but received a Roman Catholic education at Saint Louis Catholic School, where he was also introduced to art. In 1958 he attended classes at Polly Street for a year, and received tuition from both Skotnes and Kumalo. Initially Sithole studied painting, but, like many other Polly Street students, he subsequently discovered an affinity for sculpture[14]. According to Aubrey Fielding, Sithole's parents had sent him to learn carpentry and cabinet making , and he worked

in a soap factory and as a building labourer before he finally 'bought some tools and began carving wood.'[15]. From 1960 he was patronised by Lawrence Adler and Aubrey Fielding of the Adler Fielding Gallery, Johannesburg, as well as by Fernand Haenggi of Gallery 101, Johannesburg, who continues to promote his work[16].

Sithole's sculptures are mainly free-standing figurative carvings. His preferred material is wood, particularly hard indigenous woods such as ironwood from Swaziland, Rhodesian teak, and Natal ebony and Msimbiti[17]. However he has also carved in sandstone and has worked in liquid steel, as in for example, Wounded Buffalo (1971) (Plate 4.11 a). He concentrates on South African subject matter, especially wildlife and mythology. Many of his figurative works incorporate universal or humanistic themes that de Jager refers to as "ritualistic expressions or gestalten of the sacred aura which surrounds African ritual"[18].

Sithole's work can be divided into two main catagories - figurative human and figurative animal sculptures. Early works include the portrait heads Forgive Me (c.1967) and Honest (c.1968) (Plate 4.12 a/b). The former is typical of Sithole's early portrait style, which shows the influence of Kumalo. Voluminous in form with large curved shapes and with facial characteristics of large drooping eyelids and large lips. The head is finished with distinct chisel marks of a rough, overall weathered texture, creating a pattern of visual movement. Contrasted to this piece is a later head in Cape mountain stone The Peacemaker, which has a smooth refined texture, broad generalization of form, and minimal facial features; recalling formalisation in Brancusi's sculpture. A further example is Head

creatures presenting a humorous aspect. Sithole's use of form is expressionistic, in that he portrays the interior spirit of these creatures rather than their naturalisic features.

Sithole has been a prolific sculptor, working with energy and creativity since 1960.

(See Plates 4.11 - 4.15)

A list of exhibitions, awards, commissions, and collections of his work up to 1980 are as follows:

Exhibitions

1960 Queens Art Gallery, Johannesburg (Polly Street Group);
Adler Fielding Galleries, Johannesburg (Artists of Fame and Promise).
1961 Adler Fielding Galleries, Johannesburg (Artists of Fame and Promise; The Year's Findings).
1962 Adler Fielding Galleries, Johannesburg (SA Art).
1963 Adler Fielding Galleries, Johannesburg (The Year's Findings; Artists of Fame and Promise);
Gallery 101, Johannesburg (The Gallery 101-UTA 1963. Competition; Arbeid - Work).
1964 Johannesburg (Transvaal Academy);
Adler Fielding Galleries, Johannesburg (Artists of Fame and Promise).
1965 Adler Fielding Galleries, Johannesburg (Township Life; African Art;SA Painters Past and Present; The Year's Findings; Artists of Fame and Promise);
Piccadilly Gallery, London, UK (group).
1966 Pretoria (Republic Festival Exhibition);
Adler Fielding Galleries, Johannesburg (solo; Artists of Fame and Promise).
1967 Gallery 21, Johannesburg (solo);
Adler Fielding Galleries, Johannesburg (Sculptures SA 1900-1967);
SA Art Association , Pretoria (group);
Durban Art Museum (Art SA Today).
1968 Gallery 101, Johannesburg (solo);
Venice, Italy (Biennale);
Sao Paulo, Brazil (Biennale).
1969 Durban Art Museum (Art SA Today).
1970 Gallery 101, Johannesburg (solo; The Nude in 101);
Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (The 51 Club Winter Exhibition).
1971 Johannesburg (Art Dealers'Fair NICRO);
Johannesburg (Group 51 Winter Art Exhibition);
Gallery 101, Johannesburg (10 Transvaal Sculptors).

1972 Gallery 21, Johannesburg (38 artists);
Gallery 101, Johannesburg (25 African Artists).
1973 Gallery International, Cape Town (solo; Summer Exhibition);
Johannesburg (Art Dealers' Fair NICRO);
Gallery 21, Johannesburg (Collector's Choice; Selection '73;
Winter '73);
Johannesburg (Group 51 Winter Art Exhibition).
1974 Basel, Switzerland (Art 5 '74 -group);
Gallery 21, London, UK (group);
Gallery 21 (solo);
Gallery International, Cape Town (solo; Summer Exhibition;
Gallery 101 (4th Transvaal Sculpture Exhibition);
Natal Society of Arts, Durban (solo).
1975 Gallery International, Cape Town (solo);
Die Kunskamer, Cape Town (group);
Gallery 21, London, UK (African Art from SA);
Gallery 21, Johannesburg (July Winners);
SA Association of Arts, Pretoria (The Animal in Art);
University of Fort Hare,Alice (Contemporary African Art);
Gallery International, Cape Town (Festival - African Art).
1976 Gallery 21, Johannesburg (solo);
Association of Arts, Windhoek (two-person exhibition with
Lucky Sibiya);
National Museum and Art Gallery, Gaborone, Botswana (two-
person exhibition with Lucky Sibiya);
Rand Afrikaans University (RAU), Johannesburg (Metalart);
Uniefees School Hall, Pretoria (group);
St Peter's Seminary, Hammanskraal (group);
Gallery 21, Johannesburg (Summer Madness);
Gallery International, Cape Town (Claremont Exhibition).
1977 Gallery International, Cape Town (Collector's Choice);
SA National Gallery (20th Century Sculpture);
Hoffer Art Gallery, Pretoria (group);
Gallery 21, Johannesburg (solo; Selection '77);
National Gallery of Rhodesia, Salisbury (SA Art);
Johannesburg (World Wilderness Congress);
Iscor, Sebokeng, Transvaal (group).
1978 Gallery International, Cape Town (solo);
Gallery 21, Johannesburg (solo; Collector's Choice;
Treasures of the Year 1978);
National Art Gallery, Bulawayo, Rhodesia (SA Art);
SA Association of Arts, Pretoria (group);
Collector's Gallery, Johannesburg (group);
St Alban's College, Pretoria (group).
1979 Rand Afrikaans University (RAU), Johannesburg; Pretoria Art
Museum (Sculpture 1958-1979 Retrospective);
SA Association of Arts, Pretoria (East Rand Black Artists);
Johannesburg, Pretoria, Bloemfontein, Kimberley
(Contemporary African Art in SA - University of Fort Hare
collection);
Gallery International, Cape Town (Contemporary Group);
Gallery 21, Johannesburg (solo; Winter '79; Treasures of the
Year);
University of Fort Hare, Alice (Contemporary African Art);
National Museum, Bloemfontein (group).

Awards

1960 Artists of Fame and Promise (second prize).
1968 Venice Biennale

Public Commissions

1971 Braken Mines, Evander (Wounded Buffalo in front of Recreation Centre).
1978 Ciba-Geigy, Spartan.

Collections

Ciba-Geigy Pty Ltd, Spartan; Department of Education and Training, Pretoria; Durban Art Museum; Museum fur Volkerkunde, Frankfurt; National Museum and Art Gallery, Gaborone, Botswana; Oliewenhuis Museum, Bloemfontein; Pretoria Art Museum; Pelmama Permanent Collection, Johannesburg; Performing Arts Council of the Transvaal, State Theatre, Pretoria; Rand Afrikaans University, Johannesburg; Rembrandt van Rijn Art Foundation, Stellenbosch; Sage Holdings Ltd, Johannesburg; Sasol Ltd, Johannesburg; Standard Bank, Johannesburg; SA National Gallery; University of Fort Hare, Alice; University of South Africa (UNISA), Pretoria; University of the Orange Free State ,Bloemfontein; University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg[19].

iii. EZROM KGOBOKANYO LEGAE (1937-)

Ezrom Legae is the third sculptor of importance from the Polly Street school, succeeding Kumalo as art instructor at the Jubilee Art Centre in 1964[20].

For the purposes of this dissertation Legae is listed under Sculpture and Drawing. (See Chap.4:2 for biographical details.) He studied at Polly Street under Cecil Skotnes and Sydney Kumalo. Initially he expressed himself in water-colour painting, until Skotnes encouraged him to take up sculpture. Legae produced his first terracotta Reclining Nude in 1965 under Skotnes' guidance[21].

Legae expresses a feeling for Africa in his choice of subjects and in his use of form. His content deals with themes of humanity as well as animal life. Since he creates most of his sculptures in clay, his chosen method, like Kumalo's, is modelling. Legae has many of his works cast into bronze, which in comparison to many of Kumalo's sculptures are modest in size.

Sculptures of human figures repeat the motifs of standing and reclining figures and human heads. Embrace (1967), Striding Girl (1968), Young Man (1968) (Plate 4.22 a), Young Woman (1969) (Plate 4.21), Reclining Figure (1971) (Plate 4.22 b) and Young Woman (1972) (Plate 4.24) show Legae's characteristic expressionistic form. Works dating from 1969 show a greater refinement of form; compare for example Lamenting Woman (1966) (Plate 4.16) and Young Woman (1969) (Plate 4.21), which is presented with stylized head, and anatomical detail reduced to simplified and elegant abstractions. Reclining Figure (1971) (Plate 4.22 b) echoes sculptural forms both of Neolithic sculpture and modern European sculpture. Henry Moore's description of Brancusi's revolutionary contribution in modern sculpture applies to Legae's use of form when he says,

"...it may now be no longer necessary to close down and restrict sculpture to a single (static) unit. We can now begin to open out. To relate and combine several forms of varied sizes, sections and direction, into one organic whole" (Moore 1927:23)[22].

Legae's Heads of 1972 (Plate 4.23) and 1973 are resolved in sophisticated sculptural form. For example, Tilted Head (1972) (Plate 4.23) comprises an anthropomorphic head, curved in a boat-like shape with round eyes, snout-like nose and mouth turned upward, and placed on a broad-based column. His concern is with the religious and symbolic. "In this head I tried to portray the

spiritual feeling of a man that wants to grow with pride. This animal thing again - one's background - so much in me."[23]. Many of his sculptures express an interest in ritual, and the symbiotic relationship between man and animal in traditional African ritual. Aware of the significance of ritual acts in city life as in past rural traditions he writes:

"In this work I tried to portray ritual slaughter. Every Weekend in the township people slaughter goats. Even here, near the cities, blacks feel a need to appease their gods. I grew up with this. Animals are prominent in African life, their wealth, for example, being measured in cattle." (Katz 1974:58)[24].

Carcass (1966) (Plate 4.19) speaks of ritual slaughter, depicting man and animal locked in battle on the ground. The man's powerfully articulated body lunges over his prey lying on the ground. Both figures are treated with compassion. The surface has a rough, pitted and scored texture, giving the sculpture a primitive quality, typical of his work in the '60s.

Legae has a strong sense of African identity,

"If you lose your cultural background you lose yourself totally... People need a national identity. If they lose this they are like a leaf that is blown north, south, east, and west; one should be anchored like a tree - a baobab. A strong sense of belonging will give you this..." (Katz 1974:55)[25].

On themes in his sculpture he says,

"The theme of my work today is Man; I must project what I see locally, living in Soweto. Life is people. I draw and model from my immediate environment." Legae is equally inspired by subjects from nature "...a person, a stone, an animal, a plant - and then I'm away." (Katz 1974:60)[26].

Like Kumalo and Sithole, Legae expresses himself in an idiom sympathetic to his ideas and feelings as an urban African artist; his work blends the cultural influences of his heritage with African sculptural form and Western technique and material.

In 1969 he joined the group of artists known as the 'Amadlozi Group' renamed by their founder Guenther ,'Amadlozi '69'. Since the late 1970's he has turned his attention away from sculpture to working in mixed media on paper (See Chap.4:2)[27].

From 1972 to 1974 Legae was involved in directing the African Music and Drama Association Art Project (AMDA)[27a].

(See Plates 4.16 - 4.25).

A list of exhibitions, awards, commissions and collections of Legae's work up to 1980 is as follows:.

Exhibitions

1966 Egon Guenther Gallery, Johannesburg (solo);
SA - tour (SA Breweries Prize Exhibition);
Pretoria (Republic Festival art exhibition).
1967 Durban Art Museum (Art SA Today).
1968 Johannesburg (Transvaal Academy).
1971 Holland, Belgium, West Germany (SA GRaphic Art);
Pretoria (Republic Festival art exhibition).
1974 National Arts Society, Johannesburg (African Art);
United States Information Services, Johannesburg (Contemporary African Art).
1977 Milner Park, Johannesburg (World Wilderness Congress).
1978 Goodman Gallery (Chicken Series -solo).
1979 Rand Afrikaans University, Johannesburg;
Pretoria Art Museum;
University of the Orange Free State, Bloemfontein;
William Humphrey's Art Gallery, Kimberley (Contemporary African Art in SA);
Valparaiso, Chile (Biennale).
1980 University of South Africa (UNISA) (Sculpture 80).

Awards

1967 Art SA Today (Oppenheimer Sculpture Prize for Embrace (1967))
1968 Transvaal Academy (merit award for Young Man (1968) [Plate 4.28].
1972 Merril Foundation (USA), Provided funds for African Music and Drama Association (AMDA).
1979 Valparaiso Biennale, Chile (honourable mention).

Collections

Durban Art Museum; Johannesburg Art Gallery; Pelmama Permanent Art Collection, Johannesburg; South African National Gallery; Tatham Art Gallery, Pietermaritzburg; University of Fort Hare, Alice; University of South Africa (UNISA),Pretoria; William Humphrey's Art Gallery, Kimberley; University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.[28.]

4:3 Painting

i. GLADYS MGUDLANDLU (1925-1979)

Not only was Gladys Mgudlandlu the first black woman to hold an exhibition in Africa (in 1961), she was also the first significant woman painter in the history of urban black South African art. After Pemba, she was the only sixties painter from the Cape Province. Mgudlandlu was self taught and was one of the few painters of this period who was independent of any institution. Born in Peddie in the Ciskei in 1925, she moved to Nyanga and then to Guguletu township outside Cape Town, where she lived until her death in 1979. A descendent of missionaries of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in the Ciskei, she won recognition from the local community in Peddie for her clay modelling, and mural painting, creating mural-designs with different local clay colours; red from Peddie, blue from Bathurst and white from Grahamstown[1].

"Everyone liked my designs. At Christmas people used to come and ask me to do the designs on the walls inside and outside their huts. I used the brilliant local clays, and also things like feathers and kafir corn, which had never been used before. It was only when I came to Cape Town I realized these things were important. To us they were just play."(Adams 1962)[2].

After obtaining a teacher's certificate from Lovedale Training College, Mgudlandlu went to Victoria Hospital to learn nursing. In 1944 she worked at Brooklyn Chest Hospital, Cape Town, and in 1948 joined the Athlone Bantu Community School, where she remained until illness forced her to stop teaching in 1978[3].

Neville Dubow[4] sees Mgudlandlu's painting as fusing the spirit and character of the painting of Maggie Laubser and Pranas Domsaitis[5]; her folk-lore and love for living things brought her

close to Laubser, while her ability to infuse "her deep rooted images with some kind of spiritual content " recalls Domsaitis. Berman[6]. categorises Mgudlandlu's art as 'naive' as a result of her combined use of 'dream-like visions', folk tales and 'naive compositions'. Mgudlandlu wrote original folk-tales which she hoped one day to publish with her own illustrations[7]. Of her own work she says, "I think my paintings are revealing something of the African spirit and vision. I paint in parables and that is what the African people in Nyanga love."[8].

Gladys Mgudlandlu lived and painted in a small two-roomed council house in Nyanga, overlooking sand dunes where local black children played. She taught during the day and painted at night, by the light of an old paraffin lamp. Sacrifices were made to pay for oil paint and canvasses, which she painted flat on the floor instead of using an easel[9].

A deeply religious and spiritual woman, Mgudlandlu believed her painting was a divine gift which she wished to share with the Nyanga community who respectfully called her 'Gladys the African Queen'[10].

Mgudlandlu's work reflects strong spiritual ties with rural Africa. Executed in pencil, inks, water-colour, gouache or oil, her works are marked by a strong sense of pattern and organic form, coupled with exotic and bright colour. The images in her painting come from within, recollections from her childhood, linked to the soil and creatures of Africa, and inspired by memories of folk- tales told by her grandmother. However, her lanscapes, flowers, birds and people are not depictions of a

romanticised and idylic nature but rather of a primal and vital force. Her bird paintings, Watching Bird (c.1961/2), Eastern Cape Eagle (c.1963/3), No Life without Religion (c.1962/3), Birds (c. 1960s) (Plate 4.27 a),and Ducks (c.1960s) (Plate 4.28 a), present colourful animated creatures linked to a mysterious dream world which has a reality of its own. There is a monumentality in her treatment of form and in landscapes Nyanga Landscape (c. 1962/3) (Plate 4.27), Snow on Eastern Cape Mountain (c.1961/2) , Landscape (1961) (Plate 4.28a.) and Fort Peddie (c1961/2) the entire surface of the canvas pulsates with energy. Dubow describes these works saying,"...she piles up contours of hills and mountains to create terraced structures which although earth-bound always seem to reach for the sky: it is as though they were thrust up by some mighty compulsive heave from within ..."[11].

The source of Mgudlandlu's strong pattern and gestural brush technique can be traced to traditional Xhosa mural paintings, where rhythm and expansiveness of paint gesture are afforded by the scale of wall surfaces .The organic forms of plants, trees, flowers and animals are also found in Xhosa murals. Mgudlandlu's painterly brush marks have a spontaneity and tactility, evocative of the texture of paint applied to rough mud-wall surfaces. Her images and designs are executed in bright colours which, unlike mural earth clay-colours, are made possible in the cadmium range of oil and water paints. Broad brushstrokes carry colour and form with little attention to detail. Her concern is with the immediacy of artistic creation and personal expression which serves as an emotional purgative, leaving little room for the particulars of realistic anatomical structure. (Plate 4.26 a/b)

"You know it seems to me like a wheel in my head. It is always there, I can feel it turning over. And then one day it begins to turn faster. It gives me quite a headache. It makes me feel sick and I know if I don't paint I'll go mad. So I paint and paint 'till the wheel slows down again." (The Cape Times 1963)[12].

(See Plates 4.26 - 4.48a.)

A list of exhibitions, awards, commissions and collections of her work up to 1980 is as follows:

Exhibitions

1961 Room 404, 47 Parliament Street, Cape Town (solo);
Port Elizabeth (solo).
1962 Rodin Gallery, Cape Town (solo).
1963 Durban Art Museum (Art SA Today);
Rodin Art Gallery, Cape Town (solo).
1965 (solo).

Awards

1963 Art SA Today (award)

Commissions

1960s Murals for the Department of Bantu Education.

Collections

King George VI Art Gallery, Port Elizabeth; University of Fort Hare, Alice.[13].

ii. EPHRAIM NGATANE (1938-1971)

Ephraim Ngatane was one of the first students at Polly Street, and after Sekoto was one of the first painters to turn his attention to subjects taken from township life. Painted in water-colour and oil, his works deal with the raw 'reality' of township life, with none of the romantic or picturesque images which occur in idealized studies of black life by European artists in the 1960's[14]. Born in 1938 in Maseru, Lesotho, Ngatane moved to Johannesburg with his parents in 1943. He attended Rooke Memorial

School and later Orlando High School. In 1952 Ngatane joined Polly Street where he learnt water-colour painting, amongst other painting processes. Later, in 1954, Ngatane received art tuition from the Reverend Duncan Hall, an American missionary at St.Peter's School, Rosettenville in Johannesburg[15].

An early formative influence on Ngatane's use of water-colour came from Durant Sihlali who was originally a member of the Chiawelo Group of painters in Soweto[16]. (Sihlali joined Polly Street, but left in disagreement with the Polly Street approach, to pursue a tighter, more academic style of water-colour painting.) Ngatane followed Sihlali, and painted with him privately at his Soweto home[16a].

A comparison between early Ngatane water-colours (Plate 4.30 b) and Sihlali's work (Plate 4.29 a/b; 4.30 a) reveals a similarity in naturalistic style, and in choice of township imagery. Images, for example, descriptive of densely-packed streets, groups of people walking home, queuing at water taps, women washing or cooking, bare-foot children playing outside make-shift dwellings of wooden board and corregated iron, surrounded by debris. By 1963 however, Ngatane's water-colour technique became more explorative and spontaneous, with an interest in wash affects and less attention to representation . For example, two untitled works of 1963 (Plate 4.32 a/b) have a greater emphasis on compositional design; human forms and architectural structures have a stronger formalization , and attention is given to the pattern of colour, and light and shade across the picture surface. It is debatable whether works such as these of Ngatane are 'illustrative' or 'interpretative'. According to Dubow

"Illustrative, yes; but also interpretative. These scenes are intensely personal, conceived with intensity and intensely set down without rancour or overt condemnation of the system which creates these ghettos." (The Cape Argus 1963)[17]. (See Plates 4.31 a; 4.33 a)

With the introduction of oil paint, Ngatane's work moves away from illustration, although his images remain descriptive. In many paintings, however, the arrangement of form, pattern and colour creates semi-abstract compositions. Paint is vigorously and generously applied with brush and palette knife. Pimville Township (no date), an untitled township scene in the Pretoria Art Museum (no date) (Plate 4.34) and Cyclists (no date) (Plate 4.35 a) and Soweto Reflections (c. 1969) (Plate 4.35 b) are characteristic of Ngatane's oil paintings, having stylised flat human forms set in shallow foreground spaces in front of buildings arranged in vertical and horizontal linear patterns. The painting surface is made up of slabs of thick, colourful paint, and the overall impression is one of frontality and flatness of form. Ngatane's last paintings took on a 'mosaic-like' quality with small square daubs of bright colour building up his animated compositions[18]. (Plate 4.36 a).

There appears to be nothing from African tradition in Ngatane's use of colour and form[19]., and his work most clearly represents a sociological response to the township environment. Unfortunately however, having earned a name for himself in the art world, his work became repetitive and diminished in artistic quality if not popular appeal[20]..

Ngatane died in 1971, at the age of 33, from tuberculosis. He was well known to artists of the same generation such as Ezrom Legae, Louis Maqhubela and Winston Saoli, who held him in high regard

both as a person, and as an artist, for his short lived talent and contribution to the history of township painting[21].

(See Plates 4.29 - 4.36).

A list of exhibitions, awards, commissions and collections of Ngatane's work up to 1980 is as follows:

Exhibitions

1960 Lawrence Adler Galleries,Johannesburg (Artists of Fame and Promise).
1962 Cape Town; Pretoria (solo);
Adler Fielding Galleries, Johannesburg (Artists of Fame and Promise; solo);
Lidchi Art Gallery, Johannesburg.
1963 Adler Fielding Galleries, Johannesburg;
SA Association of Arts, Pretoria;
Lidchi Art Gallery, Cape Town (Polly Street Artists).
1964 Adler Fielding Galleries, Johannesburg (solo);
William Humphreys Art Gallery, Kimberely (Transvaal Artists).
1965 Adler Fielding Galleries, Johannesburg (African Art 1965).
1966 Pretoria (Republic Festival Exhibition);
Piccadilly Gallery, London, UK (African Art Exhibition);
Adler Fielding Galleries, Johannesburg (solo).
1969 Champs Elyses Gallery, Johannesburg;
Helen de Leeuw Gallery, Johannesburg (Polly Street Artists).
1970 Champs Elyses Gallery, Johannesburg.
1972 Gallery 101, Johannesburg (group).

Commissions

1969-71 Murals in St Mary's Church and Mooki Memorial School, Orlando, Soweto.

Collections

Pretoria Art Museum; Sandton Town Council; William Humphreys Art Gallery, Kimberely; University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg[22].

iii. LOUIS MAQHUBELA (1939-)

Louis Maqhubela, more than any other black South African painter working in the 1960's and 70's has broken away from township themes, creating idiosyncratic images with transcendental and poetic substance. Born in 1939 in Durban, he moved to Johannesburg in 1951 with his parents. He attended Orlando High School in Soweto until c. 1958, and in c. 1957, having heard about the Polly Street School from Ngatane, began part-time art classes under the tuition of Cecil Skotnes and Sydney Kumalo[23]. Maqhubela lives and works in Soweto.

In its earliest stages Maqhubela's work revealed his interest in literature[24]. L.Watter records that while at school the poetry of John Keats inspired Maqhubela to produce a series of drawings, which although based on township events were presented with "an amalgam of humour and imaginative vision." In 1959 a drawing from this series, The Followers of Bacchus, won a prize in the Rembrandt Tobacco Company School Exhibition, The Joy of Living[25].

"The young Maqhubela's interpretation consisted of a group of men and women who sprawl against each other, filled to the brim with the 'blushful Hippocrene'. The connotations of this ironically depicted scene are obvious. The shabby clothes, the distorted bodies, the meagre pleasure in scanty joys, these were not represented as an Hogarthian attack on vice but instead as an indictment." (Watter 1969: 25)[26].

At this stage many of the students at Polly Street, including Maqhubela, were influenced by Kumalo whose strong personal drawing style combined pseudo-cubist form with elements from traditional African sculpture. According to Skotnes, students battled to find their own mode of expression and worked extremely hard to break away from this Kumaloesque style; the appeal of

which lay possibly in his success in responding to urban subjects while rendering them with a distinctly African formalization[27].

In 1963, Skotnes recommended that Maqhubela should study art with Italian painter and printmaker, Guiseppe Cattaneo (in Johannesburg) who introduced him to conte crayon and oil paint. From 1963 to 1967 Maqhubela produced large works in conte crayon and in 1965 his work was included in the London exhibition of African Artists at the Piccadilly Gallery[28].

In 1966 Maqhubela earned himself national recognition, winning first prize on the Artists of Fame and Promise[29] exhibition in Johannesburg for his large mixed-media work, Peter's Denial (Plate 4.39 a). The prize included a return air-fare to Europe[30]. Maqhubela travelled to London and to Cornwall where he worked for three months with the South African artist, Douglas Portway whose own oil paintings had a consolidating influence in style and technique on Maqhubela's painting[31].

Prior to 1966 and Portway's influence, Maqhubela's subject matter lay between anecdotal scenes of township or urban black life (e.g. Goat Thieves, Fight over a Woman [Plate 4.37 a], The Blacksmith [Plate 4.38 b] and Washing Day [Plate 4.37 b]) and figurated subjects with more universal and poetic reference[32], (e.g. Two Dogs in the Wind, conte works such as prize-winning Peter's Denial, The Exiled King, Hunting Scene [Plate 4.39 b] and Birds in Flight [Plate 4.40 b].) His strongest works of this period regardless of subject, are not 'realist', but tend towards the imaginative and symbolic traits which surface more consciously in post-1966 paintings. His use of conte is

controlled and forceful; heavy black outline defines the monumental 'archaic' figurated forms, with highlights obtained by scraping down to the surface of the paper. In works such as Birds in Flight (circa late 60's) (Plate 4.40 b) a rich texture is built up with the addition of strips of paper collage, extending the colour-range of intense blues, reds and yellows and creating a stained-glass affect.

After working with Portway, Maqhubela's paintings in oil and mixed media (combination of oil paint, monotype and paintstick) which replaced conte as his main media, evolved significantly. Most immediately noticeable is the introduction of semi-abstract composition and form , non-representational treatment of space, graceful and delicate delineation of shapes, and pale, transparent glazes of colour. His images combine figurative and abstract elements, and a poetic symbolism reminiscent of the German transcendental expressionist, Paul Klee[33].

Paintings such as Moments of Vision (circa 1968/9) (Plate 4.41), Horse-Wire-Bird (1968/9) (Plate 4.42), Two Figures (circa 1969/70), Figure and Bird (1971), and Figure, Horse and Birds (1972) (Plate 4.46), are typical of Maqhubela's mature style. Transparent and diffused colours stain the canvasses, creating an ethereal, tissue-paper space. Painted wire-like figures of humans, birds and horses, (evocative of wire toys created by township children),float weightlessly within abstract fields of Prussian blue and Venetian red , appearing "to be protagonists in some undefined mythical saga" with occasional "suggestions of an African folklore theme"[34]. When asked about his repeated reference to birds, Maqhubela replied,"...because they represent

freedom - what could be more free than a bird? Now please don't think I am being political. I do not mean freedom for a racial group but rather freedom for the individual."[35]. Paintings such as Moments of Vision (Plate 4.41), Horse-Wire-Bird (Plate 4.42), Figure, Horse and Birds (Plate 4.46), Large Figure, Horse and Birds (1971) (Plate 4.47) and Landscape with Sun, Figure Horse and Birds (1972) (Plate 4.48) incorporate thin graphic lines, which trace the barest outlines of boulders, huts and trees, in a web of interconnecting abstract images. Maqhubela's use of line in this way " both creates and links symbols into one living entity, with Man no more important than the elements of his environment."[36]. These paintings have a mystical quality and convey a mood of metaphysical silence inspired by the poetry of Donne, Keats and Pope, as well as Zen Buddhism[36a].

"From these sources, and from his own meditations on experienced reality, he formulates his ideas. He writes them out in a kind of associative poetry. These poems he considers merely an adjunct - a clearing-ground - for the crystalization of images. Maqhubela's plastic conceptions are then not the results of mere automatism, accidentaly caused, but the fruit of his mystical and philosophical meditations." (Watter 1969:26)[37].

(See Plates 4.37 - 4.48).

A list of exhibitions, awards, commissions and collections of Maqhubela's work up to 1980 is as follows:

Exhibitions

1961 Lawrence Adler Galleries, Johannesburg (Artists of Fame and Promise).
1962 Adler Fielding Galleries, Johannesburg (Artists of Fame and Promise).
1963 Lidchi Art Gallery, Johannesburg (Polly Street Artists).
1966 Adler Fielding Galleries, Johannesburg (Artists of Fame and Promise).
1967 Adler Fielding Galleries, Johannesburg (solo);
Piccadilly Gallery, London UK. (African Art);
Durban Art Museum (Art SA Today).
1968 Lidchi Art Gallery, Johannesburg (solo).

1969 Camden Arts Centre, London, UK. (Contemporary African Art);
Helen de Leeuw Gallery, Johannesburg (Polly Street Artists);
Durban Art Museum (Art SA Today).
1970 Gallery International, Cape Town (solo);
Lidchi Art Gallery, Johannesburg (three-person exhibition with Sydney Kumalo and Geoffrey Armstrong);
Johannesburg Art Gallery (Johannesburg Artists - Diamond Jubilee of Johannesburg Art Gallery).
1974 Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (Festival of SA Graphics and Multiples 1974);
Gallery International, Cape Town (group).
1976 Gallery International, Cape Town (group).

Awards

1959 Rembrandt Company's School Exhibition (prize).
1961 Artists of Fame and Promise (second prize).
1966 Artists of Fame and Promise (second prize).
1969 Art SA Today (Cambridge Shirt award).

Commissions

Late 1950s - Mosaics for the township halls in Jabavu ('White City'), Soweto.
(date unknown) - Six Murals at Jubilee Social Centre.
Mosaics at Mofolo Park Recreation Centre, Soweto.
Mosaics at Oppenheimer Park, Soweto.

Collections

Africana Museum, Johannesburg; Anglo American; Johannesburg Art Gallery; SA National Gallery; Standard Bank; University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg[38].

iv. LEONARD MATSOSO (1949-)

An artist who is interested in the myths and customs of Africa, Leonard Matsoso creates mythical figures, half man, half beast, expressing psychological tensions of great intensity. Born in 1949 in Pimville, Johannesburg, Matsoso began to study art seriously from the age of 12, attending the Jubilee Art Centre while still at school (from 1962 to 1969), where he was taught by Cecil Skotnes, Sydney Kumalo, Bill Hart and Ezrom Legae. In 1972 he studied part-time with painter and art teacher, Bill Ainslie

at his studio in Johannesburg. Matsoso lives and works in Soweto[39].

In the early seventies Matsoso was promoted in the professional South African and international art worlds as an important new black artist ; his first solo exhibition which took place in 1971 at the Goodman Gallery , Johannesburg, was quickly followed by a string of group shows[40]. (See list of exhibitions). In 1972 he won the UTA Pavement Art Competition prize enabling him to visit London, Paris and Rome. In the same year he participated in a group show in Miami, Florida, USA, and his work was chosen for the Venice Biennale, but was not exhibited due to South Africa's exclusion that year. However, the following year a black and white drawing of Matsoso's won the Special Award for Drawing at the 1973 Sao Paulo Bienal[41].

Works which exemplify Matsoso's early black and white conte style include Themba Deciding to go back Home (1971) (Plate 4.51), Face of a Charging Induna (1971) (Plate 4.52 a),Man Smoking a Pipe (1971) (Plate 4.52 b), Human head and buck skeleton in landscape (1971), A Legend of the Basuto Warrior (1973),The Agony and the Beast (1973) (Plate 4.49), Man with Heavy Burden (1973), and Bull Fight (1973) (Plate 4.50 b) and the Sao Paulo Bienal drawing, Figure (1973). In these works Matsoso presents fantastical figures from African tribal history or mythology. The figures are presented individually filling the entire picture space and represent an aspect of the African spirit which is primeval and often malevolent. Matsoso is involved with creating visual equivalents of an elemental African force, part human and part animal, which resides within the psyche of the artist himself.

These beasts and the manner in which he presents them evoke an African antiquity. Applying conte crayon in detailed textures of cross-hatching and stippling, he creates 'tactile' images which appear to have been hewn from stone or carved from knotted, twisted wood.

Stylistically, Matsoso's work is expressionistic[42], although his emotional forms and technique are controlled, with no specifically 'expressive' marks. He is essentially a draughtsman, and his later works, which incorporate colour in the form of oil pastel or oil paint, retain a distict linear or graphic quality. In Berman's words,

"He favoured the graphic colouring medium because it afforded direct manipulative control, and not because he aimed at linear effects. Indeed, complex though the contours of his images often are, the impression is of volume rather than of line. The hall-mark of a Matsoso composition is the pronounced plasticity of his powerful interlocking forms." (1983: 278)[43].

In the late 1970's and early 1980's Matsoso's work changed considerably . De-emphasising an interest in mythical imagery his compositions turned to depictions of stately historical or heroic figures expressing power by means of militaristic, heraldic qualities. Formally, his compositions introduced strong colours such as deep reds, blues and yellows, with greater attention given to a sense of geometrical plasticity in his treatment of human form. It is tempting to refer to these monumental images as 'sculptural', not only in their plasicity, but also in that the shapes of the heads, torso's and bodies, refer indirectly to a 'geometric' stylization found in the traditional sculpture of, for example the Baule, of the Ivory Coast. However, Matsoso's figures reveal none of the traditional anatomical distortion such

as enlarged heads of the aforesaid sculpture. On the contrary his later human figures are characterized by massive frames and comparatively small heads. This distortion engenders the distinct impression that the viewer is looking up at the African kings, Indunas , warriors and heroes who sit or stand against a low horizon line and a vast sky. Metaphorically Matsoso's heroes reflect a renaissance in African identity, but in a sense his paintings also represent a merging of , black African and white European cultures. Matsoso's images are post-colonial 'African', emerging triumphantly from white colonial domination. Characteristic works include The King and his Induna (1981) (Plate 4.53 a), Zulu Dancing (1981) (Plate 4.53 b), Himba Women (1980) (Plate 4.54) and From the River (circa 1981) (Plate 4.53 a). Figures in these works have a metallic quality, created by his use of "steel-greys and coppers - with small accents of chromatic reds, yellows or greens" with a "linear division of surfaces - recalling traditional, segmented breastplates and cuirasses."[44].

(See Plates 4.49 - 4.54).

A list of exhibitions, awards, commissions and collections of Matsoso's work up to 1980 is as follows:

Exhibitions

1970 Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (solo).
1971 Preston, UK (group);
Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (solo).
1972 Florida, USA (group);
Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (SA Graphics 1972).
1973 Sao Paulo, Brazil (Biennale).
1974 National Art Gallery, Athens, Greece (Contemporary SA Art);
National Arts Society, Johannesburg (African Art Exhibition);
Gallery International, Cape Town (group);

Goodman Gallery (Festival of SA Graphics and Multiples 1974).
1976 Canberra, Australia (SA Art - Canberra week.).
1978 Sharp Festival, Grahamstown (Festival Art Exhibition).
1978-79 West Germany - tour (SA Graphic Art - 1977).
1979 Bonn and West Germany - tour (Art from SA/ Art from Soweto); Nuremberg, West Germany (Watercolours from SA); Houston, USA (Arts Festival).
1979-80 SA Association of Arts, Johannesburg and Pretoria (Renaissance II '79).

Awards

1972 UTA Pavement Artists Competition, Hyde Park Shopping Cantre, Johannesburg (first prize - trip to Paris).
1973 Sao Paulo Bienal (prize).

Commissions

(date unknown) State Theatre, Pretoria

Collections

Johannesburg Art Gallery, Pretoria Art Museum; Sandton Town Council; Sanlam; SA National Gallery; University of Fort Hare, Alice; University of South Africa (UNISA), Pretoria; University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg[45].

4:4 Drawing and Mixed Media

i. TSHIDISO ANDREW MOTJUOADI (1935-1968)

Andrew Motjuoadi's drawings are detailed observations of intimate township scenes, painstakingly executed in graphite. His work is important in that it presents anecdotes of township life, which document the people and objects within this urban landscape in the 60s. Born in the Northern Transvaal in 1935, he lived in Mamelodi township in Pretoria. Almost nothing is known about his life, except that he was well educated, and at the time of his death (from a stroke) in 1968, he was studying for a B.Sc. at the University of the North. After his death, a university lecturer from UNISA, Peter Rodda, undertook to locate Motjuoadi's family in Mamelodi, and obtained a few of his drawings held in their possession[1].

Comparing the contemporary experiences and sources of African artists in 1963 Julian Beinart wrote:

"If you are a painter and live in Khartoum you may choose to involve yourself with an ancient visual tradition like Islamic calligraphy. That is what Ahmed Mohammed Shibrain does.If you are a young Nigerian and have an Ibo background, you may paint elongated mask-like faces, and this is how Demas Nwoko paints. But what do you paint if you grow up in a South African township with no particular heritage of your own, only something new that evolves out of the mixture of different people all living together in a crowded metropolis?" (Beinart 1963:40)[2].

Although Motjuoadi turned to the surrounding township environment for his subject matter he was not interested in the banal and harsh daily existance which attracted Ngatane, for example. Instead he transformed scenes of street life into a pageant of pattern, with microscopic attention to detail. His pencil drawings, Township Scene (c.1962), (Plate 4.55 a.), Township

Musicians (c.1962) (Plate 4.59) and Kraal Scene (Plate 4.60) are drawn with the eye of a scientist observing the textures of flesh and hair, earth and foliage, and the materials of beadwork, clothing, brick, concrete,tin ,wood, and glass. His sensitivity to the textural quality of these details gives his work a humane quality, capturing the postures, gestures and expressions of his subjects with their surrounding paraphernalia .

"First there are the major characters and objects; the shebeen queens, the penny whistlers, the tsosis, the everpresent corregated-iron roofs. Then there are the lesser people and objects; a man relieving himself behind a wall, a sleeping dog, a Consul jam jar." (Beinart 1963:40)[3].

While describing the particularities of objects and events, there is at the same time, a naive disparity between naturalistic representation of detail and the distortions of scale and proportion. Men and women are shown in large scale in sections of the picture plane, while figures in the middle-ground are reduced to a disproportionately smaller scale. Objects too, such as the fire-drum in Township Scene (1962) (Plate 4.55) are as large as nearby humans. Distortions in his drawings are not of the stereotypical nature found in the drawings of Julian Motau and Ben Macala, which depict humans with large conventionalised heads, eyes, hands and feet. Motjuoadi perceives the shape and structure of human anatomy and inanimate objects with exactitude and excellent draughtsmanship[4]. In Playing Cards (1966) (Plate 4.61 b.) and Township Musicians (1966) (Plate 4.61 a.) textile patterns on the clothing of the youths do not merely serve to decorate, but simultaneously describe the underlying anatomical form. There is a photographic quality in details such as the well-used, smooth playing cards, worn rubber 'tackie' soles, the textures of wool and cotton clothes, veined shiny dark skin and

black curly hair in Playing Cards. In Township Musicians, the animated fingers of the penny-whistlers, the busy details of clothing folds and patterns, and the stern-faced concentration of the musicians, create a composition of compelling interest. All Motjuoadi's drawings are executed on a large scale, almost a metre square, accommodating vigorous pencil marks which range from carefully controlled shaded tones and lightly sketched contours to broad sweeping lines.

(See Plates 4.55 - 4.62)

A list of exhibitions, awards, commissions and collections of his work up to 1980 is as follows:

Exhibitions

1962 Adler Fielding Galleries, Johannesburg (Artists of Fame and Promise).
1963 Durban Art Museum (Art SA Today.
1965 Piccadilly Gallery, London, UK (African Art).
1966 Adler Fielding Galleries, Johannesburg (Artists of Fame and Promise).
1971 SA Association of Arts, Johannesburg (solo - memorial exhibition arranged by Esme Berman).
1972 Gallery 101, Johannesburg (group).

Awards

1963 Art SA Today (prize winner);
1966 Artists of Fame and Promise Exhibition (award for 'Best Non-European Artist').

Commissions

1964 Background scenery for credit titles of Cornel Wilde's film The Naked Prey.

Collections

Pretoria Art Museum; Pelmama Permanent Collection, Johannesburg; SA National Gallery; University of Zululand.[5]

ii. EZROM KGOBOKANYO LEGAE (1937-)

Legae has established himself as both sculptor and graphic artist. His drawings are covered in this section, with a separate entry for his sculpture in section 4:2. Legae was born in 1937 in Vrededorp, Transvaal. He attended Saint Cyprians School in Sophiatown and Madebane High School in Western Bantu Town, Johannesburg, where he completed Standard 9. In 1959 he studied at Polly Street Art Centre under Cecil Skotnes, Edoardo Villa and Sydney Kumalo. Legae replaced Kumalo as teacher at Jubilee art centre in 1964, and in 1969 travelled to the USA on an exchange scholarship[6]. He currently lives in Soweto and is the Director of the Diepmeadow Town Council Art Project.

Legae comes from an artistic family. Two of his brothers have also studied art. Abner Legae attended Polly Street in the early '60s and it was he who encouraged Ezrom to take art seriously and to study there. Abner still paints in his spare time, and Legae's other brother is a sign-writer[7]. Early in his career Legae indicated a desire to become a professional artist and an art teacher, wishing to bring art into as many black homes as possible. "I want to create and teach. I want to be internationally known. I would naturally want to have my name spoken of right into posterity."[8] He made a name for himself in the late 60s as a sculptor (see 4.12) and in the late '70s turned his talents to graphic media, producing accomplished drawings in mixed-media.

Major drawings include the Chicken Series (1978) (Plate 4.63; 4.65), Statement for 1980 and Freedom is Dead - Series 1 (Plate

4.64) exhibited at the Goodman Gallery, in 1978 and 1979 respectively. Freedom is Dead - Series 1 was exhibited at the Reglamento Bienal International De Arte - Valparaiso 1979 in Chile, where it recieved an honorary mention[9].

Legae's drawings contain intricate graphite images in grey tones, with areas of colour in conte and coloured pencil, with his subjects set against empty backgrounds of neutral tones. According to Berman[10], his drawings began with representations of humans, for example Mother and Child (1979), "which acquired bird-like limbs and feathers, while timid and scrawny fowls adopted human postures"[11] and through which he attempted to conceptualise issues of a socio-political nature. His iconography includes humans figures, animals, insects, birds, and organic objects (such as bones) and plants in a surrealist manner which transcends mundane associations. Legae creates metaphors, symbolic of states of restriction and oppression ; flayed horses in Equus (1980) (Plate 4.67; 4.68) , feeble chickens hatching from eggs in Chicken Series, and earth-bound caged birds in Freedom is Dead - Series 1. Images of the "doomed fowl and crippled dove" and "predatory images of buzzards and locusts" present "disturbing references to vulnerable nests and endangered flight."[12]

(See Plates 4.63 - 4.68)

A list of Legae's exhibitions appears in 4.2.

iii. MSLABA DUMILE (MSLABA ZWELIDUMILE MXGAJI) (c. 1940-)

Mslaba Dumile's drawings are social commentaries on township life, exemplifying a style in black art that emerged in the 1960's which Berman refers to as "intensely humanistic expressionism."[13.] Born into a Xhosa family in Worcester in the Cape Province in c. 1940, he moved to Cape Town with his family in 1946. In 1947 his mother died and his father, a policeman turned evangelist, travelled around South Africa taking the young Dumile with him. When he was 11 years old he moved to live with an uncle in Johannesburg.[14.]

Dumile became interested in drawing from an early age, and is self taught. When his father died in 1959, he worked for Block and Leo Wald Sculpture, Pottery and Plastics Foundry in Jeppe[15.], where he decorated ceramic pots with "standard 'native scenes' (aloes, huts, hillsides, blanketed figures)"[16.], while continuing to make his own drawings. In 1963 he started carving soap-stone sculptures. In the same year he was admitted to Baragwanath Sanatorium with tuberculosis, and he remained there for three months. Here he met Ezrom Legae and together they executed mural decorations in the sanatorium. After his recovery, Dumile was 'discovered' by Mme. Haenggi of Gallery 101, Johannesburg, who commissioned him to make work for sale in the gallery[16a.].

Despite earning a name for himself as a sculptor, Dumile is best known for energetic drawings, which employ expressive charcoal or crayon line. Described by E. King[17.] as " a Goya of the townships", his drawings reveal a tragic and sardonic view of humans and animals, twisted, suffering or in pain. These images

are intensely personal accounts of coming to terms with reality and survival and "not only tell the story of suffering and deprivation of his people in South Africa, but also act as a safety valve for his own personal pain and anger."[18]. A certain angst and pathos pervades his images of woman and children, as in Woman and Children (c. 1966) (Plate 4.6 a) and Harpy (c. 1966) (Plate 4.69 b). Thanks to Mother (c.1967) (Plate 4.70 a) depicts three naked children who hand flowers to an unhappy mother, who looks at the empty plate held by one of the children. In Respect of the Living and the Dead,the Living and the Unborn (1967) (Plate 4.70 b) depicts an 'earth mother' with leaves sprouting from her head; in her womb/lap two babies cling to each other while in a raised hand she holds eating utensils and a plate filled with embryos.

Images of violence and destruction in Railway Accident (1966) (Plate 4.71 a) and impending death in African Guernica (c.1967?) (Plate 4.72 a) reveal his morbid preoccupations. Dumile's problems with the South African authorities who refused him residence in Soweto[19]., were a constant source of personal stress in addition to the chaos and violence he experienced around him. However he is not without sardonic insights:

" One day I was in the Township with this driver and we went past a line of men who were handcuffed. I don't know what it was for, maybe for having no pass or something. Anyway the driver said, 'Why don't you ever draw things like that?' I didn't know what to say. Then just when I was thinking, a funeral for a child came past. A funeral on a Monday morning. You know, all the people in black on a lorry. And as the funeral went past those men in handcuffs, those men watched it go past, and those with hats took off their hats. I said to the guy I was with, 'That's what I want to draw!'" (Simon 1968:43)[20].

Religious subjects are satirised in many of his commentaries, for example An Age (c.1968) shows a figurative family tree with a

youth eating grapes (with a knife and fork) while perched on a preachers head, who in turn grasps for a wild woman's arm. The Resurrection (Plate 4.73 a/b) triptych has more overt political overtones, white figures in a somnolent state are symbolically crucified standing on their upturned coffins. On the subject of art historians and preachers Dumile says:

"Art historians are like preachers. They say this happened then and that happened then and this is what these people say and that is what those people say. And then you go along after church and you say,'What do you ,yourself think?' And he says,'Get out of here you ruffian!' and he would like to have you locked away, but really it is he who should be locked away. They can't tell you the truth - art historians or preachers. The artist knows more because he is working..." (Simon 1968:42) 21.

In 1968 Dumile left South Africa having been refused residence permits to live in either Johannesburg or Cape Town. He now lives in London, although he has considered returning to Africa, possibly to live in Swaziland[22].

Dumile is an internationally recognised artist. In Ngakane's words he is representative of those African artists "who are not only genuine products of their environments, but also speak loudly and clearly for their continent."[23].

(See Plates 4.69 - 4.75)

A list of exhibitions, awards, commissions and collections of his work up to 1980 is as follows:

Exhibitions

1963 Gallery 101, Johannesburg (solo).
1965 Johannesburg (Transvaal Academy).
1966 Gallery 101, Johannesburg (solo);
SA - Tour (SA Breweries Art Prize Exhibition);
Pretoria (Republic Festival Exhibition);
Durban Art Museum (solo);

Adler Fielding Galleries, Johannesburg (Artists of Fame and Promise).
1967 Johannesburg (Transvaal Academy - solo);
Sao Paulo, Brazil (Biennale);
Gallery 101, Johannesburg (solo);
Adler Fielding Galleries, Johannesburg (Sculpture SA 1900-1967).
1968 Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (sketches from a private collection - solo).
1969 Grosvenor Gallery, London, UK (solo);
Camden Arts Centre, London, UK (Contemporary African Art).
1970 Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (The 51 Club Winter Art Exhibition);
Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (Exhibition from the collection of Desmond Fisher).
1971 Gallery 101, Johannesburg (Group 51).
1972 Gallery 101, Johannesburg (group).
1975 Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (SA Sculpture);
Gallery 21, London, UK (African Art from SA).
1977 Gallery 21, Johannesburg;
SA National Gallery (Cape Town Festival - Drawings by SA Artists).
1978 Exhibitions at: Rand Afrikaans University; Pretoria Art Museum; University of the Orange Free State, Bloemfontein; William Humphreys Art Gallery, Kimberley (University of Fort Hare collection - Contemporary African Art in SA).

Awards

1966 SA Breweries Art Competition (merit award)
1971 African Studies Centre UCLA Art Competition (first prize).

Commissions

1978-80 Mural for the University of California, Los Angeles;
Triptych of drawings for the American Committee on Africa's 'Unlock Apartheid Jails' campaign.

Collections

Anne Bryant Art Gallery, East London; Durban Art Museum; Pretoria Art Museum; SA National Gallery; University of Fort Hare, Alice[24].

iv. TITO ZUNGU (c.1949-)

Tito Zungu began working on his unique envelope drawings in the 1960's, although his first one-man exhibition was held only in 1982[25]. Zungu, from Natal, is one of the few artists of the 1960's and 1970's who is completely self-taught. He is also

unusual in that he does not use figuration in his art. Born in KwaZulu in the Mapumulo district in c . 1949, Zungu grew up on a farm. At 14 he experimented with modelling clay "cars, houses, cows and people."[26]. He moved to Pinetown in Natal where he worked in a dairy and later to Durban where he worked as a gardener[27].

Zungu was never sent to school because his father claimed that he " had it all up there anyway"[28]. As a result he never learnt to read or write but copied writing in an attempt to teach himself. In the process he developed a personal pictographic method, using writing tools such as ball-point and felt -tip pens.

Zungu recalls that he started to draw in 1957 (while still in Mapumulo) when he made outlines of buildings and ships in pencil. "From Mapumulo, we could see the the ships on the sea, and I often desired to have a close-up view of them so I could draw one. I was never so fortunate, so I drew my impressions of them."[29]. Moving to Durban, he was able to experience 'close-up' views of skyscrapers, ships in the harbour and aircraft overhead, which he still represented without sacrificing his imaginative perceptions. His use of multi-coloured ball-point and felt-tip pens facilitated the development of an elaborate polychrome schema. Characteristic images include multi-storeyed building facades in brick and mosaic patterns, different window and roof styles, embellished with high-rise towers often with clock faces; ships with a multitude of funnels, windows, ladders, lights and flags; and aeroplanes with detailed wings, tails, and engines.

All Zungu's drawings have a geometric matrix with details reduced to geometrical shapes, square, rectangle, and triangle, but with

scant use of the circle except when representing clocks, lights, and transistor knobs. His works are pictorial metaphors of the 'concrete jungle', and the complex social structures that make up urban life. The form and style in which Zungu presents his non-figurative city images, have many parallels in Nguni bead-work. Nguni bead-work is an autonomous code and sign system[30]. Using ball-point pen Zungu composes minute bead-like dots, lines, squares , and other minuscule areas of colour into carefully constructed and layered geometrical designs. (Images of twentieth century technology are also common in the iconography of some Ndebele mural designs.) (See Chapter 2)

Zungu's original format was the paper envelope. (Plates 4.76-4.79). Since he could not write 'letters' he chose to 'draw' 'letters', externalized on the outside of the envelopes. Included in many of his designs are 'drawn' phrases such as 'Made in South Africa Pty (LTD)' or his own name 'Mr Tito Zungu'. 'Writing' is an integral part of these compositions, it becomes decoration, that is, an art motif (Plates 4.78 b; 4.79 a/b). Works made in the 1960's generally had single picture motifs as decorative additions to the envelope (Plate 4.76 a), exactly fitting the format. As he developed in the 1970's his envelopes were filled with images covering the envelope surface (Plate 4.79 b), and later he began to work on conventional paper sizes (Plates 4.80; 4.81; 4.82; 4.83).

In the 1960's Zungu sold his envelopes to other black workers who like himself were gardeners, servants, and labourers[31]. Many of these people were township-dwelling, city-working migrants who sent letters to their families in rural outlying areas. "They

MUSIC DIP

	YEAR OF STUDY	8.30	9.10	9.50	10.30	11.10
MON.	1		JAZZ +	MUSIC THEORY BEGINNERS.	ENGLISH (TENTATIVE)	
	2		JAZZ THEORY	MUSIC THEORY GRADES 6-8	MUSIC THEORY GRADES 6-8	
	3					
TUES.	1		MUSIC THEORY FIRST YEARS	MUSIC THEORY FIRST YEARS		
	2	ENGLISH (TENTATIVE)	ENGLISH (TENTATIVE)	MUSIC THEORY GRADE 5	MUSIC THEORY GRADE 5	
	3	ENGLISH (TENTATIVE)	ENGLISH (TENTATIVE)			
WED.	1		ENGLISH (FIRST YEAR)	MUSIC THEORY (DOUBLE PERIOD		
	2	ENGLISH		AURAL SKILLS		
	3	ENGLISH			AURAL SKILLS	
THURS.	1		MUSIC	APPRECIATION		
	2	THEORY GRADE 5			JAZZ STUDIES	
	3		THEORY GRADE 6-8		JAZZ STUDIES	
FRIDAY	1		ENGLISH		MUSIC THEORY	
	2		MUSIC	HISTORY		
	3		MUSIC	HISTORY		

served as post-cards in the sense that they gave the recipient a visual picture of where the sender was."[32]. In 1970 he showed his drawings Jo Thorpe of the Institute for Race Relations in Durban. Ms. Thorpe recognised his talent and began collecting his work, protecting him from commercial exploitation, by only selling works to genuine admirers through the Institute's art gallery[33].. Collectors and promoters of his work at this time included Ronald Lewcock, Amancia Guedes and V. Meneghelli[34]..

(See Plates 4.76 - 4.83)

A list of exhibitions, awards, commissions and collections of Zungu's work up to his first solo exhibition in 1982 is as follows:

Exhibitions

1971 Durban Art Museum (Art SA Today).
1973 Durban Art Museum (Art SA Today).
1975 Durban Art Museum (Art SA Today).
1981 Durban Festival Art Exhibition).
1982 University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (solo - sponsered by Totem-Meneghelli Gallery and the SA Institute of Race Relations).

Awards

1971 Art SA Today (award).
1977 African Arts magazine, University of California, Los Angeles, USA (award).
1973 Art SA Today (Hajee Suliman Ebrahim award).
1981 Durban Festival Art Exhibition (award).

Commissions

1976 African Arts magazine, University of California, Los Angeles, USA (cover for tenth birthday edition).

Collections

African Art Centre, Durban; Durban Art Museum; Johannesburg Art Gallery; SA National Gallery; Tatham Art Gallery, Pietermaritzberg; University of South Africa (UNISA), Pretoria, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg[35]..

MUSIC DIP

	YEAR OF STUDY	8.30	9.10	9.50	10.30	11.10
MON.	1		JAZZ +	MUSIC THEORY BEGINNERS	ENGLISH (TENTATIVE)	
	2		JAZZ THEORY	MUSIC THEORY GRADES 6-8	MUSIC THEORY GRADES 6-8	
	3					
TUES,	1		MUSIC THEORY FIRST YEARS	MUSIC THEORY FIRST YEARS		
	2	ENGLISH (TENTATIVE)	ENGLISH (TENTATIVE)	MUSIC THEORY GRADE 5	MUSIC THEORY GRADE 5	
	3	ENGLISH (TENTATIVE)	ENGLISH (TENTATIVE)			
WED	1		ENGLISH (FIRST YEAR)	MUSIC THEORY (DOUBLE	PERIOD	
	2	ENGLISH		AURAL SKILLS		
	3	ENGLISH			AURAL SKILLS	
THURS	1		MUSIC	APPRECIATION		
	2	THEORY GRADE 5			JAZZ STUDIES	
	3		THEORY GRADE 6-8		JAZZ STUDIES	
FRIDAY	1		ENGLISH		MUSIC THEORY	
	2		MUSIC	HISTORY		
	3		MUSIC	HISTORY		

4:5 Printmaking

i. AZARIA MBATHA (1941-)

Azaria Mbatha, is one of the first printmakers in the history of black South African art. In 1966 he was also the first artist to graduate from the Rorke's Drift Fine Art course. What Sydney Kumalo was to Polly Street, Mbatha was to Rorke's Drift. He influenced the content and graphic styles of later black artists and set a standard in black art for fine monochromatic linocut prints. Born in 1940 in Mabeka, KwaZulu, Mbatha attended Ceza Secondary School, after which he worked as a clerk in Vryheid, northern Natal[1]. In 1961 he was admitted to Ceza Hospital with tuberculosis, where he was introduced to the linocutting process by Peder and Ulla Gowenius (later the directors of the E.L.C. Art and Craft Centre at Rorke's Drift) who also taught occupational craftwork at the hospital[2]. Mbatha trained at the Gowenius' rural workshop in Umpumulo and thereafter at Rorke's Drift when they transferred their activities in 1963. After graduating in 1966, he attended the Konst Fack Art School in Stockholm, on a Swedish Bursary, returning to Rorke's Drift in 1967 to teach printmaking. In 1969, Mbatha settled permanently in Sweden, where he completed a Fine Art degree at the University of Lund in 1978[3].

An important early work of Mbatha's which won him national recognition and a prize in the 1965 exhibition, Art South Africa Today (organised by the Institute of Race Relations) is the linocut print Revelation of Saint John (1965) (Plate 4.84)[4]. The work was described by Neville Dubow as "a graphic transcription

MUSIC DIP

YEAR OF STUDY		8.30	9.10	9.50	10.30	11.10
MON.	1		JAZZ +	MUSIC THEORY BEGINNERS	ENGLISH (TENTATIVE)	
	2		JAZZ THEORY	MUSIC THEORY GRADES 6-8	MUSIC THEORY GRADES 6-8	
	3					
TUES.	1		MUSIC THEORY FIRST YEARS	MUSIC THEORY FIRST YEARS		
	2	ENGLISH (TENTATIVE)	ENGLISH (TENTATIVE)	MUSIC THEORY GRADE 5	MUSIC THEORY GRADE 5	
	3	ENGLISH (TENTATIVE)	ENGLISH (TENTATIVE)			
WED	1		ENGLISH (FIRST YEAR)	MUSIC THEORY (DOUBLE	PERIOD	
	2	ENGLISH		AURAL SKILLS		
	3	ENGLISH			AURAL SKILLS	
THURS	1		MUSIC	APPRECIATION		
	2	THEORY GRADE 5			JAZZ STUDIES	
	3		THEORY GRADE 6-8		JAZZ STUDIES	
FRIDAY	1		ENGLISH		MUSIC THEORY	
	2		MUSIC	HISTORY		
	3		MUSIC	HISTORY		

of medieval iconography into an African idiom"[5]. Characteristic features include, a "Romanesque" quality in his forms and a frieze-type schema, narrating a sequence or series of events within a single composition. Both features being commonly associated with medieval art[6].

Mbatha's compositions often combine depictions of Biblical narrative with African custom and legend , making use of "African symbols and local imagery"[7]. The source of Mbatha's "Romanesque" medievalism Berman ascribes to either"...objects in the Mission surroundings or the personal influence or otherwise- of his teacher, Peder Gowenius."[8] Mbatha recalls the origin of his interest in Christian subjects while at Umpumulo. "Many theological students attended this school and their arguments on theological questions deepened my artistic vision by giving me new ideas and a deeper insight."[9] Added to the local Zulu tradition of wooden mat-rack carving[10], the influence of Northern European folk-art, and book and textile design, through the Gowenius', must be considered, especially as Rorke's Drift tapesty designs, perhaps more overtly, reveal the same stylistic influences.

The Revelation of Saint John (1965),Invitation (no date) (Plate 4.85 a), I Send You Out (no date), and Scenes from the Bible (c.1966) (Plate 4.85 b) illustrate Mbatha's formalised treatment of his subjects, with figures and groups arranged in rhythmical compositions with a strong graphic sense of pattern and design. Invitation depicts an African welcome to the Church; in the centre of the composition a Bishop conducts the conversion and civilization of rural people. The composition is reminiscent of

Romanesque and Gothic tympanum relief carvings with a large central Christ figure , surrounded by angels, lesser personages and animals[11]. I Send You Out represents missionaries, again the largest figures, in Africa converting 'savages' and wild beasts, who bow down in submission to the Church.

Mbatha's work from the 1970's and early 1980's emphasises composition and form rather than narrative content. Rich and Poor (c. 1980) (Plate 4.87 b) and Payday (The Boxing Match) (c.1980) (Plate 4.86 a) no longer present their subjects in frieze-like serialization, nor in the 'Romanesque'-format, having simplified compositions, created out of bold black and white shapes, with figurative forms incised in thin white lines. There is a strong sense of abstraction and a contrast between positive and negative abstract forms in for example He Has Lived His Life (1981) (Plate 4.86 b), Behind Bars (1981) (Plate 4.88 a) and The Son is Dead (1981) (Plate 4.88 b) which focus on themes relating to political and social events.

(See Plates 4.84 - 4.88).

A list of exhibitions, awards, commissions and collections of Mbatha's work up to 1980 is as follows:

Exhibitions

1965 Durban Art Museum (Art SA Today);
Durban Municipal Library Foyer (solo).
1966 Pretoria (Republic Fextival Exhibition);
Payne Brothers Department Store, Durban (group).
1967 Durban Art Museum (Art SA Today).
1968 Cape Town (solo).
1969 Gallery 21, Johannesburg (solo);
Camden Arts Centre, London, UK (Contemporary African Art);
Durban Art Museum (Art SA Today).
1970 National Museum, Stockholm, Sweden.
1971 Holland, Belgium, West Germany (SA Graphic Art);

Durban Art Museum (Art SA Today).
1972 Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (SA Graphics 1972).
1973 Durban Art Museum (Art SA Today).
1976 Brooklyn Museum and Public Library, New York, USA (Black SA Contemporary Graphics).
1979 National Society of Arts (NSA) - tour (group);
SA National Gallery (SA Printmakers).
1980 African Art Centre, Durban.

Awards

1965 Art SA Today (Cambridge Shirt award).
1966 Konst Fack Art School, Stockholm, Sweden (prize/scholarship).

Commissions

Murals in Rorke's Drift Dining Room; Lutheran Church, Vryheid; Esiqhomeni Church, Eshowe; Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity, Vosloorus Township, Transvaal.

Collections

Bradford Art Galleries and Museums, UK; Durban Art Museum; Johannesburg Art Gallery; The Campbell Collections of the University of Natal, Durban; King George VI Art Gallery, Port Elizabeth,; Malmo Museum, Stockholm, Sweden; Museum Of Modern Art, New York, USA; National Museum, Stockholm, Sweden; Pretoria Art Museum; Sandton Town Council; SA National Gallery; Tatham Art Gallery, Pietermaritzberg; University of South Africa (UNISA), Pretoria; University of Zululand; William Humpherys Art Gallery, Kimberely; University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg[12].

ii. DANIEL RAKGOATHE (1940-)

Daniel Rakgoathe graduated from the Rorke's Drift Art Centre in the 1970's. Thereafter he received an extensive formal training from a number of different sources. As a printmaker he specializes in monochromatic linocut, aquatint and etching processes.

Born in 1940 in Randfontein, Transvaal, Rakgoathe recalls being interested in art from the age of seven, when he began drawing pictures on the walls of the family dwelling[13]. With the help of scholarships he went through high school and in 1959 and 1960, he

trained to become a teacher at Botshabelo Training College[14]. He studied art at Ndaleni Art Centre at Richmond , Natal in 1961 and from 1973 to 1975 he studied Fine Art at Rorke's Drift under the Granaths and Ellerstons (See Chapter 3), where he learnt basic printmaking techniques (lino and wood-cut relief printing, and etching and aquatint intaglio printing.)[15]. In the early seventies, Ndaleni and Rorke's Drift were the only art schools open to blacks in South Africa[16]. (Polly Street by this stage had closed down.) In 1976 he studied Fine Art through UNISA (University of South Africa), and completed his degree at Fort Hare University, Eastern Cape, in 1978. This made him one of the first blacks to obtain a Fine Art degree from a South African university. In 1982 Rakgoathe was the first black South African art student to recieve a Fulbright Scholarship for two years postgraduate study at the University of California, Los Angeles[17].

Like other artists who trained at Rorke's Drift, Rakgoathe's work is concerned with poetic symbologies of a mystical and religious nature, rather than township subject matter. This phenomenon is partly explained by the rural, rather than urban, environment at Rorke's Drift and the Swedish/Christian influence at the mission. Rakgoathe's mystical imagery, however, originated prior to his Rorke's Drift years, and reflects a deep and on-going concern with metaphysical values. At Rorke's Drift, Rakgaothe's work cosolidated and certainly developed under the influence of European folk-art illustration brought to the centre by the Swedish textile weavers and printmakers. Rakgoathe's prints are narratives relating to African mythology , particularly the

veneration of ancestors and a belief in spirits, as well as Biblical themes[18]. Trap of Conscience (1972) (Plate 4.89 a) as the title implies, is concerned with the conflict between two cultural systems; Western Christian practice on the one hand and pagan African ancestor veneration on the other. A forlorn man, dressed in Christian vestments bows his head beneath a large sun. Behind him stand his ancestors with open mouths as if wailing, while unclothed (tribal) blacks tumble from the sky above. Solar Rapture (no date) (Plate 4.90) presents a crucifixion attended by dark figures who stand as though they also are crucified. An array of enormous constelations fill the night sky, while a scarecrow mirrors the symbol of the crucified Christ.

Common to many of Rakgoathe's prints are images of death; Death Messengers (1972) (Plate 4.89 b), Hero's Burial (c.1971) (Plate 4.93 a) and Death Prophet (no date) (Plate 4.92 a). An organic sense of humanity as living and moving within the cycles of Nature and the cosmos enhances the themes of death, for example Solar Rapture (no date) (Plate 4.90 a) and Moon Meditations (1970) (Plate 4.91 a), the sun and moon symbolizing life and death respectively. Trap of Conscience (1972) and Death Messengers (1970) have Rakgoathe's characteristic stylistic trait of large solar symbols with spirals of light radiating out to the tragic, lost mortals below.

In addition to working as a professional artist, Rakgoathe has taught at Mofolo Art Centre and Pelmana Art Workshop in Soweto and he has earned a name for himself as a spokesman on art education:[19].

"We need many black art critics, historians, artists and art teachers. We need a fully fledged art school, not a recreational centre like the Mofolo Art Centre. We also need a community that is art conscious. And that is why I want to see art taught at school up to matric level...Whites start at nursery schools. They also have many private art schools and art is well catered for in their high school curriculum." (Rakgoathe 1981)[20].

(See Plate 4.89 - 4.94).

A list of exhibitions and collections of Rakgoathe's work up to 1980 is as follows:

Exhibitions

1967 Durban Art Museum (Art SA Today).
1969 Camden Arts Centre, London, UK (Contemporary African Art).
Denmark; Sweden, (two-person exhibition with Cyprian Shilakoe).
1973 African Art Centre, Durban (solo).
1974 (solo);
Diakonia House, Johannesburg (Black Art sponsored by the Programme for Social Change and Devcraft);
Australia (two-person exhibition with Peter Clarke).
1976 Brooklyn Museum and Public Library, New York, USA (Black SA Contemporary Graphics);
Canberra, Australia (SA Art - Canberra Week);
Canberra and Australia - tour (SA Graphics).
1978-79 West Germany - tour (SA Graphic Art).
1978-80 USA and West Germany - tour (Art in SA).
1979 Durban (two-person exhibition with Ronny Nzimbane).

Collections

Durban Art Museum; Pretoria Art Museum; Pelmama Permanent Collection, Johannesburg; University of Fort Hare, Alice[21].

iii. LUCKY SIBIYA (1942-)

Lucky Sibiya's work defies exclusive classification within the categories of the art-forms painting, printmaking or sculpture. However, for the purposes of this study, he is discussed under 'Printmaking' which in a sense embraces not only his woodcut prints but also his painted incised wood panels, and other incised and engraved objects such as bones.

Sibiya was born in 1942 in Vryheid, Natal. Little is known about his early life and education. He moved to Soweto sometime before 1970 and is largely self-taught[22]. In 1970 Sibiya showed Cecil Skotnes calabashes he had decorated in the traditional Zulu manner, incising designs with a knife onto the dried gourds used as snuff-boxes, and beer or water containers. Skotnes recognised the young artist's talent and introduced him to his own particular art forms of coloured incised wood panels and wood-block printing. Sibiya subsequently received art training from Bill Ainslie, where he met other black artists such as Julian Motau, Eric Mbatha, and Ezrom Legae[23].

Sibiya although an urban artist, is one of the few black South Africans whose work is representative of a formal African aesthetic. His work displays similarities to Skotnes' work in his intuitive 'perceptive' response to the natural shapes of objects, without overt reference to their identities. Skotnes' approach applies equally to Sibiya when he states that "the natural shape dictates the emerging shape."[24] The subject matter of Sibiya's work includes traditional Zulu folklore, myth and history, but is secondary to formalization, having none of the narrative qualities for example, of the lino prints of Azaria Mbatha.

In 1971, only one year after Skotnes had introduced him to the process, Sibiya held his first solo exhibition of coloured incised wood panels which he had developed and adapted in his personal style. Between 1971 and 1976, Sibiya exhibited his work on eighteen shows[25], establishing him as a leading black artist.

Sibiya's wood-panel compositions are created from interlocking semi-abstract and absract shapes which are both geometric and organic. His figurative elements affect a cubistic stylization. Life of Man (1973) and Untitled (1973) are examples of earlier coloured engraved panels, with bold planimetric shapes forming the compositional structure. African Mythology (1974) (Plate 4.95 b), Harvesting (1974) (Plate 4.95 a) and Untitled Wood Panel (c.1974) (Plate 4.97) illustrate the distinctive feature of dividing the panel into interlinking relief figurative elements in positive relief with the background and surrounding shapes expressed in the negative. The dominant relief areas are usually coloured in dark earth colours, and are cut into broad flowing masses with little detail, other than thin incised contour lines in a lighter tone. Behind and between these shapes, negative carved areas are decoratively worked into rich and varied textural and tonal details. The abstract design motifs are evocative of carving designs in Shona headrest and divining tablets; interlaced and concentric circles, circles, dots, cross-hatching, chevrons and opposed chevrons, diamond, traingular and 'V' shapes[26]. Motifs such as these give Sibiya's work its distinctly 'African' feel, despite there being a limited African tradition of wood-panel carving using these particular designs (see Venda 'vhuti' doors[27], South Africa, and Giryama carved grave-markers, Kenya/Somalia coast)[28] although many of the motifs are common to free-standing wood sculptures, such as Bambara antelope head dresses, Mali; Bakuba and Baluba masks and heads of Zaire; and Baule heads and masks of the Ivory Coast[29]. Amongst Zulu-speakers there is the precedent of wood-panel mat-racks, which are long thin panels carved with kraal scenes in relief,

having areas in colour or burnt with a poker. Sibiya's elongated figurated panels, for example Untitled (c. 1984) (Plate 4.98 a) exhibited at Gallery 21, Johannesburg bear a close resemblence to Zulu mat-racks in the Africana Museum collection (Plate 4.98 b).

In 1974 Sibiya began to make wood-block prints, and in 1975 produced a portfolio of 15 hand-printed works based on Welcome Msomi's play Umabatha (Plate 4.99 a/b). Although not directly based on Shakespeare's Macbeth, the plot portrays historic Zulu events woven around Macbeth[30]. The Umabatha compositions are similar to the wood-panels, although more obviously figurative, and lacking in the texturality of the latter . "The most sympathetic qualities of his panels are lost in the unrelieved flatness and hard-edge precision of the printed image", according to Berman[31].

In the same years (c.1974/5) Sibyia undertook a project for the Totem-Meneghelli Gallery in Johannesburg, involving the engraving and colouring of natural objects such as bones. Comparing this art-form with the Umabatha prints, it appears that Sibiya prefers the 'materiality' of natural materials and, according to Berman, "seems to have been more responsive to direct dialogue with organic materials than the referred procedure of printmaking."[31a].

In his wood-panels, prints and bone engravings, Sibiya employs pictographic representations of humans, animals and birds; personalised symbols of Africa.

"All Sibiya's images are deliberately conceptualized - he has never demonstrated any inclination toward perceptual portrayal of the visible object. Simple pictographic figurations represent the animals and humans in the events and rituals he visualizes; and, over the years, he has devised a compendium of abstract symbols,

"We need many black art critics, historians, artists and art teachers. We need a fully fledged art school, not a recreational centre like the Mofolo Art Centre. We also need a community that is art conscious. And that is why I want to see art taught at school up to matric level...Whites start at nursery schools. They also have many private art schools and art is well catered for in their high school curriculum." (Rakgoathe 1981)[20].

(See Plate 4.89 - 4.94).

A list of exhibitions and collections of Rakgoathe's work up to 1980 is as follows:

Exhibitions

1967 Durban Art Museum (Art SA Today).
1969 Camden Arts Centre, London, UK (Contemporary African Art).
Denmark; Sweden, (two-person exhibition with Cyprian Shilakoe).
1973 African Art Centre, Durban (solo).
1974 (solo);
Diakonia House, Johannesburg (Black Art sponsored by the Programme for Social Change and Devcraft);
Australia (two-person exhibition with Peter Clarke).
1976 Brooklyn Museum and Public Library, New York, USA (Black SA Contemporary Graphics);
Canberra, Australia (SA Art - Canberra Week);
Canberra and Australia - tour (SA Graphics).
1978-79 West Germany - tour (SA Graphic Art).
1978-80 USA and West Germany - tour (Art in SA).
1979 Durban (two-person exhibition with Ronny Nzimbane).

Collections

Durban Art Museum; Pretoria Art Museum; Pelmama Permanent Collection, Johannesburg; University of Fort Hare, Alice[21].

iii. LUCKY SIBIYA (1942-)

Lucky Sibiya's work defies exclusive classification within the categories of the art-forms painting, printmaking or sculpture. However, for the purposes of this study, he is discussed under 'Printmaking' which in a sense embraces not only his woodcut prints, but also his painted incised wood panels, and other incised and engraved objects such as bones.

which act both as a shorthand visual language and as decorative elements of composition." (Berman 1883:423)[32].

(See Plates 4.96 - 4.102).

A list of exhibitions and collections of Sibiya's work up to 1980 is as follows:

Exhibitions

1971 Gallery 101, Johannesburg (solo).
1972 Gallery International, Cape Town (solo);
Gallery 101, Johannesburg (solo; 25 African artists);
Gallery 21, Johannesburg (Selection '72);
St Peter's Seminary, Hammanskraal (solo).
1973 Totem-Meneghelli Gallery, Johannesburg (solo);
Gallery 21, Johannesburg (solo).
1974 National Arts Society, Johannesburg (African Art);
Natal Society of Arts, Durban (solo);
Gallery International, Cape Town (group);
Gallery 21 (solo);
Mazini, Swaziland (Swazi Trade Fair - two-person exhibition with J. Maseko).
1975 Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (SA Sculpture);
Gallery 21, Johannesburg (Umabatha Portfolio);
Totem-Meneghelli Gallery, Johannesburg (solo);
Gallery International, Cape Town (Umabatha Portfolio);
Gallery 21, London, UK (African Art from SA).
1976 Ceolfrith Arts Centre, Sunderland, UK (solo);
Canberra, Australia (SA Art - Canberra Week);
Colonnade des Arts, Lake Buena Vista, Florida, USA (group);
Uniefees School Hall, Pretoria (group);
Rand Afrikaans University (RAU), Johannesburg (graphics - group);
Gallery International, Cape Town (group);
SA Association of Arts, Pretoria (Umabatha Portfolio);
Association of Arts, Windhoek (two-person exhibition with Lucas Sithole);
Totem-Meneghelli Gallery, Johannesburg (solo);
Lidchi Art Gallery, Johannesburg (African Art Mythical and Modern);
Gallery 21, London, UK (group).
1977 Gallery International, Cape Town (solo);
Hoffer Gallery, Pretoria (solo; group);
Old Vic Theatre, London, UK (solo);
Gallery 21, Johannesburg (group).
1978 Totem-Meneghelli Gallery, Johannesburg (solo);
Gallery 21, Johannesburg (Collector's Choice).
1978-79 Bonn and West Germany - tour (Art from SA/Art from Soweto);
SA Association of Arts, Cape Town (group);
Gallery 21, Johannesburg (Winter '79 Selection);
SA Association of Arts, Johannesburg (Renaissance II '79).

Collections

Africana Museum, Johannesburg; BBDO, New York, USA; Berliner Missionwerk Library, Berlin, West Germany; Bureau for Information, Pretoria; Commerzbank, Joahnnesburg; Durban Art Museum; Edward Bateman Ltd, Boksburg; Everite Ltd, Johannesburg; H.M. King Moshesh II, Lesotho, J. Walter Thompson Co, Johannesburg; The Campbell Collections of the University of Natal, Durban; Municipal Library, Sasolburg; National Museum and Art Gallery, Gaborone, Botswana; Pelmama Permanent Collection, Johannesburg; SA Broadcasting Company; Sandton Town Council; SA National Gallery; Sasol; University of Fort Hare, Alice; Vaal Administration Board, Sebokeng, Transvaal; William Humphreys Art Gallery, Kimberley; University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg[33].

iv. MPHO CYPRIAN SHILAKOE (1946-1972)

Cyprian Shilakoe's mystical symbologies have made a significant contribution to black South African art, despite his short career having been terminated by his death in a motor accident in 1972. Born on an isolated mission station at Buchbeeskreich in the Eastern Transvaal, Shilakoe had a rural upbringing at the mission where he lived with his grandmother until her death in 1962. His education took him to junior secondary level. In 1968 Shilakoe went to live at Rorke's Drift where he studied printmaking under Azaria Mbatha, excelling in etching and aquatint[34].

Shilakoe's close friend and collegue, Dan Rakgoathe wrote of his strong sense of African identity saying, "He found his identity first as an African, then as an individual."[35] Like many other black artists and writers in the '60s and '70s, his search for personal identity was rooted in the upheaval of social and cultural life brought about by moving from semi-rural African life into urban living areas. However, on a personal level Shilakoe's inspiration and identity remained firmly rooted in

rural Africa with a nostalgia for the land and his spiritual ancestors, particularly his grandmother . We Don't Want to Go (1971) (Plate 4.103 a) is an explicit reference to the pain of leaving and uprooting a personal past, as is We are Leaving (c. 1969) (Plate 4.103 b).

Shilakoe's images resonate with emotional loneliness brought about by either the death of friends and relatives or enforced separation, for example Loneliness (1971) (Plate 4.105 a). His mood is similar to that of his friend Rakgoathe; and their friendship appears to have been based on a mutual interest in questions of transcendence beyond the material world of 'physical living'. Rakgaothe claimes that Shilakoe had psychic abilities[36]. His fascination with death was not morbid,and he attempted to penetrate the mysteries of life, death and after-life through his work. The last time Rakgoathe and Shilakoe were together they were involved in the car accident which ended Shilakoe's life.

"...The transient drift of clouds across the infinite sky, the swaying ghostly trees in the caressing breeze, splash spots on carelessly painted walls, linen flapping desperately in a violent wind - all these gave him inspiration for shapes and forms reflected in his etchings and sculpture." (Rakgoathe 1973:68)[37].

Where Have They Gone To (no date),They Came and Left Footprints no date),My Donkey (1970) (Plate 4.104 b), Loneliness (1971) (Plate 4.105 a), Figure (1968) (Plate 4.110 a) and Can you See the Grave, Child? (no date) are parables of life and death, and bitter comments on the transitory state of human life.

Shortly before his death, Shilakoe began working in wood, translating forms from his etchings into three-dimensional totemic sculptures of cycles of birth, life and death[38]. Examples of these include Coming Out (c. 1970) (Plate 4.112), Totem Pole

(c. 1971), Mother and Child (no date) and Two Figures (no date) (Plate 4.113 a/b).

(See Plates 4.104 - 4.113).

A list of exhibitions, awards, commissions and collections of Shilakoe's work up to 1980 is as follows:

Exhibitions

1968 Durban Art Museum (Rorke's Drift - group).
1969 Durban Art Museum (Art SA Today);
Denmark, Sweden (two-person exhibition with Daniel Rakgoathe).
1970 Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (group).
1971 Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (solo);
Preston UK (three-person exhibition with Winston Saoli and Leonard Matsoso);
Germany; Sweden; Denmark; Italy; USA.
1972 University of California, USA (African Art);
Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (SA Graphics 1972).
1973 Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (Memoroal Exhibition);
Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (Third Festival of SA Graphics).
1975 Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (SA Sculpture Exhibition).
1976 Canberra, Australia (SA Art - Canberra Week);
Brooklyn Museum and Public Library, New York, USA (Black SA Contemporary Graphics).
1977-9 West Germany - tour (SA Graphic Art).
1979 SA National Gallery (SA Printmakers).

Awards

1972 University of California, USA African Art Exhibition (first prize for graphic art).

Collections

Durban Art Museum; Johannesburg Art Gallery; King George VI Art Gallery, Port Elizabeth; Sandton Town Council; SA National Gallery; University of Zululand[39].

v. JOHN MUAFANGEJO (1943-1987)

"I am a Kuanyama of the Ovambo people of Namibia. The border between Angola and Namibia divides our tribe. First I was carving cups and snakes when I was 24 years old. Then Minister Mallory saw my talent and I went from the small village in the north of South West Africa to the Mission Scool at Rorke's Drift South Africa..." (Wagner 1987:11)[40].

Although John Muafangejo was born in Angola[41]., he is part of the Rorke's Drift school, and as such recognised as a South African artist. Muafangejo developed from a carver of wooden objects to a maker of linocuts. He specialized in monochromatic linocut prints, often presenting humorous and acute observations of bewildering incidents in the passage from rural tribal life to urban Western culture. Muafangejo was an engaging story-teller, often including a text in his compositions to elucidate events relating to the pictorial narrative.

Born in 1943 at Etunda lo Nghadi near Oshikango in Ovamboland, Angola[42]., Muafangejo attended Saint Mary's Anglican Mission School, where he trained as a teacher. In 1968, in the same year as Shilakoe, Muafangejo went to Rorke's Drift, where he studied under Otto Lundbohm, learning printmaking from Azaria Mbatha, and Jules and Ada van de Vijver[43]. In 1970 Muafangejo returned to Ovamboland where he taught, and worked on a series of graphic prints and tapestry designs[44]. In 1974 he returned to Rorke's Drift where he taught and worked on his own prints[45].

Muafangejo was an extremely prolific artist, compulsively involved in his work. In 1977 Bruce Arnott wrote of his work,

"Form and content are conceived and presented emotionally, with little evidence of the sobering influence of intellect. Composition is idiosyncratic rather than formal. Visual impact is imparted by bold delineation, freely repeating rhythms of contrasting elements. Characterization is shrewd and economical

and, while there is little formal sophistication, there is no trace of traditional influence." (Arnott 1977:)[46].

Muafangejo's subjects range from religious and Biblical themes, for example Vision of Eden (1968), Moses (1969), Adam and Eve (1973) (Plate 4.114 a), Holy Communion (1974) (Plate 4.114 b), to Zulu and Ovambo history, such as The Battle of Rorke's Drift (1969) (Plate 4.115 a), Death of Chief Mandume (1971) (Plate 4.115 b), and Chief Mandume (1971). His interest in traditional custom is portrayed in works such as The Hunters (1971), Kuanyama Wedding (1973), and Making Sour Milk (1975); while urban fashion and custom are presented in Fashions in Beards (1973) (Plate 4.116 a), with penetrating observations from urban life in Judge (1969) (Plate 4.117 a) and Ovambo Police (1975) (plate 4.117 b). Themes of racial and cultural conflict are common to many of his prints, for example The Battle of Rorke's Drift (1969) (plate 4.115 a) and Death of Chief Mandume (1971) (Plate 4.115 b).

Muafangejo is an anecdotalist and many of his works are essentially autobiographical. He is one of the few artists discussed in this chapter who made self-portraits, for example Self Portrait (1969) (Plate 4.118 a), Muafangejo's Kraal (n/d) (Plate 4.118 b), The Lucky Artist (1974) (Plate 4.119 a) and Welcome Back (1975) (Plate 4.119 b) consistently record both personal feelings and the responses of his community to himself as an 'artist'. In Interview at Cape Town University (1971) (Plate 4.120 b), The Second-Hand Car (1973) (Plate 4.121 a) and Lonely Man (1974) (Plate 4.120 a) he presented his experiences in relation to daily events whether of a personal or socio-historical nature, with uncompromising honesty. In this sense his work is 'emotional' and spontaneous[47].

Much of his work shows the influence of Rorke's Drift and particularly his teacher, Mbatha, as exemplified by the serialisation of events within one compositional frame[48], in for example, The Border (1974) (Plate 4.122 a) and Orange Farm (1974) (Plate 4.121 b). (This is also a characteristic of Zulu woodcarved- panels, which relate events in frieze form. [Plate 4.98 b]) Textile printing, taught at Rorke's Drift, with its 'overall' and repetitive design qualities may have also influenced this compositional mode. In prints such as the above, Muafangejo more specifically related "divisions of reality" of a cultural or geo-physical nature; between tribal African culture and Western tradition, pagan and Christian worship, in an attempt to establish a personal 'sense of place'[49]. In The Border (Plate 4.122 a) he draws a pictorial 'map'of Zululand and Natal with the words, "BUFFALO (UMZIN?THA) RIVER BETWEEN NATAL AND ZULULAND" and, "NATAL WHERE THE SCHOOL IS". The significance of Muafangejo's boundry demarcation is pointed out by Arnott:

"It is also pertinent that both missions at which Muafangejo studied are situated in places where it is impossible to ignore the fact that political boundaries have drawn arbitrary and invisible lines of division through otherwise homogeneous populations. At Oshikango the Angolan border passes virtually through the village to divide the Ovambo people in two... At Rorke's Drift the Buffalo River has been nominated the boundary between Zululand and Natal - a feature pointedly expressed in The border...which depicts Zulus, nevertheless, on both sides." (Arnott 1977:)[50].

Muafangejo died on November 27, 1987, in Katutura Township, 51. in Windhoek, Namibia.

(See Plate 4.114 - 4.122).

A list of exhibitions and collections of his work up to 1980 is as follows:

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Johannesburg: Ravan Press:208

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Johannesburg: Sprocas/Ravan

5. Chapman,M.(ed.) 1982 Soweto Poetry
South Africa: McGraw-Hill:12-13

6. Coplan,D.B. 1985 In Township Tonight: 208

4:2 Sculpture

i. Sydney Kumalo

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2. Kumalo,S. 1987 Personal correspondence.

3. Kumalo,S. 1987 ibid

4. Van Rensburg,S 1970 Sydney Kumalo en ander Bantoe-
kunstenaars van Transvaal

Krell,A. 1971 Urban African Art in South Africa
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5. Van Rensburg,S. 1970 Sydney Kumalo en ander Bantoe-
kunstenaars van Transvaal

6. Van Rensburg,S. 1970 ibid

7. Watter,L. 1978 'Sydney Kumalo'
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Education, Science and Technology:67-
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8. Kumalo,S. 1987 Personal correspondence.

9. Watter,L. 1978 'Sydney Kumalo':67-73

10. Watter,L. 1978 ibid: 67-73

Exhibitions

1968 Durban Art Museum (Rorke's Drift).
1969 Camden Arts Centre, London, UK (Contemporary African Art); Durban Art Museum (Art SA Today).
1969-70 Canada - tour.
1970 National Gallery, Stockholm, Sweden (group).
1971 Windhoek Kunstkabinett (solo).
1972 Sao Paulo, Brazil (Biennale).
1973 Durban Art Museum (Art SA Today)
1974 Diakonia House, Johannesburg (Black Art, sponsered by the Programme for Social Change and Devcraft).
1976 SA Association of Arts, Johannesburg (Rorke's Drift); Brooklyn Museum and Public Library, New York, USA (Black SA Contemporary Graphics).
1977-78 West Germany (SA Graphic Art).
1980 Finland.

Collections

Anne Bryant Art Gallery, East London; Durban Art Museum; Johannesburg Art Museum; The Campbell Collections of the University of Natal, Durban; King George VI Art Gallery, Port Elizabeth; Pretoria Art Museum; Pelmama Permanent Collection, Johannesburg; SA National Gallery; University of Bophuthatswana; University of Fort Hare, Alice; University of South Africa (UNISA), Pretoria; University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg[52].

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In the twentieth century black South African art entered a new phase of its development, reflecting similar characteristics in content, style and technique to new African art elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa.

The first part of this dissertation has shown that since the ninteenth century African art has experienced a major evolution. Art schools in Africa, founded either by Church missions or independent artists from Europe were a major force of regeneration and direction in transforming African art. Two approaches in teaching have been noted: the tendency towards preserving indigenous traditions, in content, style and technique; and the wish to introduce African artists to new processes, such as painting and printmaking, commonly associated with Western art. Both approaches have run concurrently in different art schools in different parts of Africa. A popular approach introduced by Piere Romain-Desfosses at the academy at Elizabethville in the 1940's encouraged artists to embrace new styles and techniques while drawing on their personal responses to existential forces and influences. This method of teaching was adopted later by Skotnes at the Polly Street art school in Johannesburg.

In attempting to establish categories by which to classify African art, types such as 'souvenir art', 'assimilated fine art' and 'new African art' have been suggested. In the case of black

South African art these categories are all applicable. Two categories of black South African art have been identified in this dissertation: 'traditional or functional art', incorporating rural art; and 'popular art' or 'new African art', incorporating urban art.

Traditional black South African art has embraced a continuous tradition of two distinct types: free-standing figurative woodcarving used mainly in initiation schools; and the painting and decoration of domestic dwellings for symbolic and aesthetic purposes. Woodcarving is traditionally practised by men in so-called traditional Bantu-speaking communities, while mural painting is generally done by women. It is not possible to date the origins of these art forms, however their practice and function continues in the twentieth century.

The twentieth century has seen the birth of the newer art forms catagorised as urban art. Urban art is practised by individual artists living in townships in different parts of South Africa. Up to 1980, with the exception of a few women , these artists have been men. Certain artists utilise modified traditional imagery and techniques in their art, such as Lucas Sithole's carved sculpture, Lucky Sibiya's carved and painted woodpanels and Gladys Mgudlandlu's paintings. During the 1930's and 1940's isolated artists began using painting media such as water-colour and oil paint, under the tutelage of certain white artists. Early black fine artists include Koenakeefe Mohl, Gerard Bhengu, George Pemba and Gerard Sekoto. In the 1950's the Polly Street Art Centre in Johannesburg marked the first concerted effort to establish an art school for blacks. Cecil Skotnes and other white

South African artists founded the school; later, black graduate artists such as Sydney Kumalo and Ezrom Legae continued the teaching. A genre stemming from this school is referred to as 'township art', as practised by certain artists including the painter Ephraim Ngatane, and the graphic artist Andrew Motjuoadi. Other artists of this school have been concerned with social, cultural and mythological subjects and include the sculptors Sydney Kumalo, Lucas Sithole and Ezrom Legae, and the painter Louis Maqhubela. The Polly Street school introduced black artists to water-colour painting and sculptural techniques. South Africa's first professional black sculptors emerged from this school in the late 1950's and early 1960's. The 1960's saw further the establishment of the second art school of importance for blacks at Rorke's Drift in Natal, founded by the Swedish artists Peder and Ulla Gowenius. Artists of note who graduated from this school have excelled in the printmaking techniques of lino, wood-cut and etching, with the content tending towards socio-religious and socio-political subject matter. Artists of the Rorke's Drift school include Azaria Mbatha, Daniel Rakgoathe, Cyprian Shilakoe, and John Muafangejo. Individual artists who do not belong to either school are the painters Gladys Mgudlandlu and Leonard Matsoso, and the graphic artists Mslaba Dumile , Lucky Sibiya and Tito Zungu. These artists were discovered while working independently and encouraged either by white artists or by gallery owners who provided tuition and sponsorship.

The debate on the identity of 'African' and black South African art in the face of Western artistic and urban influences is complex and on-going. Many artists refute the suggestion that they have one foot in their respective traditional culture and

the other in Western tradition, seeing themselves and their work as 'African' regardless of outside influences. Modern African art no longer fits accepted ethnographic stylistic criteria, developed to describe traditional 'classical' African art, suggesting that for the purposes of art historical studies in Africa criteria for assessing African art should be modified to include contemporary developments.

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6.	Berman,E.	1983	Art and Artists of South Africa :291
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17.	Dubow,N.	1963	'Artist's work is illustrative but also interpretative' The Cape Argus, 24 September.
18.	Berman,E.	1983	Art and Artists of South Africa :311
19.	Berman,E.	1983	ibid:311
20.	Krell,A.	1971	Urban African Art in South Africa :54-67
21.	Krell,A.	1971	ibid
22.	Sack,S.	1988	The Neglected Tradition:120

Berman,E.	1983	Art and Artists of South Africa :311;513-520

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30. Berman,E.	1983	Art and Artists of South Africa :270-271
31. Watter,L.	1969	'Louis Maqhubela':25-28
32. Eglington,C.	1963	'Maqhubela'
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34. Berman,E.	1983	Art and Artists of South Africa :217
35. Maqhubela,L.	1967	Sunday Express, 2 April.
36. Watter,L.	1969	'Louis Maqhubela':25-28
37. Watter,L.	1969	ibid
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iv. Leonard Matsoso

39. Berman,E.	1983	Art and Artists of South Africa :277-279
40. Berman,E.	1983	ibid
41. Basson,J.	1973	'Sao Paulo Bienal' Artlook, 6 November:16-17
42. De Jager,E.J.	1973	Contemporary African Art in South Africa
43. Berman,E.	1983	Art and Artists of South Africa : 278
44. Berman,E.	1983	ibid

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2. Beinart,J. 1963 'New Drawings by Andrew Motuoadi' The Classic, 1(1):40

3. Beinart,J. 1963 ibid:40

4. Knight,N. 1972 'Andrew Motuoadi' Artlook, February:18-19

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iii. Mslaba Dumile

13. Berman,E. 1983 Art and Artists of South Africa :118-120

14. Simon,B. 1968 'Dumile' The Classic, 2(4):40-43

15. Sack,S. 1988 The Neglected Tradition: 111-112

16. Simon,B. 1968 'Dumile':40-43

16a. Anon. 1967 'Dumile - youthful artist of genius' Bantu, February: 22-26

17. King,E. 1966 '...a Goya of the townships?' Artlook, November: 5

18. Ngakane,L. 1970 'Dumile: a Profile' African Arts, 3(2):10

19. Ngakane,L.	1970	ibid
20. Simon,B.	1968	'Dumile':43
21. Simon,B.	1968	ibid:42
22. Simon,B.	1968	ibid:43
23. Ngakane,L.	1970	'Dumile: a Profile':13
24. Sack,S.	1988	The Neglected Tradition:103
Berman,E.	1983	Art and Artists of South Africa :119;513-520

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26. Zungu,T.	n/d	'Tito Zungu' S.A. Institute for Race Relations
27. Zungu,T.	n/d	ibid
28. Polansky,L.	1982	'Hands off that letter! It's a masterpiece'
29. Zungu,T.	n/d	'Tito Zungu'
30. Tswala,R.G.	1951	'Beads as Regulating the Social Life of the Zulu and Swazi':113-123
31. Thorpe,J.	1982	'Tito Zungu' Durban: African Art Centre, April.
32. Younge,G.	1986	'Tito Zungu' ADA Magazine 2: 22
33. Thorpe,J.	1982	'Tito Zungu'
34. Guedes,P.	1982	'The Master of the Decorated Envelope' Opening Speech of Zungu exhibition at the Department of Architecture, University of the Witwatersrand
35. Sack,S.	1988	The Neglected Tradition:134
Berman,E.	1983	Art and Artists of South Africa :294;513-520

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1. Mbatha,A.	1969	'Azaria Mbatha' Artlook, Ocober: 30
2. Mbatha,A.	1969	ibid
3. Berman,E.	1983	Art and Artists of South Africa :280-81
4. Dubow,N.	1965	The Cape Argus, 20 June.
5. Dubow,N.	1965	ibid

6.	Berman,E.	1983	Art and Artists of South Africa :281
7.	Berman,E.	1983	ibid
	Dubow,N.	1965	The Cape Argus
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9.	Mbatha,A.	1969	'Azaria Mbatha':30
10.	Zulu mat wracks housed in the Africana Museum, Johannesburg.		
11.	Janson,H.W.	1982	A History of Art London: Thames & Hudson :274
12.	Sack,S.	1988	The Neglected Tradition:114
	Berman,E.	1983	Art and Artists of South Africa :280;513-520
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14.	Ngwenya,K.	1981	'A Fine Effort' Sowetan, 24 August.
15.	Ngwenya,K.	1981	ibid
16.	Ngwenya,K.	1981	ibid
17.	Rakgoathe,D.	1971	'Notes on My Work':58
18.	Rakgoathe,D.	1971	ibid
19.	Ngwenya,K.	1981	'A Fine Effort'
20.	Ngwenya,K.	1981	ibid
21.	Sack,S.	1988	The Neglected Tradition: 125
	Berman,E.	1983	Art and Artists of South Africa :201;513-520
iii	Lucky Sibiya		
22.	Berman,E.	1983	Art and Artists of South Africa :422-423
23.	Berman,E.	1983	ibid:423
24.	Anon.	1968	'Cecil Skotnes' Artlook, February:20-21
25.	Berman,E.	1968	Art and Artists of South Africa :423
26.	Trowell, M.	1954	Classical African Sculpture:64-74
27.	Walton,J.	1954	'Carved Wooden Doors of the Bavenda' Man, 1(4), March: 43
28.	Gillon,W	1979	Collecting African Art:149
29.	Gillon,W.	1984	A Short Introduction to African Art
30.	Anon.	1982	'Lucky Sibiya' Informa, April:6-7

31.	Berman,E.	1983	Art and Artists of South Africa :423
32.	Berman,E.	1983	ibid:423
33.	Sack,S.	1988	The Neglected Tradition:128-129
	Berman,E.	1983	Art and Artists of South Africa :423;513-520

iv. Cyprian Shilakoe

34.	De Jager,E.J.	1975	'Cyprian Shilakoe' South African Panarama, July:20
35.	Rakgoathe,D.	1973	'Cyprian Shilakoe: In Memorandum' African Arts, Autumn:68
36.	Rakgoathe,D.	1973	ibid
37.	Rakgoathe,D.	1973	ibid
38.	De Jager,D.	1975	'Cyprian Shilakoe':20
39.	Sack,S.	1988	The Neglected Tradition:127
	Berman,E.	1983	Art and Artists of South Africa :202;513-520

v. John Muafangejo

40.	Muafangejo,J.	1987	in Wagner,N. 'John Muafangejo' ADA Magazine 4:
41.	Sack,S.	1988	The Neglected Tradition:115
42.	Sack,S.	1988	ibid
43.	Arnott,B.	1977	Muafangejo Cape Town: Struik:(1)
	De Villiers,D.	1983	'SWA/Namibian artist hailed as master of the woodcut' The Argus, Tonight,3 June.
44.	Arnott,B.	1977	ibid:(1)
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46.	Arnott,B.	1977	ibid:(2)
47.	Arnott,B.	1977	ibid:(2)
48.	Berman,E.	1983	Art and Artists of South Africa :201
49.	Arnott,B.	1977	Muafangejo: (2)
50.	Arnott,B.	1977	ibid:(2)
51.	Sack,S.	1988	The Neglected Tradition:119
52.	Sack,S.	1988	ibid: 119
	Berman,E.	1983	Art and Artists of South Africa :201;513-520

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APPENDIX 1

In 1879 the Native Location Act established segregated locations for urban black Africans on the outskirts of towns. Although not originally intended as such, locations were to become reservoirs of a cheap labour force for mining and industry. In 1923 the Natives (Urban Areas) Act imposed a further policy of territorial segregation limiting the rights of blacks to land ownership. When the Nationalist Government came to power a Group Areas Bill was passed in 1950 proclaiming residential and business areas for particular race groups only. This restricted the freedom of movement of blacks, coloureds and Indians within and around white urban areas. In 1952 Section 10 of the Native Laws Amendment Act sytematically limited black Africans with the right to live permanently in the urban areas to those who had been born there, those who had lived there continuously for fifteen years, and those who had worked continuously for the same employer for ten. In the same year a Natives (Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents) Act required all blacks (including those exempted under pass laws, and women for the first time, as well as men) to carry 'passes' or 'reference books'. This created the means of ensuring that control over black influx into the towns and cities could be exercised. In 1954 the Native Resettlement Act further empowered the government to forcefully remove blacks to new areas designated for 'townships'. (One of the first of these removals took place in Sophiatown in 1954 which was rezoned for whites only, and renamed Triomph. Black residents were moved to a new area called Meadowlands, 12 miles outside Johannesburg.)

The Native Resettlement Act together with the Homelands Policy of 1961, denied black Africans any legal status as South African citizens. The Homelands Policy made provision for certain areas including Venda, Bophutatswana, Transkei, Ciskei, Lebowa, Gazankulu, KwaNdeble, KaNgwana, KwaZulu and QwaQwa as independant, self-governing 'homelands'. Blacks from these homelands are regarded as citizens of one or another homeland and denied the right to residential or political status in South Africa. Many blacks however are forced to seek employment as migrant labourers or domestic servants inside South Africa without permanent residential rights (for either themselves or their families), living temporarily in labour hostels or in townships.

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