

Nocturnal scenes

Africa is rich with magic, but instead of being primitive or dehumanising, it is the source of great creativity and heritage. The darkness of night often functions as the catalyst for magical happenings, the focus of the works selected here. In *My Mother and her Animals* (1994) Helen Sebidi works with rural mythologies, combining the narratives of her local oral culture with her own aesthetic style.

This work has animal and human forms merging and assuming one another's characteristics. In what has become her signature technique, she layers paint and collage elements, building up surfaces of accumulated colours with mercurial effect. Sebidi became the first black woman to win the Standard Bank Young Artist Award in 1989. Judas Mahlangu's *Nocturnal Characters* (1975) exploits the printmaking skills he acquired studying at Rorke's Drift in the early 1970s. His aquatint creates shifting and shadowy distorted forms of cats in an alley, evoking the dubious dealings that occur under the guise of night. In the tapestry *Nightlight Sleeper* (2004) Norman Catherine fuses geometric patterning with a graphic style influenced by comic books to create a series of tessellated night-time visages.

Akin to how darkness reduces vision to simple patterns and shapes, Catherine's faces are abstracted into a crudely cut triangular nose and circular eyes, leaving the viewer uncertain about the identity of these indistinct characters. **Catherine Green**

Above:
Mahlangu, Judas (b.1951)
Nocturnal Characters 1975
 Etching on paper 5/30, 33.5 x 26 cm

Opposite:
Sebidi, Helen Mmakgabo Mmapula (b.1943)
My Mother and her Animals 1994
 Mixed media on paper, 55.5 x 76 cm

Overleaf:
Catherine, Norman (b.1949)
Nightlight Sleeper 2004
 Woven woollen carpet, 171.5 x 250.5 cm









Left:
Zulu, Vuminkosi (1948-1996)
Monkey and the Crocodile 1995
Linocut on paper 11/60, 35.5 x 51.5

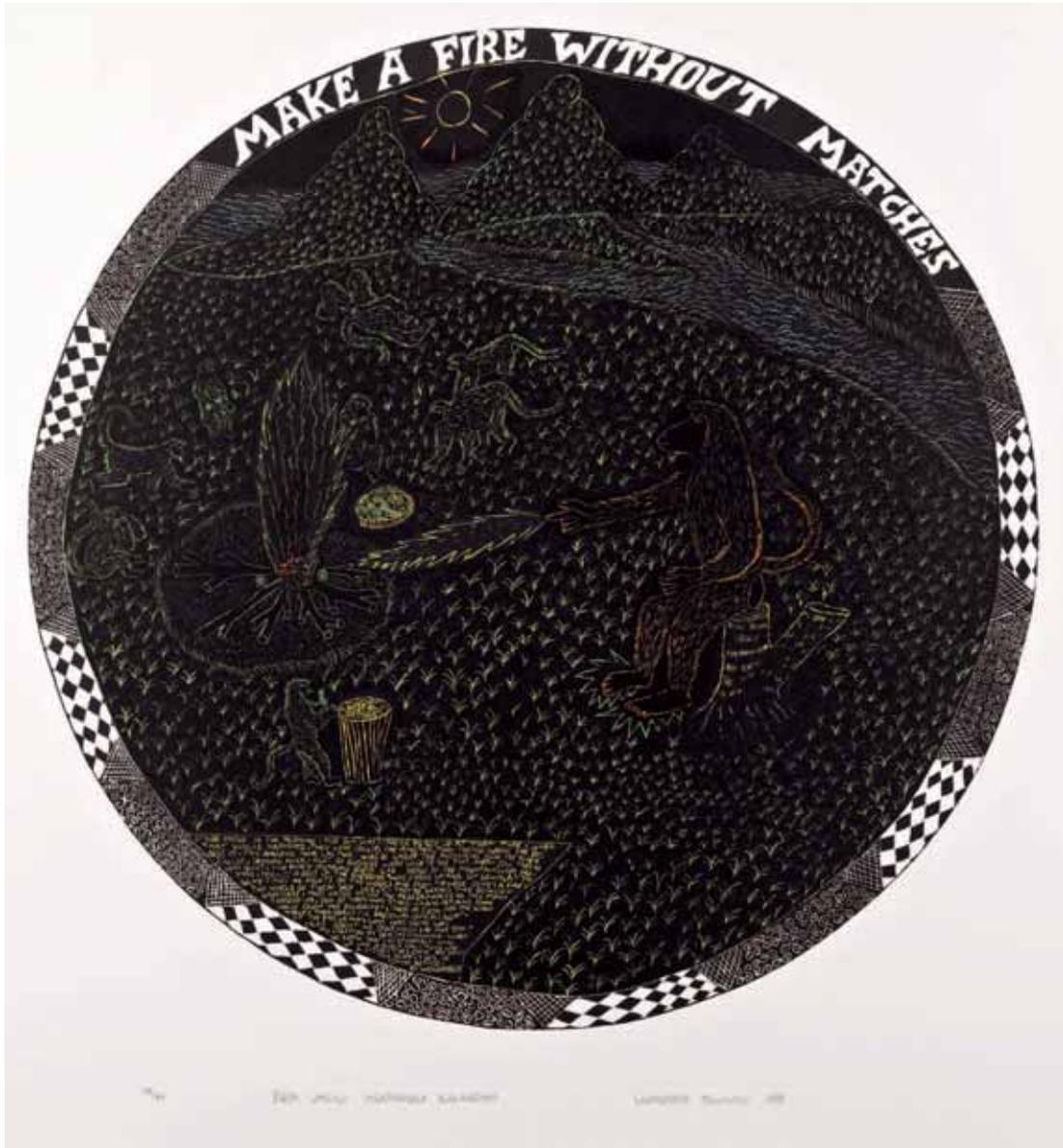
Centre:
Sibisi, Sthembiso (1976-2006)
The Story Teller 1995
Linocut print 16/60, 28 x 27 cm

Right:
Mandindi, Billy (1967-2005)
Puppeteer 1994
Linocut print on paper, 41.2 x 30.5 cm

Opposite:
Nxumalo, Wonderboy (b.1975)
Make a Fire without Matches
(*Basa Umillo ngapandle Kukamatches*) 1995
Silkscreen on paper 12/45, 42 x 42 cm

Storytelling

The apartheid system generated a milieu of oppressive and often bizarre experiences that were interpreted into theatre, music, comedy, photography, writing and the visual arts. Peder Gowenius, who initiated the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC) Arts and Crafts Centre at Rorke's Drift, encouraged storytelling practices: "We chose not to discuss politics with the students, instead we encouraged storytelling."¹ The storytelling device was primarily employed to avoid overt political expression. Among the prominent artists who pursued the storytelling form were Azaria Mbatha and John Muafangejo. It was the graphic quality of the linocut technique that appeared to be the most appropriate vehicle for narrative expression. The storytelling tradition has always been an integral part of child rearing in the African culture. Fables, with their surrealistic use of talking animals, include favourite preferences for monkeys and hares. These animal stories were often told to impart moral guidance to young children. Vuminkosi Zulu's *Monkey and the Crocodile* (1995) is a typical animal fable of a monkey attempting to entice the crocodile out of the water. Sthembiso Sibisi's 1995 composition of the storyteller is a nostalgic rendition of the mother assuming the role of storyteller. Here she is lit up in the centre of the night-time composition, with the children surrounding her. *Puppeteer* (1994) by Billy Mandindi is a subtle and witty comment on the politicisation of power, while Wonderboy Nxumalo's 1995 composition is an allegorical narrative that makes additional use of text to convey the narrative. **David Koloane**



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THE LIFE OF THE MAN

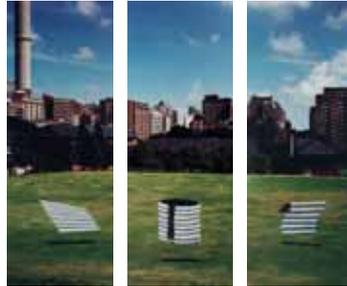
THE LIFE OF THE MAN

Further selections from the Collection

What follows is a representative sample of artworks in the South African Reserve Bank Collection. Listed alphabetically by artist's surname, this selection of thumbnails captures the historical extent, formal diversity and subject range of a Collection that has been growing considerably since its inception in 1954. The selection represents most of the artists in the Collection. Where the Bank has collected historically important bodies of works by single artists, these artists have been afforded additional thumbnail space.



Alexander, Keith Savel (1946-1998)
Near Upington 1984
 Oil on canvas, 61 x 91.5 cm



Alice, Bonita (b.1962)
Turf (triptych) 1998-2000
 Digital print on photographic paper,
 195 x 80 cm, 195 x 80 cm, 195 x 72 cm



Amshewitz, John Henry (1882-1942)
Still Life Undated
 Oil on canvas, 71 x 58 cm



Andersen, Nils Severin (1897-1972)
Boathouse, St Lucia Bay Undated
 Oil on board, 46 x 61 cm



Andersen, Nils Severin (1897-1972)
Strelitzia, South Coast Undated
 Oil on canvas-covered board, 60 x 91 cm



Andrew, David Patrick (b.1962)
Signwriters Packed the Pavements 1994
 Charcoal on paper, 100 x 69 cm



Arnold, Marion (b.1947)
Incident 1991
 Silkscreen on paper 6/14, 59.8 x 85.2 cm



Augustinus, Paul (b.1952)
Buffalo Herd under Tortilis Trees 2000
 Oil on canvas, 80 x 120 cm



Badenhorst, Philip (b.1957)
The Vanishing of all Things 1986
 Oil on canvas, 130 x 179 cm



Bally, Niel (b.1951)
Eastern Cape Landscape 1994
 Oil on board, 72 x 92 cm



Battiss, Walter Whall (1906-1982)
Rensburg Kop 1988
 Tapestry in mohair 1/111, 214.5 x 299 cm



Battiss, Walter Whall (1906-1982)
Landscape with River Mouth Undated
 Watercolour on paper, 23.5 x 39.5 cm



Bester, Shayle (Unknown)
African Moonlight Magic 1995
 Lithograph 11/50, 43 x 58.5 cm



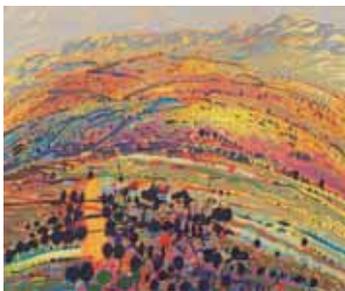
Beyi, N C (Unknown)
Gumatha 1995
 Lithograph and screenprint 12/40, 37 x 29 cm



Blennerhasset, William Thomas (1895-1954)
Landscape, Natal Undated
 Oil on canvas, 56 x 76.5 cm



Blom, Willem Adriaan (Wim) (b.1927)
Girl in a Room 1974
 Oil on canvas, 75 x 92 cm



Blomkamp, Paul (b.1949)
Magaliesberg Undated
 Oil on canvas, 100.5 x 120 cm



Boonzaier, Gregoire Johannes (1909-2005)
Little Cottages, Newlands, Cape 1969
 Oil on board, 34.5 x 65 cm



Boonzaier, Gregoire Johannes (1909-2005)
Malay Quarter 1935
 Oil on canvas, 41 x 54 cm



Boonzaier, Gregoire Johannes (1909-2005)
Malay Quarter, Cape Town 1942
 Oil on canvas, 46 x 61.5 cm



Boonzaier, Gregoire Johannes (1909-2005)
Old Buildings and Table Mountain, District Six 1974
 Oil on canvas, 71 x 92 cm



Boshoff, Adriaan Hendrik (b.1935)
Cattle in the Kraal Undated
 Oil on canvas-covered board, 89.5 x 140 cm



Boshoff, Adriaan Hendrik (b.1935)
Jonkershoek 1964
 Oil on board, 60.5 x 91 cm



Botha, Elizabeth Josephine (Eliza) (b.1938)
Rainbow Snake 1995
 Lithograph 12/45, 63.5 x 46 cm



Botha, Elizabeth Josephine (Eliza) (b.1938)
In Memory of Eileen 1991
 Silkscreen on paper 7/15, 25.5 x 20.5 cm



Botha, George Taylor (b.1928)
Seascape 1989
 Oil pastel on paper, 45 x 66 cm



Botha-Vogel, M (Unknown)
Landscape 1940
 Oil on canvas-covered board, 76 x 111.5 cm