

# "DUMILE"

Dumile Feni was born in South Africa on May 21, 1939. Encouraged by family members, he began drawing at an early age. His source of inspiration and motivation stem from viewing, first hand, the cave paintings of his ancestors, the San People.

In 1956, he became apprenticed with a group of African artists at the Leo Wald Sculpture and Pottery Foundry, Johannesburg. This lasted until the late 1950's. Dumile first exhibited at the Jourbert Park annual show. In 1960, he was jailed for the first time by the South African regime because his art, both in form and content, was regarded as politically dangerous to the interests of the state.

The genre that Dumile developed flowed from the infinite belief which he held over the years that equality and the culture of South Africa are inseparable from the struggle for liberation.

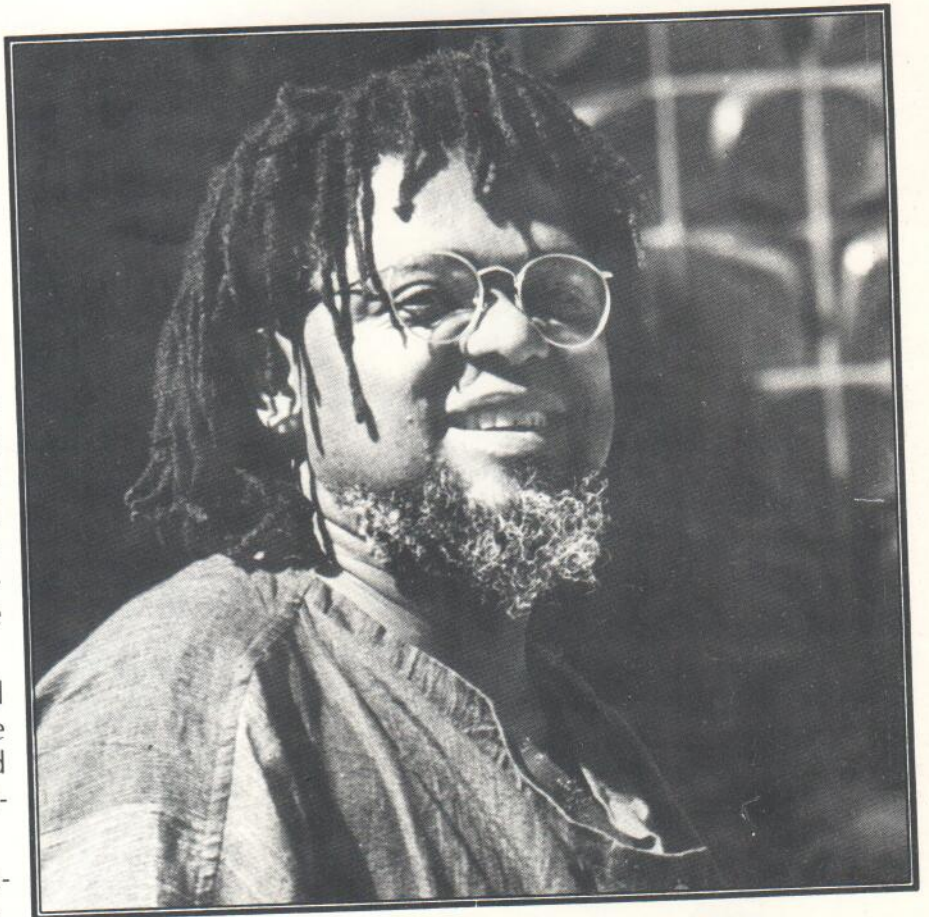
As a young person, Dumile Feni experienced persecution from the South African regime which left an indelible mark on his psyche. The damage goes beyond description and surpasses the visual scars that the eye can apprehend.

Dumile was affected and inspired by the non-violent protests against apartheid which were led by the African National Congress, especially the bus boycott and the anti-pass book campaign in the mid-to-late Fifties.

Dumile Feni felt called to set up learning opportunities for old and young in the townships and other stations of life. In this way, he made it possible to keep cultural information available in which growth and continuity were emphasized. Despite the oppression and cruelty of apartheid, artists and musicians as historians came to the fore. They spoke with knowledge about the past, present and future through the media of sculpture, poetry, painting, music and slide-show presentations. In this way, the masses were approached directly, in the locations of their deprivations.

After years of harassment, Dumile Feni went into hiding at the house of fellow artist, Bill Ainslie. Later, he joined with Ainslie in starting a multi-racial art school. They put on many exhibits and concerts before Dumile was forced into exile by the South African regime in 1968.

Since that time, he has contributed much work to the movement in the struggle against apartheid. For instance, in 1980, Dumile Feni participated in the 25th Anniversary of the Freedom Charter, which was commemorated at the United Nations.



**Mhlaba Zwelidumile Mgxaji Feni**

**Dumile contributes a percentage of all sales of his artwork to  
The African National Congress.**