



Thapong Arts Newsletter

ARTS FOR ALL

Volume 1, Issue 1
March 2009

The newsletter covering the Arts in Botswana: visual art, drama, dance, music, film and literature.

Thapong Member's Exhibition 2009

The opening at Thapong Visual Arts Centre of the Thapong Member's Exhibition on 10th March went exceedingly well. The event was opened by the coordinator of the centre, Mr Reginald Bakwena. He spoke of the wonderful variety of artworks on display, but also of the need for artists to understand that they need to become more professional in their approach to galleries. Unfortunately some works submitted by artists were unframed and consequently

were not hung for the exhibition.

The evening was successful as artists and the public came together to discuss the artworks. Several artworks were sold that evening. Supporting local artists by buying their works not only gives them an income but also lifts their spirits.

The artworks on display include paintings, drawings, sculptures, pottery, textile art, photography and mixed

media artworks.

The exhibition will remain open weekdays 9-5pm until the 4th April. Sponsored by Kgalagadi Breweries and World Foods.



Christopher Mokgeledi
Winds of Change
Acrylic on canvas

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QUOTES

On Inspiration

"Painting without inspiration is like driving a car with flat tires."

- Ron Elstad

"Stop. Breathe. Allow yourself the luxury of doing nothing for a moment, or an hour, or even a day. It is in emptiness that inspiration will appear."

- Carole Katchen

"Don't wait for inspiration. It comes while one is working"

- Henri Matisse

Film Festival



From the Human Rights Film Festival : *above* Zimbabwe

The DITSHWANELO 9th Annual Human Rights Film Festival is on between 19th March- 3rd April 2009 at The AV Centre, Maru a Pula School.

Tickets are P25 per person and are available at Maitisong from Thursday 12 March and at the door dur-

ing the festival. There are 19 films that will be shown over the course of the festival covering various themes on human rights in Africa and other countries.

The program and first film will be opened on Thursday 19th March by Minister Phandu Skelemani, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. The first theme is Zimbabwe and the title of the first film is **Zimbabwe**, South Africa (2007) running at 84 minutes. Directed by Darrell James Roodt, courtesy of dv8 Films.

A young orphan named Zimbabwe by her patriotic father is forced to seek survival in neighbouring South Africa as a result of the deteriorating economic and political situation. The film shares the experiences of the undocumented migrant in

Southern Africa whose only aim is to survive in an often hostile environment. Roodt was initially commissioned by an NGO, The International Organisation for Migration (IOM), to produce a short film, but the idea developed into this feature film.

Winner at the Kenya Film Festival – Best Feature Film 2008; Carthage Competition – Best Actress Tunisia 2008; Lumiere d'Afrique – Lyceens et Apprentis au Cinema Region de Franche Comte Award France 2008.

After the film, a discussion will be led by Mr Madoda Nasha (UNHCR) about the situation of refugees in Botswana.

See page 4, *What's on* for film details.

Text and image courtesy of www.maitisong.org

Artist Interview: Andrew M. Matseba

Andrew Mogome Matseba grew up in Tlokweng and now works as a full-time painter in his studio at Thapong Visual Arts Centre. The earliest art related experience he can recall is of drawing pictures in the dirt for entertainment. Matseba has been interested in art ever since he was very young. He became serious about his art in secondary school, and after graduating he decided to develop his talent.

Matseba received two different reactions when others knew of his hopes to become an artist. One friend asked him what he wanted to do that for, that it was merely playing around. Not that Matseba would have been discouraged by any negative comments—he describes himself as being stubborn and having a love for art. Other people encouraged him in his endeavors, and could see the potential and passion he has for painting.

Matseba is a self-taught painter who has participated in several workshops both in Botswana and outside the country. He says one can learn many things from

speaking and watching other artists; and that one never stops learning. Matseba says that working at Thapong is where he can share ideas with other artists and that that is what helping him to grow as an artist.

Including admiring work by various other artists, Matseba is inspired by one local painter in particular, Velias Ndaba. The loose brushwork in Velias's paintings is what Matseba is drawn to. Other artists work that he admires and takes pleasure in are by Pablo Picasso and Vincent Van Gough.

In his own work, Matseba is inspired by nature and the life led by the people around him. In his painting, he likes to take chances, to be free to experiment and explore with paint. Matseba is currently working on a commissioned work.

When Matseba first began as a young artist he worked predominantly with pencils and then moved onto acrylic and oil paints. In the future he would like to try his hand at sculpting.



Andrew M. Matseba

When asked about his thoughts on the visual arts in Botswana, Matseba said that it is growing slowly and that it is wonderful that the government is encouraging and supporting artists.

Matseba advises aspiring artists to work hard and not to expect everything to “fall into your lap”; to visit galleries and Thapong, and to talk with other artists.

Interview by Violette Grosse



Andrew M. Matseba
The Game
Acrylic on canvas



Andrew M. Matseba
Woman at the Market
Acrylic on canvas

Public Art Survivor Workshop

The coordinator of Thapong Visual Arts Centre, Mr Reginald Bakwena, participated in the Public Art Survivor Workshop held in Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa from 16th February to 1st March. The workshop was organized by the Visual Art of South Africa together with three of Johannesburg's leading public art organizations including Art at Work Trinity Session and the Joubert Park Project.

There were 15 participants from Botswana, Lesotho, one Zimbabwean, 10 South Africans, a Ugandan and a Nigerian. The three facilitators were from Cameroon (Goddy Leye), Zurich (Markus Weiss), and New York (Markus Wetzel).

The aims of the workshop were to develop new public

art talent in South Africa and across the continent; to promote greater connection and networking in the field of public art; raise the profile of public art in the public imagination; and to promote debate and discussion around critical issues in public art practice among artists, curators, managers, clients and writers.

The participants were divided into three teams and during the 12 day period they proceeded to conceptualize, develop and realize three projects each. The projects for three different locations: Sandton; a historic part of Soweto; and Joubert Park, a chaotic inner city neighborhood of Johannesburg. The three partner organizations are currently involved in real public art projects in these locations.

During the first three days of the workshop participants heard presentations by several international guest artists and curators.

As a result of the workshop, several conclusions were reached by the participants on the significance of public art and how to proceed successfully in such projects. The artist needs to take the location into consideration; being able to communicate effectively with the project/art manager and the environmentalist; the need to observe deadlines and consider the project as a business operation; and to have an ongoing dialogue with the project manager and the client/s.

A detailed report on the workshop is available from Thapong.



Mr Bakwena (2nd from right) with his group at the Public Art Survivor Workshop in Johannesburg.

"The artist should open the eyes of the viewer to overlooked beauty that is sometimes right in front of us."

- Kenn Backhaus

Past and Future Thapong Events of 2009

Molepolole Painting Workshop

A five day workshop held from 9th – 14th February.

The workshop was organized for Molepolole artists. The aim of the workshop was to give participants a focused practical experience of working with art as a therapeutic and advocacy tool for HIV/AIDS and other illness relating to it. The workshop ended with an exhibition which was attended by an American Ambassador, H.E Stephen Nola.

Student Exhibition

The student exhibition was a success. This imitative of showcasing student artwork started in 2008. The main idea is to expose student work to members of the community which also will create an opportunity for student to interact with each other. The schools were Maruapula, Rainbow and Westwood. The invitation was extended to government schools. The exhibition was running from 13th February - 1st March

Curated by Steve Jobson, Erika and Vivie.

Drawing Workshop and seminar on professionalism to be held in Francistown. 16th – 21st March

The workshop is postponed because the sponsors did not give us an answer in time. The suggested sponsor is Barclays Bank. They will make a decision in April.

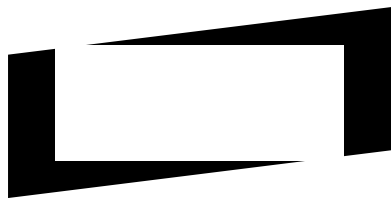
"If art was defined simply by the ability to draw, then my inkjet printer would be a greater artist than Michelangelo."

- Curtis Verdun

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Arts for All



History and Profile of Thapong Visual Arts Centre

The Thapong Visual Arts Centre was established in 1999 with the aim of promoting visual arts in Botswana. The Centre, amongst other things, develops contemporary art, helps artists pursue a career in art, hosts artist's workshops focused on drawing, painting, pottery, sculpture and printmaking. The Centre strives to encourage the community and aspiring artists to be creative, discover means of self-expression and to portray messages by using visual language. Thapong is a membership driven organization whose membership covers the whole country. Members meet and interact primarily during workshops and exhibitions.

Upcoming Family Art Day

The public is invited to attend a Family Art Day at Thapong Visual Arts Centre on the 4th April. The day will bring together artists and members of the community in order to share art and creativity. Artists will set up specifically to demonstrate to the public and to give them the opportunity of participating.

The day could help you to discover and develop interest in the art of drawing, painting, potting, sculpting, and printmaking.

See "What's On" on page 4.

What's On

Thapong Visual Arts Centre

Thapong Family Art Day

Date: Sat. 4th April

Time: 09:30 - 18:00

Contact: Ellis Scotch

Ph: 3161771

Thapong Member's Exhibition

10th March - 4th April

Time: 09:00 - 17:00 Week-days

Pottery Classes at Thapong

Contact: Ellis Scotch

Ph: 3161771

School Holiday Art Classes at Thapong

Maru a Pula School

DITSHWANELO 9th Annual Human Rights Film Festival

19 March– 3 April 2009 at The AV Centre, Maru a Pula School.

Films:

19th March: **Zimbabwe**

20th March: **The Shame of Musina, Missing Presumed Dead, Death of a Nation, and The People's Voice (Our Song)**

21st March: *Special FREE screening for students of War Child* at 3pm - 4:45pm. 21st

March: **Blues for Tiro** and **More Than Just a Game**

23rd March: **The End of Poverty**

25th March: **This Palestinian Life and Occupation 101—Voices of the Silenced Minority**

26th March: **In a Soldier's Footsteps**

27th March: **A Crude Awakening—The Oil Crash** and **The War on Democracy** 29th

March: **Taking Root**

30th March: **Burma VJ**

1st April: **War Child**

2nd April: **At the Death House Door**

3rd April: **War Dance**

Maitisong Festival 2009

Date: 16th March - 8th April

Contact: 3971809 for more information.