

La Galleria

SECONDI
CLASSE

DUMILE FENI

Dumile Feni was born in South Africa in 1939. Remembering the cave paintings of his ancestors seen as a child—paintings which still inspire the style and sensibility of his work—Dumile says, "I am amazed by the one thing that I am glad never left me—that is the beauty of the line, the fine lines."

In the 1950's he learned about casting through an apprenticeship at the Sculpture, Pottery and Plastics Foundry of Block and Leo Wald in Jeppe, Transvaal.

Dumile has always drawn inspiration from the community of black artists in South Africa—well-known writers such as Bloke Modisane, Willie Kgositsile, Dennis Brutus and Wally Serote. And they have been greatly influenced by Dumile.

In the 1960's, Dumile was becoming very well known in Johannesburg and exhibited in many cities throughout South Africa. His works also began to be shown overseas — in Brazil at the Sao Paulo Biennale, in Belgium at the Museum of Art and in England through the Grosvenor Gallery.

At the end of the decade, Dumile came under increasing harassment by the South African Government. The authorities disliked the attention he gave such figures as Nobel Prize winner Chief Albert Luthuli and resented the attacks against Apartheid which emerged in the titles he gave his sculptures and drawings. Dumile was also an active sympathizer of the banned African National Congress. After being in and out of prison and often in hiding, Dumile was finally forced into exile.

Despite the great hardships of exile, Dumile has struggled to develop and expand his wide artistic interests. Though he considers himself to be a sculptor first, Dumile has made posters, murals, and calendars for the cause of South African liberation and served as a visiting lecturer in the Department of Fine Art at UCLA and the Massachusetts College of Art.

More recently, Dumile has created a triptych of major drawings for the American Committee on Africa's "Unlock Apartheid's Jails" campaign, and is exhibiting with six other South African artists in a traveling show, "Voices From Exile", which is touring American cities through the autumn of 1988.

Also he will be participating in an Art Against Apartheid Exhibition for City Without Walls Gallery in Newark, New Jersey in February, 1988.

~~After years of struggling to find his feet in foreign lands, Dumile is now about to become widely known in New York and North America.~~

The upcoming exhibition, "Statements", marks Dumile's first major showing in New York City since the late '60's and will include drawings and sculptures.

"Statements" will be at La Mama's "La Galleria" from January 7 through January 24, 1988. The gallery is located at 6 East 1st Street New York City and will be open Wednesday through Sunday 1-6 PM or by appointment.

Dumile's friend, Bill Anslie, has summed up the artist's achievements thus, "Dumile took the raw material of his life in Soweto, and it was a life of real ordeal and translated it into work in a manner which revealed a capacity to face unflinchingly the most frightening extremities of human desperation and cruelty without spilling over into sentimentality or overblown expressionism. His originality led to a new style of drawing in South Africa, but I have not found anybody equal to the ferocity and compassion of his work."

If you have any questions about the exhibition please contact Mark Quinlan at (212) ~~583-8379~~.

dumile 410-7797.