

Mslaba Dumile

DUMILE was born in 1942 in Worcester, a little town in the Cape Province, of devout Christian parents who were members of the Xhosa tribe, and whose father was an active lay preacher. At the age of 6, after his mother's death, the family moved to Cape

Town. At 11 he was sent to live with an uncle's family in Johannesburg, and in the same year left school. From an early age his main interest and preoccupation was drawing and carving. In 1963 while spending 'three months in a sanatorium convalescing

from tuberculosis, he spent his time decorating the hospital with murals. On leaving he visited his first art exhibition in Johannesburg and was immediately taken on contractually by a commercial gallery.

Within 2 years Dumile had shown fairly extensively; 3 one-man shows, represented South-Africa at the Sao Paulo Biennale with 5 works, participated in several group shows such as the Transvaal Academy (1965 and 66), and Republican Arts Festival (1966), Fame and Promise Exhibition (1966), South African Brewery competition

(1966) in which he was awarded one of the main prizes. In 1968: his portrait sculpture of the African leader and Nobel Prize winner: the late Chief Albert Luthuli, attracted much attention whilst-exhibited in Pretoria. Unable to convince the authorities that being an artist was a profession, Dumile was in turn expelled from Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Worcester, and under the 'threat of being arrested and sent to a tribal reservation, he returned to Johannesburg and applied for passport to leave the country. After waiting a year, Dumile was finally given a ; passport and has now been in England for a little over a year.

More than thirty-five new drawings completed in England are being exhibited.

Dumile's inspiration and passion is Jazz. It sustains him. In South Africa he owned a large collection of jazz records which he collected over 10 *years*, and in London spends much of his time at jazz concerts and in jazz clubs. He draws inspiration and energy from the music, and says that without it he tires quickly, Many of his drawings are of musicians such as Roland Kirk and Sidney Bechet. Because of this strong passion for jazz, he is hoping to go to America, the primeval home of jazz. His ultimate plan is to go back to live in Africa, not necessarily the South, where his understanding of the people and problems inspires his work; he believes that art should not only relate to the people but must also be for the people. Dumile, already a major African artist, is now deservedly becoming internationally acclaimed. His works will also be exhibited at the Contemporary African Art exhibition at the Camden Arts Festival, in August- September **1969**.

Dumile, eventually travelled to America. He spent his last years in New York where he made a living designing record covers, illustrating books and painting murals. He died in 1991.