

# First Mobil Zimbabwe Heritage Biennale 1998



## Panel of Judges

**ARTHUR AZEVEDO** (Metal sculptor/Graphic artist/Art teacher) See President's Award page 8.

**DOMINIC BENHURA** (Sculptor) Born in Zimbabwe, Dominic Benhura has been carving since he was a child and today is recognised as one of Zimbabwe's most innovative and experimental sculptors. He has exhibited extensively in Zimbabwe and abroad since 1987 and participated in Workshops in Botswana, Germany, Holland, United States of America and Zimbabwe. In the Zimbabwe Heritage Exhibitions he had work displayed in 1988, 1989, 1993 and 1997, receiving a Highly Commended Certificate in 1988 and the Mobil Award of Distinction for Large Outdoor Work in 1997. In 1995 he was awarded "Invited Artist" status at Chapungu Sculpture Park and in 1996 he won Second Prize at the Remise Academy International Workshop in Denmark. Lives in Harare.

**LIONEL DAVIS** (Graphic artist/Painter/Art teacher) A well known South African artist who was a political prisoner on Robben Island from 1964 to 1971, and whilst there he worked for and obtained his Senior Certificate. In 1982 he studied Fine Art at The Evangelical Art and Craft Centre in Rorkes Drift, Natal. He obtained a B.A.F.A. degree from the University of Cape Town in 1994 and has had wide experience in judging and assessing works for many exhibitions. He has exhibited in South Africa, Botswana, Germany, Gt. Britain and the United States of America. He is a Tour Guide at Robben Island Museum where he now lives. Has work in many Public and Private Collections including the National Gallery of Zimbabwe.

**BABETTE FITZGERALD** (Textilist/Graphic artist) Born in South Africa. Won a Scholarship to the School of Art and Crafts, Natal Technical College in 1948, and in 1983 was awarded a British Council Visitorship to the United Kingdom. Has participated



*Standing: The Honourable Cephaz Msipa, Minister of State in the President's office; Professor George Kahari, Director; Maurie Bath, Financial Director - Mobil Oil Zimbabwe; The Honourable Gabriel Machinga, Minister of Education Sport and Culture; Lawrence Vambe of the Board of Trustees, Rose West, Curator*  
*Sitting: Voti Thebe; Arthur Azevedo; Lionel Davis; Babette Fitzgerald; Sue McComick; Dominic Benhura*

in National Gallery Exhibitions since 1969, and in many group exhibitions throughout the world. Has won many awards. Selected exhibitions: 1986-1996 Zimbabwe Heritage Exhibitions; 1980 Zimbabwe-Rhodesian Exhibition, Johannesburg, South Africa; 1980-83 Recent Zimbabwean Literary and Art Exhibition in United Kingdom; 1981 Art do Zimbabwe, Maputo, Mozambique; 1986 Commonwealth Arts Festival, Edinburgh, Scotland; 1991 Havana Biennale, Cuba; 1984 Solo exhibition, National Gallery of Zimbabwe. Amongst awards received Fitzgerald was presented with the Floating Award for Outstanding Work, 1988; two Awards of Merit and the Director's Award of Distinction in the Zimbabwe Heritage Exhibitions and has been a Guest Artist since 1993. Had works displayed in the MBCA Decade of Award Winners, 1997. Has works in many Public and Private Collections throughout the world and in the National Gallery Permanent Collection. Lives in Harare.

## Panel of Judges — Comments

**SUE McCORMICK** (Ceramicist/Textilist) Born in Zimbabwe, has participated in many exhibitions both in Zimbabwe and abroad. Sue McCormick is recognised as one of Zimbabwe's foremost ceramicists. Her works have a sculptural quality which has received recognition throughout the world, particularly in Italy, where she has twice been presented with the Gualdo Tadino Premio Aquisto Award (1988 and 1994) when participating in exhibitions in that country. She has been exhibiting in the National Gallery since 1976. In the Zimbabwe Heritage Exhibitions she received an Award of Merit in 1989, and has been a Guest Artist since 1994. Had works displayed in the MBCA Decade of Award Winners, 1997. Has works in many Private and Public Collections. Lives in Harare.

**VOTI THEBE** (Painter/Graphic artist/Sculptor/Textilist) Born in Zimbabwe, Voti Thebe studied Art at the Mzilikazi Arts & Crafts Centre in Bulawayo. He has participated in many exhibitions both in Zimbabwe and abroad. In the Weldart Exhibitions of 1979 and 1987 he won awards and has exhibited in the Zimbabwe Heritage Exhibitions from 1986-1997. Voti Thebe received the President's Award of Honour in 1997 for consistent artistic excellence and outstanding dedication to the development of contemporary visual artists of Zimbabwe. He is currently Head of the Exhibitions Department in the National Gallery in Bulawayo. Lives in Bulawayo.

### COMMENTS

Although there were more pieces submitted in all categories this year, a smaller number of works than in previous years was selected by the judges. The criteria of the Panel was quality and each piece was assessed not once but many times; the good points and the bad discussed with knowledge, thoughtfulness and integrity.

When the selection was completed, the entire number of accepted works was yet again reviewed and some assessed as not being up to the standard required. The judges were insistent that the quality of this display should be of the best. Some of their comments are as follows:

**Arthur Azevedo:** "... as the days passed it became more and more obvious to us that quality, originality and creativity were the cardinal criteria for selection ... .. It was encouraging to note that some artists responded to rejection in previous years and faced the challenge to produce really exciting work..."

**Dominic Benhura:** "... I really enjoyed the judging process, and was particularly impressed with the metal sculpture..."

**Lionel Davis:** "... the judging was a thought-provoking and profound experience..."

**Babette Fitzgerald:** "... the judging was stimulating and informative ... In the category of Painting some new vibrant work was submitted... Metal work in particular caused great interest amongst the Panel..."

**Sue McCormick:** "... such a large number of works was somewhat daunting... but as we viewed and re-viewed it became obvious that we could select a display of quality..."

**Voti Thebe:** "... a lot of works submitted showed a new emphasis on the experimental ... there is no doubt that new talents are emerging in all areas ..."

**Arthur Azevedo:** "... Zimbabwe's reputation as a nation of gifted sculptors must be upheld ... quantity must never be permitted to swamp quality ...there were very promising colourists among the young painters... although young painters who continue to outline figures etc in blue should rethink this technique..."

**Dominic Benhura:** "... established sculptors and painters should continue supporting this exhibition whether they are Guest Artists or not ..."

**Lionel Davis:** "... The number of works selected is smaller, but it is a more powerful display than in previous years ... having work exhibited in the First Biennale should be seen as a matter of national pride ..."