

INVITATION

JAMES MPHAHLELE

invites you personally to the PREVIEW of his exhibition of a series of 25 linocuts under the theme "DIALOGA", portraying the rites and traditions surrounding the Initiation Ceremony of the Pedi in Lebowa (Northern Transvaal).

PREVIEW DAY:	Tuesday, 7th February, 1989
TIME:	18h00 till 20h30
VENUE	Gallery 21, Johannesburg

A brochure with illustrations of all the works and descriptions will be available on Preview Day.

The exhibition will close on 24th February, 1989.

R.S.V.P.

(011) 838-6630
(011) 838-1582

Gallery Hours

Mondays - Fridays: 10h00 - 17h00
Sat. (exhibitions only) 10h00 - 12h30



Biographical Notes

JAMES SEROLE MPHAHLELE was born at GaMphahlele near Pietersburg on 19th July, 1954.

He trained as a Primary School Teacher at the Sekhukhune College of Education (1976/77), studied art at the Ndaleni College of Education, Natal (1980), at Rorke's Drift (1982), and the Johannesburg Art Foundation (1983/84).

He exhibited his work at Ngoye, Zululand (1982) and held a two-man show with Ranko Pudi at the FUBA Gallery, Johannesburg (1986).

His "DIALOGA" Portfolio is included in the PELMAMA Permanent Art Collection, Johannesburg.



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GALLERY 21, 3rd Floor, Victory House, 34 Harrison Street (between Commissioner and Fox Sts.), Johannesburg

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DIALOGA Part 10: Go ilela legwetsane 1987

Linocut. 40,5 x 98

Signed bottom right

Collection: Pelmama Permanent Art Collection

This is the day of not eating. The young men spend a day in the bush or mountain, living off herbs and roots. This day is called "go ilela legwetsane".



DIALOGA Part 11: Blanketed on their mats 1987

Linocut. 31 x 105

Signed bottom right

Collection: Pelmama Permanent Art Collection

Back at the Chief's Kraal, the young men are seated blanketed on their mats to protect themselves from the cold. Men and women surround the Kraal and are seen drinking. The Closing Ceremony is a respectful event amongst the Bapedi.

DIALOGA series of 25 linocuts. Gallery 21, 1989.02.07 - 1989.02.24

Born 19 July 1954 GaMphahlele, near Pietersburg.

Studied at the Sekhukhune College of Education 1976-77, Ndalen College of Education 1980, Rorke's Drift 1982, Johannesburg Art Foundation 1983-84. Teacher and artist.

Since we are on the brink of losing all that was best in African Art and African Tradition, who will take the initiative to retrieve that which has been lost to the West? Traditions have to be passed on to future generations.

Extract from the exhibition catalogue. The DIALOGA series records the closing of the initiation ceremony practised by the Pedi in the northern Transvaal (Lebowa).

Concise 1977

De Jager, E Images of Man

James Mphahlele

This talented Pedi artist was born at GaMphahlele near Pietersburg in the Northern Transvaal on 19 July 1954. He obtained his Junior Certificate in 1975 at Kgoadia Moleke. Between 1976 and 1977 he trained as a primary school teacher at the Sekhukhune College of Education. He studied art, first at the Ndalení Art School during 1980 and then at the Rorke's Drift Art and Craft Centre in 1982. Between 1983 and 1984 he continued his art studies at the Johannesburg Art Foundation. Since 1986 he has worked as an artist and part-time art teacher at various places in the Northern Transvaal. In 1986 he held an exhibition with fellow artist Ranko Pudi at the FUBA Gallery, Johannesburg. He had his first one-man show at Gallery 21, Johannesburg, in 1989.

At this one-man show Mphahlele exhibited a portfolio of 25 linocuts, entitled *Dialoga*. The linocuts are concerned with traditional Pedi custom, more particularly with the closing ceremony of their male initiation. During Pedi initiation the initiates are secluded for some time until the closing ceremony is performed. The body of each initiate is smeared with red-*orche* and the young men are now called *Dialoga*. Mphahlele is very much concerned with the loss of African art and tradition and his *Dialoga* must also be seen as an attempt on his part to help preserve this heritage for future generations. The linocuts contain excellent interplay and balance between the black and white colours. Compositionally the linocuts are powerful and densely packed with fine use of line, excellent use of space and interesting

forms. There is vitality and movement in the scenes depicted. The atmosphere in which this ceremony is performed is also captured very successfully. Present in the series are accurate descriptions and a strong narrative quality. The twenty five linocuts form a harmonious unit. Mphahlele has proved himself to be a master of the medium of linocutting.