

ART SHOW

The Star
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Untutored, this African depicts the elemental

THE VENUE: Gallery 101.

THE EXHIBITOR: Dumile.

THE SOLID IMPACT of Dumile's drawings and sculptures makes one speculate about the degree of originality in indigenous art in South Africa.

Here is an untutored African artist who has produced more than 50 drawings and sculptures in nine months with an amazing facility and a strong line, and with a social and economic emphasis which is so powerful that one feels that this is a subject which has endless discussion points.

He awakens our senses to the the plight of the underprivileged; not in any vindictive mood but rather as the stark chronicler of the reality of life.

There is an elemental realism about his depiction of life in the townships. The titles of some of his drawings, "Despair," "Forlorn," "Rape," "Where Can We Go?" (a desperate caricature of a mother and child), "Searching for my Soul" (there is no more earthly hope left) and "Weight of Motherhood," are good examples of the awareness of social limitations.

In many of his drawings there is a religious influence, but with satirical overtones. His caricature of an African preacher, "The good word comes out of my mouth," shows an insight which cannot be ignored. In fact this drawing, which shows unctuous piety, is a subtle reminder of the weakness of mortals, even preachers.

OBSESSION

Dumile, who expresses himself mainly in black and white drawings seems to have an obsession about the Mother figure, which is again emphasized in his small sculptures. The fecundity of the female, the accents on buttocks, breasts and thighs, are all part of his awakening to the animal nature of things.

Above all his skill in drawing is quite remarkable. With guidance, we should hear more about this artist in a few years' time.

J. D.