





The Wanderers Club, Illovo, Johannesburg
10 November 2014 – 8 pm

**The Harry Lits Collection of
Works by the Amadlozi Group**

Evening Sale
Lots 141–174



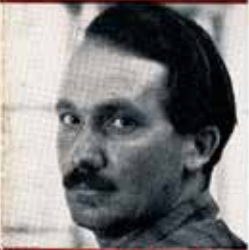
GIUSEPPE CATTANEO



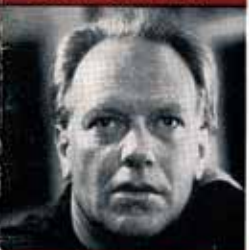
SYDNEY KUMALO



CECILY SASH



CECIL SKOTNES



EDOARDO VILLA



amadolzi

Egon Guenther was born in Mannheim, Germany, in 1921. He trained as a gemmologist at the Staatliche Meisterschule in Pforzheim and later ran a workshop and art gallery in Mannheim. He developed a passion for African art and started collecting as a teenager.

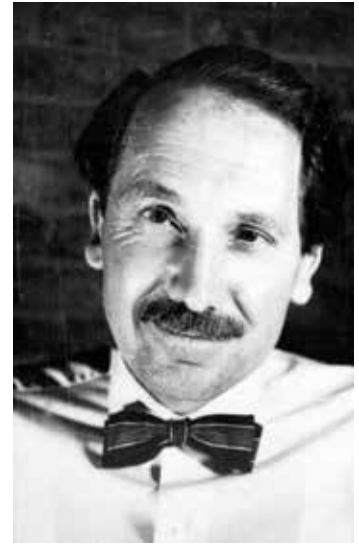
In 1951 Guenther immigrated to South Africa and soon established contact with the local art world. He initially started a jewellery workshop in Johannesburg and later established an art gallery on Bree Street. However, he

believed that artworks looked better when viewed against a natural background and did not feel that the heart of the city was the ideal setting for his Johannesburg gallery. Consequently, he gave architect, Donald Turgel, free reign to add a gallery wing to his house which was constructed entirely from South African woods and other indigenous materials. Guenther was a collector, promoter of the arts, designer, gemmologist and jeweller, but his primary objective was to fight for the international recognition

PAGE 94, FROM LEFT:
Amodlozi Exhibition invitation, 1963
Cecil Skotnes, Edoardo Villa,
Giuseppe Cattaneo, Egon Guenther

PAGE 95 FROM LEFT:
Edoardo Villa
Sydney Kumalo
Cecil Skotnes
Ezrom Legae

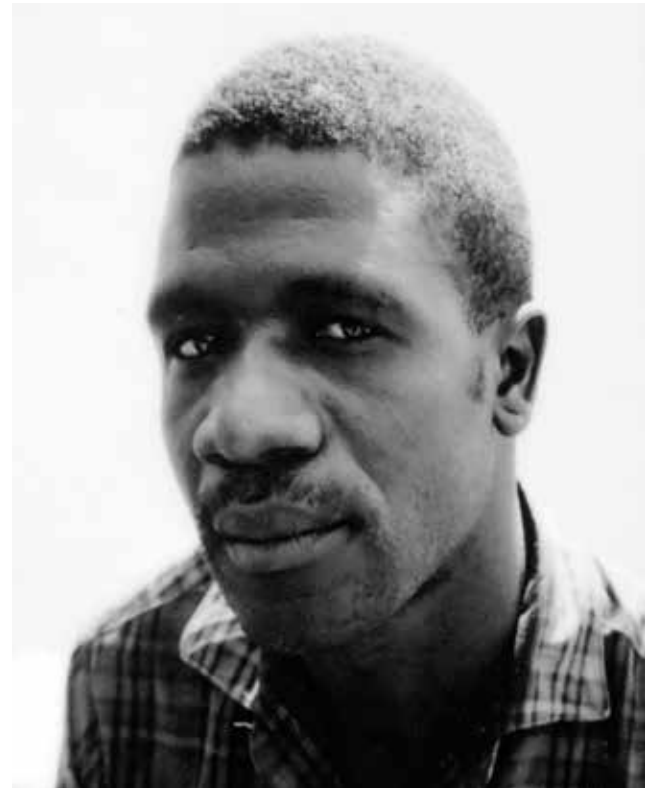




of South African artists. He subsequently selected a group of artists whom he thought were sufficiently talented to achieve international acclaim and, in 1963, he assimilated this group under the banner 'Amadlozi', a name meaning 'Spirit of our Forefathers', given by one of the members, Cecil Skotnes. Other members included the sculptors Edoardo Villa and Sydney Kumalo, and painters Cecily Sash and Guiseppe Cattaneo. Although their styles all differed dramatically, they were unified in their pursuit for a pronounced, indigenous character to their art, something essentially true to Africa. Later additions to this group were other painters and sculptors, Georgina Ormiston, Hannes Harrs, Ezrom Legae and Peter Hayden. Shortly after the formation of the original group

they exhibited in Johannesburg, after which Guenther organised a series of exhibitions in Italy (Rome, Florence, Milan and Venice) in order to promote these artists on an international platform.

In the late fifties Harry Lits, a pharmacist by profession, purchased the property next to Guenther's and the two became friends. Over the succeeding two decades and with the assistance and guidance of Guenther, Lits started assimilating his own collection of South African art. Guenther even assisted in the design of Lits' house in order to best display his art works. The collection that follows is a credit to Harry Lits' vision and an insight into the quality and connoisseurship he developed in his love for premium South African art.





141

Sydney Alex

KUMALO

SOUTH AFRICAN 1935–1988

Cock

signed and numbered 3/10
bronze with a verdigris patina
height: 25 cm

R100 000–150 000

LITERATURE

Miles, Elza. (2004) *Polly Street: The Story of an Art Centre*,
Johannesburg: Ampersand Foundation. Another example from the
edition illustrated in colour on page 119.



142

Edoardo Daniele

VILLA

SOUTH AFRICAN 1915–2011

Maquette for Reclining Figure

signed, dated 1967 and numbered 5/6

bronze with a verdigris patina, mounted on a wooden base

height: 44 cm, including base

R70 000–100 000

LITERATURE

de Klerk, Chris and de Kamper, Gerard. (2012) *Villa in Bronze: A comprehensive reference to the castings of Edoardo Villa*, Pretoria: the University of Pretoria. Another example from the edition illustrated on page 158.

Engel, Prof. E.P. (ed.) (1980) *Edoardo Villa Sculpture*, Johannesburg: United Book Distributors. Another example from the edition illustrated on page 192, plate 27.



©The Estate of Cecil Skotnes | DALRO

143

Cecil Edwin Frans

SKOTNES

SOUTH AFRICAN 1926–2009

Four Figures

signed

carved, incised and painted wood panel

90,5 by 122 cm

R150 000–200 000

Ezrom Kgobokanyo Sebata

LEGAE

SOUTH AFRICAN 1938–1999

Loneliness

signed with the artist's initials and numbered 1/5
bronze with a brown patina, mounted on a wooden base
height: 174 cm, including base

R300 000–500 000

NOTES

A skilled draughtsman and accomplished sculptor, Ezrom Legae is best remembered for his expressive figure drawings and tall, elemental sculptures. On his death in 1999 Kendell Geers heralded him as 'one of South Africa's greatest artists.'¹ Legae had a modest start, initially working as assistant at a hair salon in central Johannesburg. His brother introduced him to the adult recreation centre at Polly Street in 1959 where he pursued his interest in music. In 1962 he began attending art classes led by Cecil Skotnes and Sydney Kumalo. His skill and facility quickly generated notice. In 1964 he became an instructor at the centre. The year after he met dealer Egon Guenther, who enabled the production of Legae's first bronze sculptures. Guenther also introduced Legae to his collection of traditional African art, much of it acquired at auction in Europe. In a 2000 interview Guenther recalled the decisive influence² these encounters had on Legae, whose practice critic Ivor Powell has characterised as 'absolutely [and] convincingly located at a cusp between African sensibility and reference on one hand, and the transcendent and universalist preoccupations of international modernism on the other.'³ Legae held his first solo exhibition at Guenther's gallery in 1966 and the following year received the Ernest Oppenheimer Trust Award for a rough-textured brick clay (terracotta) sculpture displayed on 'Art-SA-Today' group exhibition. This bronze from 1970, produced during a busy period of exposure and consolidation, bears out the defining attributes of Legae's early practice. His figures were reduced, distorted, totemic and unabashedly primal in character. Art historian EJ de Jager also noted the 'absence of outward movement from the central axis' in many of his early compositions, as well as Legae's tendency to balance 'subordinate masses', for example, between left and right, front and back.⁴ There is a close correspondence between the expressive content of this melancholy work and the artist, who in a 1974 interview remarked: 'Various moods prevail in my work; I am a very emotional person.'⁵

1. Geers, Kendell (1999), 'No support for artists', *The Star*, 27 January.

2. Nel, Karel (2000) *African Art from the Egon Guenther Family Collection*, auction catalogue, New York: Sotheby's (New York), 18 November.

3. Powell, Ivor (2006) 'Ezrom Legae', in *Revisions*, Cape Town: UNISA/ SAHO/ Iziko Museums. Page 192.

4. De Jager, EJ (1978) 'Contemporary African sculpture in South Africa', in *Fort Hare Papers*, Vol. 6(6), September. Page 441.

5. Katz, Dina (1974), 'A man of two worlds: Ezrom Legae', in *Lantern*, Vol. 24(1), September. Page 62.



145

Edoardo Daniele
VILLA

SOUTH AFRICAN 1915–2011

Standing Figure I

signed and numbered IV/VI; dated 1967
and inscribed 'Philip' on the underside
bronze with a verdigris patina, mounted
on a wooden base
height: 46 cm, including base

R40 000–60 000

LITERATURE

Pretoria Art Museum exhibition catalogue.
(1970) *Sculpture by Edoardo Villa 1960–1970*,
Pretoria: Hansa Press Pty Ltd. Another
example from the edition illustrated,
unpaginated.



146

Edoardo Daniele
VILLA

SOUTH AFRICAN 1915–2011

Standing Figure IV

signed and numbered III/VI; dated 1967
and inscribed 'Andre' on the underside
bronze with a brown patina, mounted on
a wooden base
height: 47 cm, including base

R40 000–60 000

LITERATURE

Pretoria Art Museum exhibition catalogue.
(1970) *Sculpture by Edoardo Villa 1960–1970*,
Pretoria. Another example from the
edition illustrated, unpaginated.



147

Cecil Edwin Frans

SKOTNES

SOUTH AFRICAN 1926–2009

Totem

signed; dated 1971 on the underside
carved, incised and painted wood
height: 98 cm, including base

R80 000–120 000

NOTES

Throughout his professional career Cecil Skotnes applied himself to producing architectural features – notably murals, doors and interior panels – for churches, schools, businesses and private homes. It is demeaning to think of these works simply as decorative elements. In his book *Johannesburg Style*, architectural critic Clive Chipkin situates these interventions within a broader sweep of experimentation that helped formalise a 'new domestic vernacular architecture' in post war Johannesburg.¹ The artist's totems are a product of this particular trajectory. In the late 1960s, by which time his abstracted figurative style had settled into a mature idiom, Skotnes began producing wood panels marked by their extreme verticality and figural distortion. Often produced using long wooden beams, Skotnes described these works using the word totem, a concession to the generic influence of North American cultures on his practice. A great many of these works tended to be totemic murals offering proscribed points of viewing when compared with this freely navigable columnar form. Whether murals affixed to walls or freestanding objects, Skotnes's totems generally adopted one of two representational strategies: they either depicted 'tall, attenuated figures' or, as in this work, aggregated a number of vividly coloured images in a 'tall, vertical array.'² Unlike the gouged and porous totems produced by architect and artist Monty Sack during the same period, Skotnes did not fully treat his freestanding totems as sculptural pieces. The close affinity, in style and geometry, of this work to his incised paintings is self-evident. Ultimately, his totems remained paintings, albeit highly applied ones. Of note, the post war collector John Schlesinger held a Skotnes totem in his large Schlesinger South African Art Collection, donated to the Wits Art Museum in 1979.

1. Chipkin, Clive (1993) *Johannesburg Style*, Cape Town: David Philip. Page 294.

2. Harmsen, Frieda (1996) 'Artist Resolute', in *Cecil Skotnes*, Cape Town: Cecil Skotnes. Page 28.



© The Estate of Cecil Skotnes | DALRO

148

Edoardo Daniele

VILLA

SOUTH AFRICAN 1915–2011

Vertical Abstract Form

signed and dated 1987

painted steel, on a custom steel base

height: 144,5 cm, including base

R40 000–60 000



149

Cecil Edwin Frans
SKOTNES

SOUTH AFRICAN 1926–2009

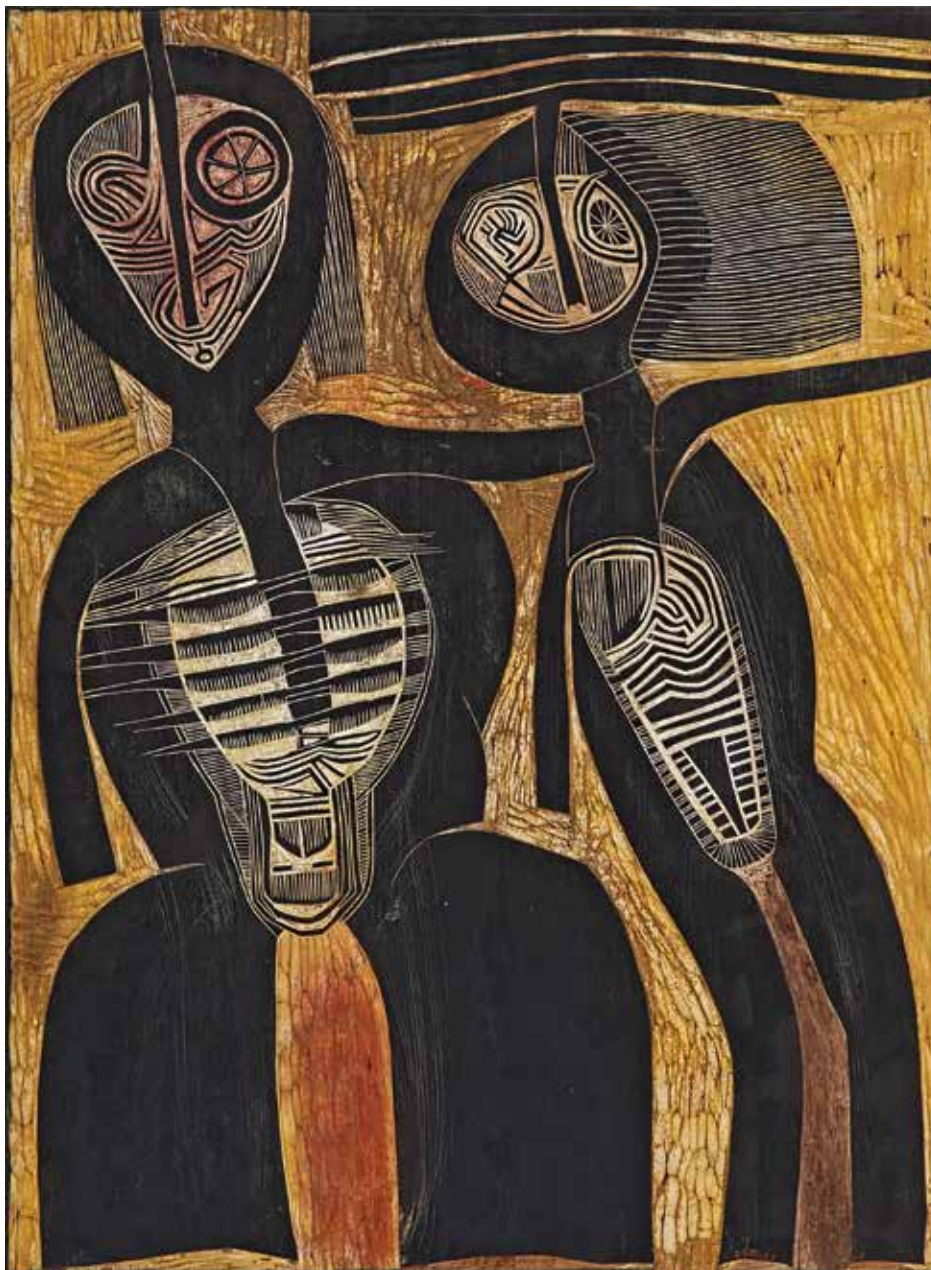
Mother and Child

signed

carved, incised and painted wood panel

61 by 45 cm

R80 000–120 000



© The Estate of Cecil Skotnes | DALRO



© The Estate of Cecil Skotnes | DALRO

150

Cecil Edwin Frans

SKOTNES

SOUTH AFRICAN 1926–2009

Landscape with Animals

signed

carved, incised and painted wood panel

45 by 61 cm

R80 000–120 000

Sydney Alex

KUMALO

SOUTH AFRICAN 1935–1988

Man on Beast

signed, dated 71 and numbered 4/10

bronze with a black patina

height: 50 cm

R200 000–300 000**NOTES**

Animal subjects were a hallmark of Sydney Kumalo's prodigious output. At various points in his career he depicted leopards, eagles, frogs, roosters and horses. Kumalo's animal studies were rarely straight depictions. He possessed what Walter Battiss in 1967 characterised as a 'powerful expressionist'¹ style, and confidently distorted and reduced his animal and human figures. Very often he also conflated these two key subjects, producing animals marked by their visible anthropomorphic qualities. 'Most of Kumalo's studies of animals are images of predatory power, often invested with human features,' noted Elizabeth Rankin.² Not all his animal studies were muscular beasts with human-like qualities. Kumalo also produced bronzes in which human figures interact with animals, typically as riders posed astride horse-like beasts. The power relations in these portrayals are self-evident. Yet even in these works Kumalo's descriptions of basic features often suggest commonality rather than difference. Eyes and mouths were typically evoked with the same elementary flourish. In this particular work both the animal and human elements feature the same striated surface texture. Animal subjects were rarely benign or neutral subjects for Kumalo, a cosmopolitan artist whose work expressed metropolitan concerns. His loose representational strategies, especially in relation to his many animal subjects, must be understood in the context of their time. 'In art of the period, the human figure was often put through animal transformations that indicated how [the] everyday brutality of apartheid was internalised and how it might be exorcised,' observed art historian John Pepper. 'Through graphic distortions of the body and its metamorphosis into a beast, artists posed trenchant questions about the relation of corporeal existence to ideas about animality, community, and the scared.'³

1. Battiss, Walter (1967) 'A New Art in South Africa', Optima. Page ...

2. Rankin, Elizabeth (1994) *Images of Metal: Post-War Sculptures and Assemblages in South Africa*, Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press. Page 132.

3. Pepper, John (2009) *Art and the End of Apartheid*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Page 41.





152

Sydney Alex

KUMALO

SOUTH AFRICAN 1935–1988

The Beast

signed and numbered 2/10; inscribed with the artist's name, title, dated 1964 and numbered 2/10 on a label adhered to the underside
bronze with a brown patina, mounted on a wooden base
height: 23 cm, including base

R100 000–150 000



153

Sydney Alex

KUMALO

SOUTH AFRICAN 1935–1988

Figure with Outstretched Arms

signed with the artist's initials and numbered I/X, executed in 1969
bronze with a brown patina, mounted on a wooden base
height: 118 cm, including base

R400 000–600 000

LITERATURE

Toerien, Heine and Duby, George. (1970–9) *Our Art 3*, Pretoria: The Foundation for Education, Science and Technology. Another example from the edition illustrated on page 73.

Miles, Elza. (2004) *Polly Street: The Story of an Art Centre*, Johannesburg: Ampersand Foundation. Another example from the edition illustrated in colour on the frontis page.

NOTES

This tall and elementary figure, which reads as supplicant and/or celebrant, either way evoking pathos, is widely referenced in literature about Sydney Kumalo. Unusually, its earliest appearance in print is in government-backed publications. It is illustrated in *South Africa: A Visual History* (1973), a Department of Information book that describes Kumalo as a 'well-known Black artist' whose work is 'much sought-after'.¹ It is also illustrated in *Our Art III* (1978), the third in a series of books issued by the Foundation for Education, Science and Technology.² Kumalo received considerable attention as an artist, more so after he began showing internationally. In 1965, following a series of exhibitions in Italy organised by his dealer Egon Guenther, Kumalo was included on a group show at dealer Eric Estoric's Grosvenor Gallery in London. The *New York Times* favourably remarked on the 'powerful monumentality' of Kumalo's works on this show.³ In 1966 Kumalo was invited to represent South Africa at the Venice Biennale, bearing out an appraisal of him as South Africa's 'best-known, most admired and most sought-after figurative sculptor'.⁴ Shortly afterwards, in 1967, his bronzes received a considered evaluation in *Art Voices*, a short-lived New York art magazine. Kumalo's work was characterised as part of the 'new synthesis in South African art', his work marked by its affinities to 'wood carvings from the Cameroons and the Cubist sculpture of Juan Gris, Archipenko, Lipschitz or Zadkine'.⁵ South Africa's expulsion from the Venice Biennale in 1968 did not end Kumalo's international career, as it did so many other local artists. He continued exhibiting and generating notice. This important work is illustrated in art historian Benedict Donahue's *The Cultural Arts of Africa*, in which she remarks on the 'kangaroo pose' and 'cubistic style' of Kumalo's figure.⁶ Kumalo has not been forgotten in the post-apartheid era: this work appears prominently at the front of Elza Miles's 2004 history of Polly Street.⁷

1. — (1973) *South Africa: A Visual History*, Pretoria: Department of Information. Page 151.

2. Watter, Lola (1978) 'Sydney Kumalo', *Our Art III*, Pretoria: Lantern. Page 73.

3. Spencer, Charles (1965) 'Africans exhibit in London', *New York Times*, 28 September. Page 5.

4. — (1965) 'Art under apartheid' *New York Times Magazine*, 28 March. No page.

5. — (1966) 'Art Around the World', *Art Voices*, Vol. 5(2), Winter. Page 97.

6. Benedict Donahue (1979) *The Cultural Arts of Africa*, Washington: University Press of America. Page 231.

7. Miles, Elza (2004) *Polly Street: The Story of an Art Centre*, Johannesburg: Ampersand Foundation. Page 2.



154

Sydney Alex

KUMALO

SOUTH AFRICAN 1935–1988

Standing Figure

signed with the artist's initials and
numbered I/X

bronze with a brown patina,
mounted on a wooden base
height: 61,5 cm, including base

R150 000–200 000



155

Sydney Alex

KUMALO

SOUTH AFRICAN 1935–1988

Seated Female Figure

signed and numbered I/X
bronze with a brown patina,
mounted on a wooden base
height: 45 cm, including base

R150 000–200 000



156

Ezrom Kgobokanyo Sebata
LEGAE

SOUTH AFRICAN 1938–1999

Elongated Head

signed with the artist's initials and
numbered 3/10

bronze with a black patina, mounted on a
wooden base

height: 50 cm, including base

R100 000–150 000

LITERATURE

Miles, Elza. (2004) *Polly Street: The Story of
an Art Centre*, Johannesburg: Ampersand
Foundation. Another example from the
edition illustrated in colour on page 5.



157

Sydney Alex

KUMALO

SOUTH AFRICAN 1935–1988

Mask

signed

terracotta, mounted on a wooden base

height: 50 cm, including base

R200 000–300 000

LITERATURE

Peffer, John. (2009) *Art and the End of Apartheid*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Illustrated on page 28.

Miles, Elza. (2004) *Polly Street: The Story of an Art Centre*, Johannesburg: Ampersand Foundation. Another example from the edition illustrated in colour on page 84.

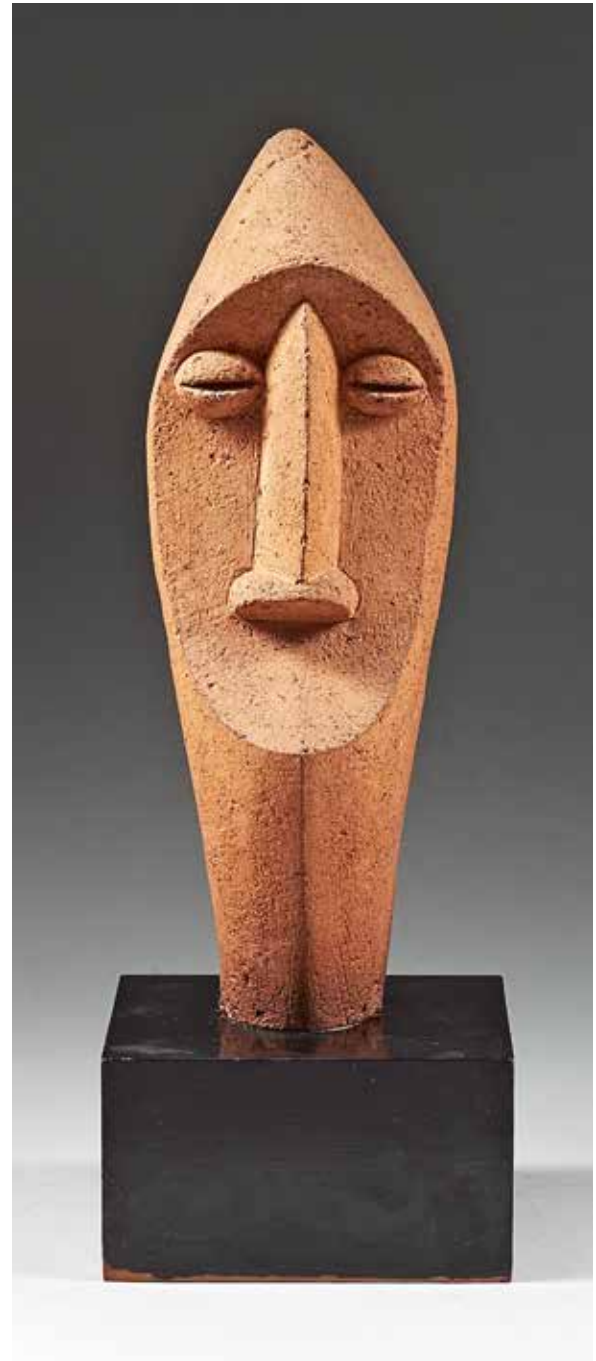
NOTES

Sydney Kumalo was a still a teenager when, in 1952, he began attending biweekly art classes at a hall designated for 'non-European' adult recreation on Polly Street in central Johannesburg. Led by Cecil Skotnes, the loose curriculum focussed on drawing, painting and basic aspects of sculpture using brick clay (or terracotta). Sophiatown-born Kumalo, whose interest in art was sparked by youthful encounters with paintings and sculptures seen in white suburban homes serviced by his house-painter father, concentrated on painting. Despite his lack of formal training and youth (Kumalo was nine years younger than Skotnes), his arrival at Polly Street helped establish a 'contemporary creative climate', according to Walter Battiss.¹ Writing in a 1965 issue of the London magazine *Studio International*, Battiss also remarked how Kumalo, with his 'talent' and 'brain', helped Skotnes to breath 'new life' into the centre. The death of Kumalo's father prompted his sudden transition from painting to sculpture. 'He was a watercolour painter and needed a job', recalled Skotnes in a 1984 interview.² On the same day that Kumalo announced his plight to Skotnes, the Bishop of Kroonstad visited Polly Street in search of an artist to create a ceiling mural at St Peter Claver Church in Seisoville, Kroonstad. Skotnes proposed Kumalo. The pair jointly executed the mural, exploring and devising generic African forms together. Kumalo additionally produced bas-reliefs of the 14 Stations of the Cross, photographs of which Skotnes showed Edoardo Villa. In 1958 Villa agreed to mentor Kumalo twice a week at his studio. Kumalo's earliest sculptures, of which this reduced portrait is a fine example, were made from brick clay, which was easy to obtain and inexpensive.³ The work reveals the early generic influence of West and Central African sculptural idioms on Kumalo, whose syncretic style was also greatly influenced by the volumetric experiments and simplifications of the human form by modernists like Brancusi, Picasso and Moore.

1. Battiss, Walter (1965) 'Cecil Skotnes and the Angst of Africa', *Studio International*, Vol. 170. Page 124.

2. Skotnes, Cecil (1984) Interview with Cecil Ambrose Brown, 20 April, Cape Town. <http://cecilskotnes.com>

3. Rankin, Elizabeth (1996) 'Teaching and Learning: Skotnes at Polly Street', in *Cecil Skotnes*, Cape Town: Cecil Skotnes. Page 71.



158

Cecil Edwin Frans

SKOTNES

SOUTH AFRICAN 1926–2009

Conversation

signed

carved, incised and painted wood panel

122,5 by 120,5 cm

R500 000–700 000

NOTES

In 1956, at the prompting of his dealer Egon Guenther, Cecil Skotnes began to explore more fully woodcarving as a complement to his printmaking. Skotnes, who at the time produced chiefly landscape studies, soon started embellishing his printing blocks with marble dust and coloured oxides, showing the end result as 'autonomous works'.¹ Commonly referred to as 'incised paintings', these works are now celebrated as the epitome of Skotnes's output. Informed by a great wealth of influences, ranging from German Expressionism and Cubism to the classical civilisations of Italy, Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Greece and, of course, West and Central Africa, Skotnes synthesised all these influences into an original proposition that was wholly his own. By the late 1960s his subject matter had also decisively shifted from landscape to abstracted figures. Initially a great admirer of painter JH Pierneef, Skotnes later criticised South Africa's landscape tradition for its conservatism and limiting scope:

'Our art, having grown up in a political system that is founded on standards incompatible with democratic morality, is mainly concerned with extending the influence of European and American styles and maintaining an interest in the South African landscape, both rural and urban. The political and human environment which plays so important a role in our lives is scarcely touched on ... even when important influences are employed ...'²

The figures in this work, as in so many of the artist's incised paintings, are unspecified. Elemental, fragmented and nominally genderless, they are, in the great Skotnes tradition, archetypal. Tellingly, however, each figure is visibly different, both in form and colour. The imbalance in scale and oblique linear projections from the taller figure invite narrative projection. The work's title however suggests dialogue, a very basic form of mutuality. 'The great human drama being enacted now is almost entirely ignored,' stated Skotnes during his 1979 lecture.³ This ostensibly apolitical work animates this drama, with the minimum of fuss.

1. Harmsen, Frieda (1996) 'Artist Resolute', in *Cecil Skotnes*, Cape Town: Cecil Skotnes. Page 14.

2. Skotnes, Cecil (1979) 'The Problem of Ethnicity', in *The State of Art in South Africa*, Cape Town: University of Cape Town. Page 16.

3. Ibid. Page 17.



© The Estate of Cecil Skotnes | DALRO

159

Sydney Alex

KUMALO

SOUTH AFRICAN 1935–1988

Madala V

inscribed with the artist's name, title, 'was shown at the Biennale São Paulo 1967' and numbered IV/X on a label adhered to the underside
bronze with a brown patina, mounted on a wooden base
height: 44,5 cm, including base

R180 000–240 000

EXHIBITED

The Egon Geunther Gallery, Johannesburg
São Paulo Biennale, 1967

LITERATURE

Berman, Esmé. (1983) *Art & Artist's of South Africa*, Cape Town:
AA Balkema. Another example from this edition illustrated on page 403.

NOTES

The 1960s were a pivotal period in the biography of Sydney Kumalo, marking his passage from promising Johannesburg sculptor to nationally recognised artist with an international career. Influential promoters aided his career, notably Cecil Skotnes, who in 1960 favourably commented on his protégé's work in a review published in *Fontein*, a short-lived art journal co-edited by poet Charles Eglinton. Around this time Kumalo received a commission to produce a large outdoor sculpture for display in Milner Park, Johannesburg. While still tethered to a pious Christian theme, Kumalo's *St Francis* (1961), a smooth-surfaced bronze portraying the founder of the Franciscan order, nonetheless crystallised his idiosyncratic style of figurative sculpture, which broadly synthesised the formal experiments of European modernism with the distorting and reductionist idioms of West and Central African sculpture. In 1962 Kumalo held his debut solo exhibition with dealer Egon Guenther, a noted local promoter of German Expressionism and collector of African traditional art. In 1963 Guenther further aided Kumalo's early public reception by showing him under the Amadlozi banner with Giuseppe Cattaneo, Cecily Sash, Skotnes and Villa. Emboldened by the increasingly positive reception of his work, Kumalo resigned his teaching position at Polly Street in 1964 to pursue a full-time art career. Kumalo announced his mature style with *Large Seated Woman* (1964), a work noted for its expressive figuration and lacerated surface finishes.¹ This work forms part of a series depicting an elderly seated male figure. The wizened black elder is an enduring trope in South African art. Kumalo's work is however more than the sum of its ostensibly clichéd parts or 'primitivising influences'.² A precursor work, *Madala I* (1966), was awarded a bronze medal at the Transvaal Academy in 1967, the same year this particular iteration was shown on the São Paulo Biennale in Brazil.

1. Watter, Lola (1978) 'Sydney Kumalo', *Our Art III*, Pretoria: Lantern. Page 70.

2. Powell, Ivor (1995) 'Us Blacks: Self-construction and the Politics of Modernism', in *Persons and Pictures*, Johannesburg: Newtown Galleries. Page 15.



160

Sydney Alex

KUMALO

SOUTH AFRICAN 1935–1988

Mother and Child

signed with the artist's initials and
numbered 1/10

bronze with a verdigris patina
height: 66 cm

R300 000–500 000



161

Ezrom Kgobokanyo Sebata

LEGAE

SOUTH AFRICAN 1938–1999

A Striding Girl

signed and numbered 7/10

bronze with a brown patina, mounted on a wooden base

height: 58 cm, including base

R200 000–300 000

NOTES

In 1969 Ezrom Legae became a member of the Amadlozi Group, a loosely associated collective of artists established by dealer Egon Guenther in 1963. By this time Legae had already formulated his elemental brand of figurative sculpture, which, through shifting subjects and times, he would remain faithful to throughout his life. Broadly speaking, Legae's sculptures express little of the directness or stridency one sees in his highly regarded works on paper. This late sculpture, which shares many formal affinities with *Standing Female Torso* (1998), speaks in an entirely different register to his well-known *Chicken* series (1978), which offered the image of a fowl as a proxy for the body of murdered activist Steve Biko, or later *Jail* series (1981), which unambiguously described apartheid's brutality. Solemn and dignified, this monumental bronze prompts respectful appraisal rather than outrage. In a particularly sharp overview of the art produced by black South African modernists, critic Ivor Powell in 1995 remarked how works invested with pathos and sadness never explored the cause of the suffering, 'and thus, while such pieces certainly engage the sentiment of the viewer, they would hardly confront him or her with the actionable realities which produce the pathetic situation'.¹ It is true as a generalisation. As too is the fact that white patronage and the temperament of the market undoubtedly played an important role in limiting the choice of subjects available to black urban artists, more so when producing costly bronzes. Yet it is a measure of Legae's achievement, both as artist and citizen, that he did not demur from addressing South Africa's political situation, or for that matter limit himself from expressing his diverse moods. With bronze Legae found a medium both pliable enough to explore his syncretic style and steadfast enough to express his radical humanism.

1. Powell, Ivor (1995) 'Us Blacks: Self-construction and the Politics of Modernism', in *Persons and Pictures*, Johannesburg: Newtown Galleries. Pages 14-15.



162

Ezrom Kgobokanyo Sebata

LEGAE

SOUTH AFRICAN 1938–1999

Pensive Woman

signed with the artist's initials and

numbered 4/10

bronze with a black patina, mounted

on a wooden base

height: 110 cm, including base

R400 000–600 000



163

Edoardo Daniele

VILLA

SOUTH AFRICAN 1915–2011

Heraldic Figure V

signed, dated 1985 and numbered 2/3
bronze with a white patina, mounted on
a wooden base

height: 59 cm, including base

R50 000–80 000

LITERATURE

de Klerk, Chris and de Kamper, Gerard.
(2012) *Villa in Bronze: A comprehensive
reference to the castings of Edoardo
Villa*, Pretoria: the University of Pretoria.
Another example from the edition
illustrated on page 110.



164

Edoardo Daniele

VILLA

SOUTH AFRICAN 1915–2011

Heraldic Figure

signed and dated 1988

bronze with a grey patina; mounted on a steel base

height: 45,5 cm, including base

R40 000–60 000

NOTES

This bronze formed part of a large selection of sculpture included on the two-man show 'Villa Skotnes' at the Pretoria Art Museum in 1989. In the accompanying catalogue, museum director Albert Werth contextualised this modestly-scaled work against the broad sweep of Edoardo Villa's prodigious post war output:

'Early works had a barbed nervousness, the open shapes defined by lines and angles. Then came the works in which heavy volumes dominated, and later these volumes were defined by curved steel surfaces. Later again volumes were reduced dramatically to elongated cylinders.'

In distinction to Villa's large outdoor works, monumental figure totems and abstract geometrical forms, Werth remarked of Villa's 'compact' bronzes that they were 'highly self-contained, with a powerful inner energy'.² The observation is worth analysing. Throughout his life Villa's abstracted figures were repeatedly likened to Henry Moore, an impression no doubt amplified by the prominent placement of one of his works near a Moore bronze outside architect Monty Sack's Schlesinger Centre (1967) in Braamfontein. Villa, jokingly perhaps, dismissed the likeness when, in the 1990s, he is reported to have asked for a book about Moore, 'so I can see who this guy is that influenced me'.³ Far less remarked upon in appraisals of the development and form of Villa's abstract grammar is the artistic milieu of early post war Johannesburg, where Villa matured through representation to abstraction. In 1955 Villa moved into a house in Parktown North with Stanley Dorfman, a noted young painter who in 1950 exhibited with Christo Coetzee. Latterly recognised for his work as one of Britain's leading pop music television producers, Dorfman also introduced Douglas Portway to Cornwall. When Portway emigrated to England in the late 1950s Villa bought his house in Kew, Johannesburg. These relationships and associations suggest other ways of approaching Villa's intimate bronzes, which while couched in an international style modernism are also the expression of home-grown friendships, conversations, experiments and accomplishments.

1. Werth, Albert (1989) *Villa Skotnes*, Pretoria: Pretoria Art Museum. Page 2.

2. Ibid. Page 2.

3. Barron, Chris (2011), 'Eduardo Villa: Famed sculptor', in *Sunday Times*, 8 May.





© The Estate of Cecil Skotnes | DALRO

165

After Cecil Edwin Frans

SKOTNES

SOUTH AFRICAN 1926–2009

Two Figures, woven by TMP Sino

woven with the artist's signature; embroidered with the serial number 1638 - 1/4 on the hem, signed by the artist, numbered 1638 - 1/6, printed with the weavers name and 'Manufactura de Tapeçarias de Portalegre, Portuga' on a label stitched to the reverse

hand woven tapestry

119 by 170 cm

R120 000–160 000



© The Estate of Cecil Skotnes | DALRO

166

Cecil Edwin Frans

SKOTNES

SOUTH AFRICAN 1926–2009

Landscape

signed

carved, incised and painted wood panel

45 by 61 cm

R80 000–120 000

167

Edoardo Daniele

VILLA

SOUTH AFRICAN 1915–2011

Seated Figure

signed and dated 1987

painted steel

height: 80 cm, excluding base

R80 000–120 000

NOTES

This work was used on the poster and invitation for the National Grahamstown Art Festival, 1987

This painted steel figure was made three decades after Edoardo Villa was released from Zonderwater, an internment camp outside Cullinan, east of Pretoria. Villa, an Italian national who completed his studies at the Scuola D'Arte Andrea Fontoni in his native Bergamo, was conscripted to fight in World War Two and captured in North Africa. Upon his release from prison Villa opted to stay in South Africa and work as an artist. His early years were marked by poverty, struggle and doubt. By 1988, when he was the guest artist at the Standard Bank Festival of the Arts in Grahamstown, Villa was widely recognised and a much-admired artist. This unusually humorous figure work, conjured from a skilful combination of primary volumes, received star billing in Grahamstown. The formal geometry and patinated surface is consistent with the artist's sculptural output from this period. Its figurative qualities also animate a key aspect of Villa's thinking. 'If anything could sum up my fundamental concern in art, it is that of the human and the individual – the human condition,' the artist told Allan Crump.¹ Villa's attitude to colour was less defined and fluctuated over the years. He first began applying colour to his sculptures in the early 1960s, notably to create an 'even surface' and dramatise the 'play of lightness against strength', and subsequently went through periods of rejecting it because of the way colour 'lessened the essential, monumental character of his work'.² This work, produced during a period of great public acclaim – including a two-man show with fellow Amadlozi Group stalwart Cecil Skotnes at the Pretoria Art Museum in 1989 – captures the master in a lighter, more ebullient mood.

1. Crump, Allan (1987) *Sculpture by Edoardo Villa, 1985 to 1987: Johannesburg Art Gallery, June 9 to July 12, 1987*, Johannesburg, Johannesburg Art Gallery. Page 8.

2. Watter, Lola (1978) 'Edoardo Villa', *Our Art III*, Pretoria: Lantern. Page 64.



168

Edoardo Daniele
VILLA

SOUTH AFRICAN 1915–2011

Standing Form

signed and dated 1987
painted steel, on a custom steel base
height: 190 cm, including base

R60 000–90 000



169

Sydney Alex

KUMALO

SOUTH AFRICAN 1935–1988

Owl

signed and dated '65

conté and pastel

65 by 44 cm

R6 000–9 000

170

Sydney Alex

KUMALO

SOUTH AFRICAN 1935–1988

Bull

signed and dated '66

conté and pastel

50 by 71 cm

R10 000–15 000

LITERATURE

Miles, Elza. (2004) *Polly Street: The Story of an Art Centre*, Johannesburg: Ampersand Foundation. Illustrated in colour on page 13

171

Sydney Alex

KUMALO

SOUTH AFRICAN 1935–1988

Reclining Beast

signed and dated 66

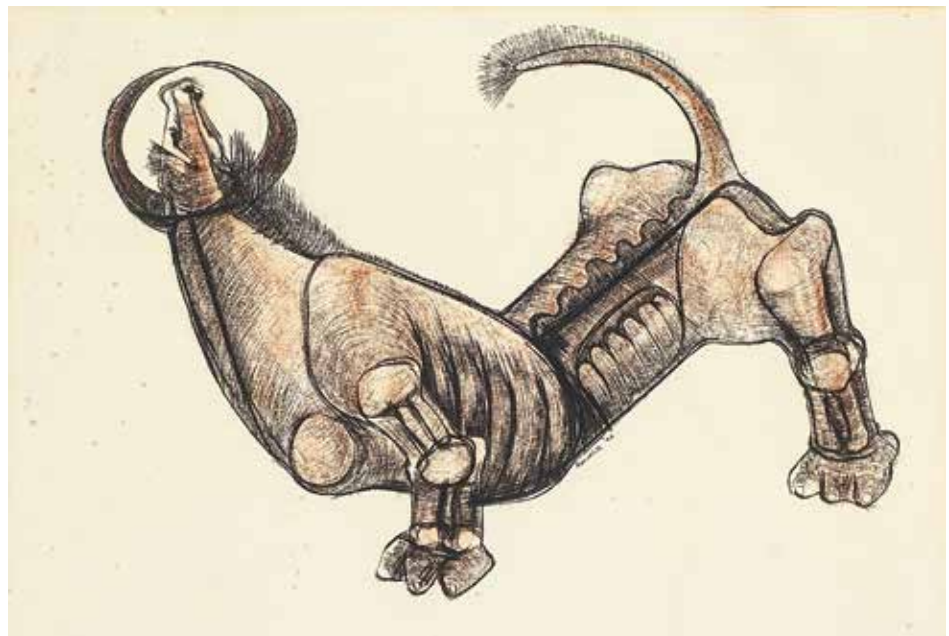
conté and pastel

54 by 73 cm

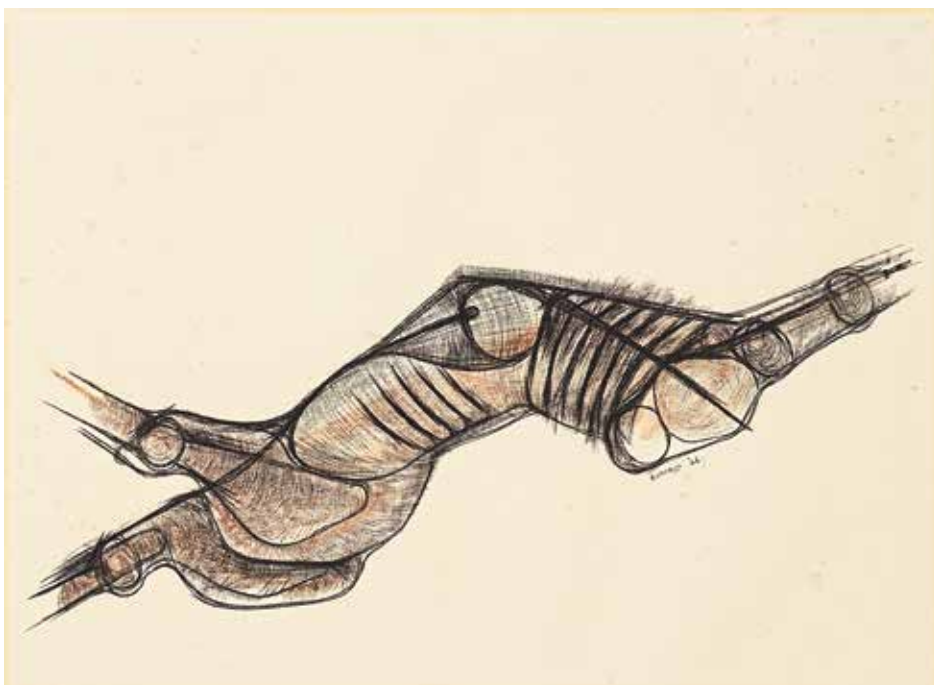
R5 000–8 000



169



170



171



172

172

Sydney Alex

KUMALO

SOUTH AFRICAN 1935–1988

Standing Figure

signed and dated 1967

pencil

48,5 by 30 cm

R4 000–6 000

173

SKOTNES, Cecil Edwin Frans

and

BOSMAN, Herman Charles

Die Rooinek

special edition artist's book by Herman Charles Bosman, printed and published by Egon Geunther, Johannesburg 1981, numbered 71/75, including one colour woodcut and 14 wood engravings by Cecil Skotnes, each signed and numbered 71/75 in pencil, bound; with slip-case

R8 000–12 000

174

Cecil Edwin Frans

SKOTNES

SOUTH AFRICAN 1926–2009

Man's Gold

A portfolio of twenty eight woodcuts by Cecil Skotnes, 6 poems and text by Stephen Gray, based on ideas by Denis Godfrey.

These woodcuts were printed from original blocks in 2 to 5 colours on Zerkall Buetten paper by Egon Guenther, each copy is hand bound in Oasis goat skin by Peter Carstens, Johannesburg, August 1975 to January 1979, edition limited to 75 copies and 15 artist's proofs, this numbered 63/75, each woodcut signed and numbered 63/75 in pencil in the margin, the title page signed by both the artist and poet

colour woodcuts

sheet size: 38,5 by 53,5 cm each

R30 000–40 000