

DUMILE
STRUGGLE &
REPRESSION

**Grosvenor
Gallery**



Народна Република Српска, Београд, 1998.

**Grosvenor
Gallery**

DUMILE

STRUGGLE &

REPRESSION

From Soweto to New York
DUMILE in drawings & Sculpture
1960-1991

FRIEZE NEW YORK

4 - 7 May 2017

**"FRIEZE"
ART
FAIR**

We are very excited about exhibiting this collection of works, most unseen. To show them in New York is also very poignant, after all this is the city where Dumile lived and died, tragically in Tower Records in 1991. He only had two exhibitions in New York. Therefore this will be a discovery for not only the South Africans but also for the New Yorkers.

Dumile (1942-1991) hit the art scene in Johannesburg in 1966 in a big way. A popular figure and known for his amazing drawing talent, he was spotted by Madame Haenggi of Gallery 101 who gave him his first show in 1966 as well as studio space at the gallery. She also introduced

him to Bill Ainslie, who lodged him as well as giving him guidance. His exhibition was a sensation and it was very well received and reviewed and he became famous overnight, museums acquired, as well as foreign and local collectors, the press described him as *"the find of 66"* *"He rose from the dead to become a genius."*

In 1967 he represented South Africa at the São Paulo Biennale with five drawings, including Train Crash. But the following year he fled South Africa for London, travelling mostly overland. Various rumours still circulate as to why the hasty exile, the most likely one being that

his cards were marked by the police and had he stayed he would almost certainly been arrested under the Immorality Act, associating or worse sleeping with whites was illegal.

Life in exile was tough and London was miserable for him, however he kept true to his cause and never failed to create, draw and sculpt. He had exhibitions at the Grosvenor Gallery, was included in Museum shows, had reviews and sold to some important collectors such as Anthony Quinn and Sydney Poitier. His friends were artists, musicians and other South African exiles. New York followed, where again he carried on creating.

Accounts of his living conditions, the drugs, are appalling but from the generosity of his friends he made his career and these most powerful and eloquent art works are testament to the artist. The enigma of Dumile has provoked an element of hero worship in his home country, from the moment he came onto the scene to his tragic death. His friend Justice Albie Sachs captures it so well when he writes: *"The reason why we have a constitution today is because we have the spirit of Ubuntu, which was never destroyed, despite all the humiliation, hardships and injustice. Jazz musicians and Dumile captured this in their work before we even put it in the Constitution."*



1. MADAME HAENGGI, 1966

Conte Charcoal on paper
Signed and dated lower right 'Dumile 1966'
49 x 35 cm (19 ¼ x 13 ¾ in)

PROVENANCE:

Gallery 101, Johannesburg
Stuart and Irene Mcdowall, Canada

EXHIBITED:

Gallery 101, Johannesburg, c.1966



2. WASHDAY, 1966

Conte Charcoal on paper

Signed and dated lower right 'Dumile June 1966'

58 x 42 cm (22 7/8 x 16 1/2 in)

PROVENANCE:

Durban Art Gallery

Sidney Michael Young, (acquired from the above in 1966
for 55 Rand)

Professor Anthony Young, Norwich (by descent)

EXHIBITED:

Dumile, Durban Art Gallery, 18th August - 6th September
1966, no. 14

Dumile at Gallery 101 with 'Washday' in the background.
Photograph by A. Moosa Badsha, 1966, taken from
Pel mama.org

3. TRAIN CRASH, 1966

Blue ball-point on Paper

Signed and dated lower right 'Dumile 1966 June' and
inscribed lower left

56 x 76 cm (22 1/8 x 29 7/8 in)

Train Crash is a study for the *Railway Accident*, 1966,
Charcoal on paper 107 x 237 cm, in the collection of the
National Gallery of South Africa. That work was exhibited
at the São Paulo Biennale in 1967 (pictured overleaf)



Возвращение в родную землю

Ducita 1786 June 1. 4497



Director of the Johannesburg Art Foundation, the late Bill Ainslie, said in 1967: *"Dumile took the raw material of his life in Soweto... and translated it into work in a manner, which revealed a capacity to face unflinchingly the most frightening extremities of human desperation and cruelty without spilling over into sentimentality or overblown expressionism. His originality led to a new style of drawing in South Africa, but I have not found anybody equal the ferocity and compassion of his work."*



Dumile at The Durban Art Gallery, August 1966.
Photograph by A. Moosa Badsha, 1966, taken from
Pel mama.org

Dumile's rise from township artist to South African celebrity was quick and added to his enigma. Local journalists came out with quotes such as: *"The Star of 66"*, *"He rose from the dead to become a genius"*, *"At the beginning of the year no one had heard of him. He grew up a waif – nobody's child, educated in the tough school of Johannesburg's Township slums. He is simply known as Dumile.... he bears the scars of numerous beatings and stabbings.... and once lay for a day on a mortuary slab, officially taken for dead..."*





4. MOTHER AND CHILD, 1967

Coloured pens on paper

Signed and dated lower right '1967 D. Geelboi'

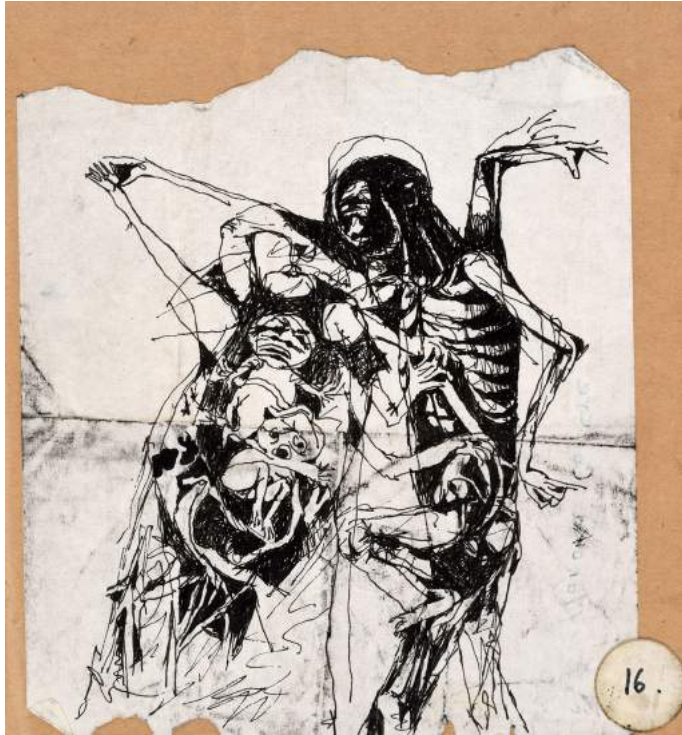
34.5 x 25 cm (13 5/8 x 9 7/8 in)

Moraka Centre, circa 1967

Black ball-point on paper

Titled on reverse

14 x 13 cm (5 1/2 x 5 1/8 in)



5. UNTITLED (MAN AND WIFE) 1968

Pen and ink on paper

Signed and dated lower right '6819 Dumile'

25.5 x 17.5 cm (10 1/8 x 6 7/8 in)

Reverse study of Fighting Dogs



6. MAN AND WIFE, 1968

Ink on paper

Signed and dated lower right '6819 Dumile'

Study for *'Fighting Dogs'* on the reverse

25.5 x 17.5 cm

10 1/8 x 6 7/8 in

"One day I was in the Township with this driver and we went past a line of men who were all handcuffed. I don't know what for, maybe for having no pass or something. Anyway the driver said, 'Why don't you ever draw things like that?' I didn't know what to say. Then just when I was still thinking, a funeral for a child came past. A funeral on a Monday morning. You know, all the people in black on a lorry. And as the funeral went past those men in handcuffs, those men watched it go past, and those with hats took off their hats. I said to the guy I was with, 'That's what I want to draw!' "

(Simon, 1968:43)



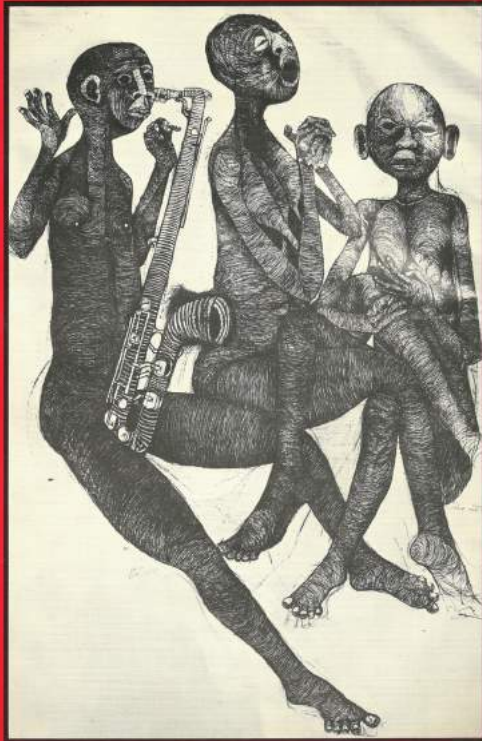
7. UNTITLED (STANDING FIGURE), 1968

Black ball-point on paper

Signed and dated lower right '6819 Dumile'

50 x 33 cm (19 ³/₄ x 13 in)

african arts / arts d'afrique



8. JAZZ MUSICIANS, APRIL – DECEMBER 1968

Charcoal on paper

Signed and dated lower right 'DUMILE 68 APRIL 6819 DEC'
250 x 150 cm (98 ¾ x 59 1/8 in)

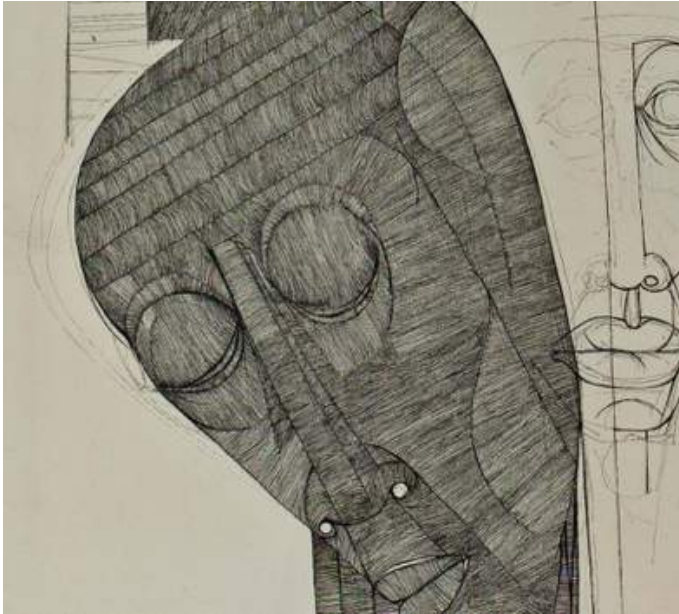
PUBLISHED:

African Arts/Arts D'Afrique, Winter, 1970, vol. 3,
illustrated on the cover (image left)

*"When I listen to Jazz, I get ideas. Even in London my
mind is taken back home"*

Dumile, quoted in Ngakani, Lionel, *Dumile: A profile,*
African Arts, 1970





9. COMPOSITION FOR A MEMORIAM, 1969

Ink and black ball-point on paper

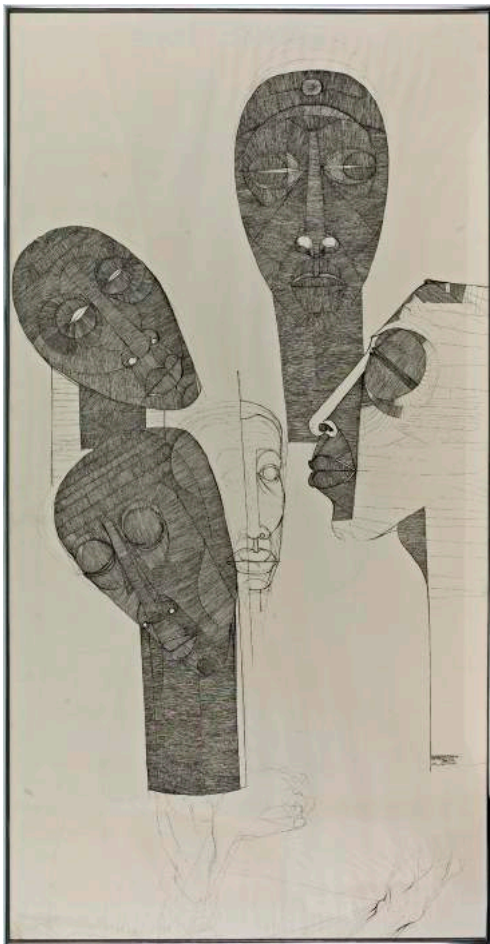
Titled lower right

142 x 73.3 cm (55 7/8 x 28 7/8 in)

EXHIBITED:

Dumile, Drawings, Grosvenor Gallery, London, 1969, No.33

William Kentridge recalls "As a teenager I went to Bill Ainslie's studio... Dumile made remarkable strong, dynamic drawings, either in ballpoint on a small scale or in charcoal on a large scale. That was the first time that I understood the power of figurative, large scale charcoal drawings; that they could be so striking... he had the capacity to express things on a scale that I thought drawings could not achieve. He is the key artist who influenced me."





10. UNTITLED (WASP AND CHAMELEON), 1969

Pen and ink on paper

Signed and dated lower right 'Feni 1969'

25 x 20 cm (9 7/8 x 7 7/8 in)



11. UNTITLED (MAN AND GUITAR) 1969

Black ball-point on paper
Signed and dated lower right
'Dumile 6919'
36 x 26 cm (14 1/8 x 10 1/4 in)



12. COMPOSITION FOR A GENTLEMAN, 1969

Black ball-point on paper
Signed and dated and titled '69 Dumile' 36 x 26 cm
(14 1/8 x 10 1/4 in)



**13. IN PUTTING THE BROKEN PIECES TOGETHER
SOME OF US MAY FIND PEACE, 1969**

Black ball-point on paper
Signed, dated '6919 Dumile' and titled along lower edge
36 x 26 cm (14 1/8 x 10 1/4 in)

Illustrated: International Herald Tribune, August 23, 1969

EXHIBITED:

Dumile, Drawings, Grosvenor Gallery, 1969, No.9



**14. ANCIENT AFRICA
ALSO MUSICIANS THE WORLD OVER, 1970**

Black ball-point on paper

Signed, dated and titled lower centre 'Mxgaji Feni
Dumile 7019'

56 x 87 cm (22 1/8 x 24 1/4 in)



John Matshikiza: *"I heard about Dumile when Hugh Masekela's album 'Home is where the Music Is' was released. I was living in Lusaka at the time... Thabo Mbeki told me that the artist was an extraordinary person. 'You must meet him when you go to London, he sits at the back of the pub to draw and talk all the time' he told me the man's name was Dumile."*



15. COSMO, 1970

Ink and watercolour on paper

Signed, dated and titled '7019 Cosmo Dumile' lower left

34.3 x 25cm (13 ½ x 9 7/8 in)

PROVENANCE:

Grosvenor Gallery, London

(acquired directly from the artist)

EXHIBITED:

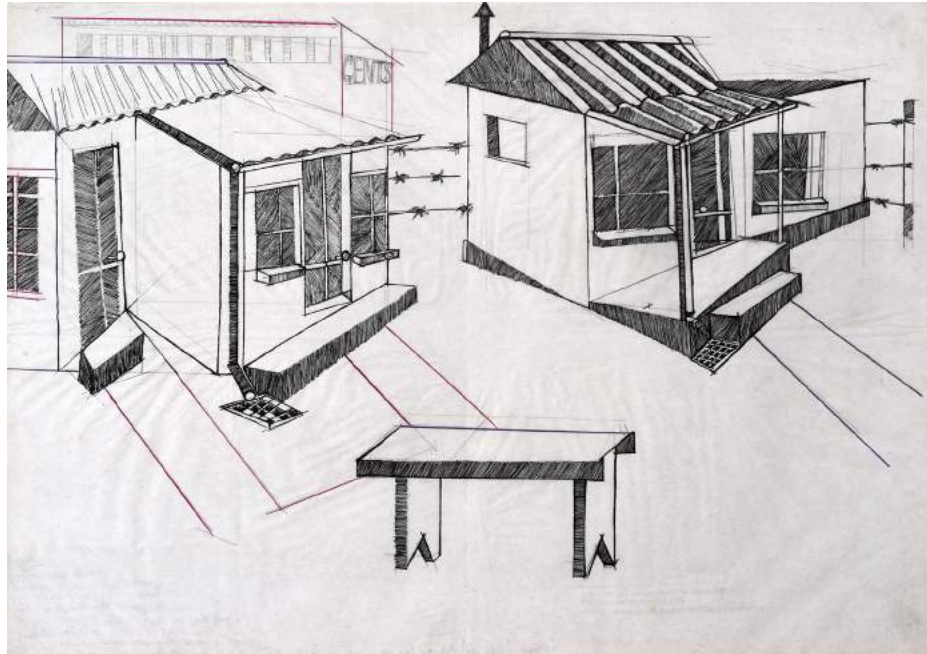
(Possibly) Gallery 21, London,

African Art from South Africa, 1975

This work is reproduced in the record sleeve for

Hugh Masekela, *Home is where the Music Is*





16. TOWNSHIP, CIRCA 1970

Pen and ink on paper

42 x 59 cm (16 ½ x 23 ¼ in)

17. THE WILL TO DIE, 1971

Pen and ink and watercolour on paper

Signed and dated lower right '*Dumile 7119*' and titled on reverse in pencil

35.5 x 25.5 cm (14 x 10 1/8 in)





18. JOY, 1972

Pen and ink on paper

Signed and dated lower right 'Dumile 7219'

This work is inscribed with a poem

18.2 x 26 cm (7 1/8 x 10 1/4 in)

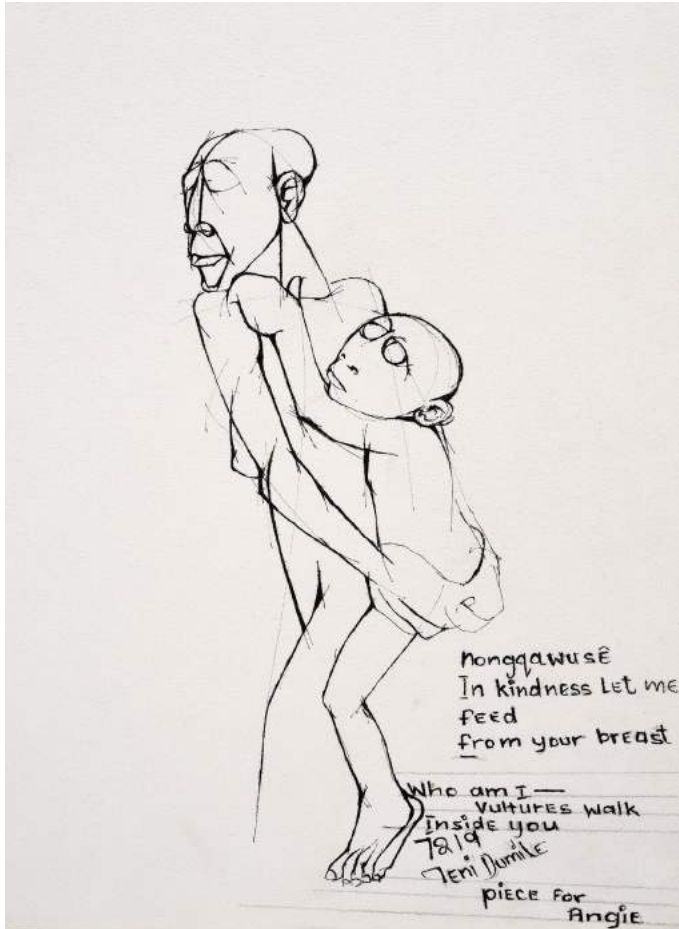


19. YOU TELL ME..., 1972

Pen and ink on paper

This work is inscribed with a poem

18.2 x 26 cm (7 1/8 x 10 1/4 in)



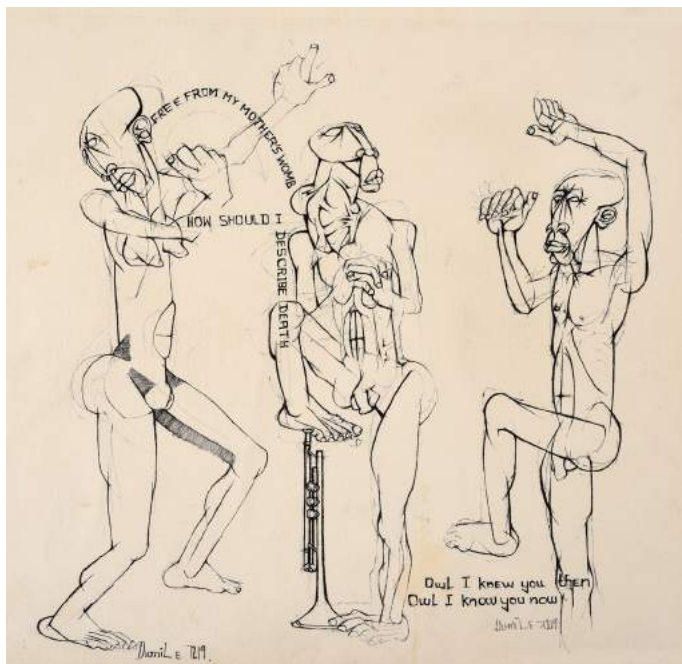
20. PIECE FOR ANGIE..., 1972

Pen and ink on paper

Signed and dated lower right 'Dumile 7219'

This work is inscribed with a poem

18.2 x 26 cm (10 ¼ x 7 1/8 in)



**21. FREE FROM MY MOTHER'S WOMB
HOW SHOULD I DESCRIBE DEATH
OWL I KNEW YOU THEN
OWL I KNOW YOU NOW, 1972**

Black ball-point on paper
Signed and dated lower right 'Dumile 7219'
This work is inscribed with a poem
49 x 35 cm (13 ¾ x 19 ¼ in)



22. UNTITLED (EXPULSION), 1978

Pen and ink and watercolour on paper
Signed and dated lower right 'Dumile 78'
32 x 40 cm (12 5/8 x 15 3/4 in)



23. RUTH FIRST, C.1980

Cast bronze sculpture from an edition of six
57 x 34 x 32 cm (22 ½ x 13 3/8 x 12 ½ in)



24. LABOURER, C.1980

Cast bronze sculpture from an edition of six
60 x 34 x 32 cm (23 5/8 x 13 3/8 x 12 1/2 in)



25. UNTITLED (MAN AND JAPANESE LADY) 1984

Black ball-point on paper

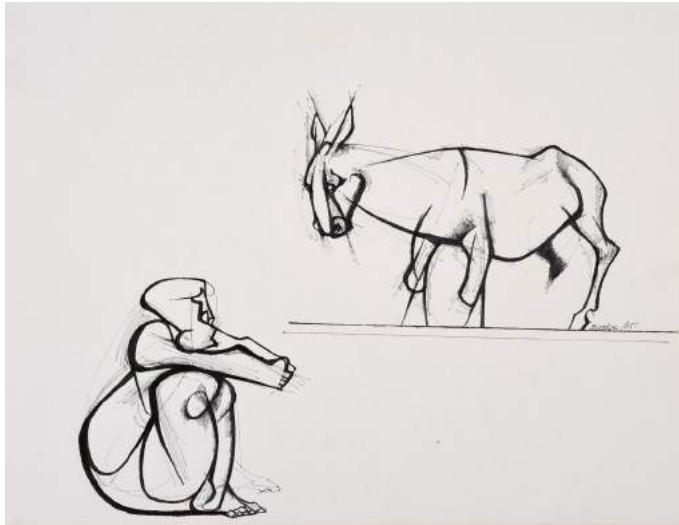
Signed and dated lower right 'Dumileu 84'

41 x 32 cm (16 1/8 x 12 5/8 in)



**26. UNTITLED (STANDING NUDE WITH HANDS
ON HIPS) 1985**

Black ballpoint on paper
Signed and dated lower right 'Dumile 85'
41 x 32 cm (16 1/8 x 12 5/8 in)



27. UNTITLED (MAN AND DONKEY) 1985

Black ball-point on paper

Signed and dated centre right 'Dumile 85'

32 x 41 cm (12 5/8 x 16 1/8 in)

"The master of turbulent imagery was undoubtedly Dumile Feni, who was known as the 'Goya of the townships'. His apocalyptic vision talks directly of personal experience, indicating the extent to which the political and the personal had become inextricably intertwined."

Steven Sack, 1988



28. UNTITLED (FIGURES IN THE STREET) 1985

Orange ball-point on paper
Signed and dated lower centre 'Dumile 85'
61 x 46 cm (24 1/8 x 18 1/8 in)



29. UNTITLED (FIGURE AND BEAST) 1985

Red ball-point on paper

Signed and dated lower centre 'Dumile 85'

61 x 46 cm (24 1/8 x 18 1/8 in)



**30. AFTER ALL THESE YEARS NOTHING
HAS CHANGED, 1985**

Green ball-point on paper

Signed and dated lower centre '1985 Dumile' and titled
lower right

32 x 41 cm (12 5/8 x 16 1/8 in)

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

1963, Municipal Art Gallery, Johannesburg, Curator. Mme. Z.

Wiznicka-Kleczynska

1964, Exhibition of Charcoal drawings and terra cotta sculptures,
Transvaal Academy

1965, Republican Arts Festival, Johannesburg

1966, Gallery 101, Johannesburg

1966, Transvaal Academy, Johannesburg Art Gallery

1966, 'Artists of Fame and Promise', Adler Fielding Galleries,
Johannesburg, South Africa

1966, South African Brewery Competition, awarded a prize for the
work 'Mother and Child'

1966, Trans-Natal Group show, Natal Society of Art Gallery, Durban

1966, Pretoria Art Museum, Pretoria

1966, Johannesburg Civic Theatre

1967, Gallery 101, Johannesburg

1967, Transvaal Academy, Johannesburg

1967, South African pavilion, Expo 67, Montreal, Canada

1967, São Paulo Art Biennial, Brazil

1967, 'Sculpture South Africa, 1900-1967', Adler Fielding Galleries,
Johannesburg, South Africa

1968, Grosvenor Gallery, London

1968, Sketches from a Private Collection, Goodman Gallery, South
Africa

1969, 'Contemporary African Art', Camden Arts Centre, London,
United Kingdom

1969, Grosvenor Gallery, London

1970, Exhibition from the Collection of Desmond Fisher, Goodman
Gallery

1970, The 51 Club Winter Art Exhibition, Goodman Gallery

1970, 'Contemporary African Art', Dublin, Ireland

1971, Gallery 101, Johannesburg

1972, Gallery 101, Johannesburg

1975, 'South African Sculpture', Goodman Gallery

1975, 'African Art from South Africa', Gallery 21, London, UK

1977, 'Contemporary African Art in South Africa', Rand Afrikaans
University, Pretoria Art Museum, University of Orange Free State,
William Humphrey Art Gallery (University of Fort Hare)

1977, SANG (Cape Town Festival), Gallery 21, South Africa

1981, 'Black Art Today', Jabulani Standard Bank, Soweto

1982, 'Art towards Social Development: an Exhibition of South
African Art', National Museum and Art Gallery, Gaborone,
Botswana

1983, United Nations Exhibition, Commemoration of Namibia
Freedom Day, New York, USA

1988, 'Uhuru: an Exhibition of African American Art against
Apartheid', City without Wall Gallery, Newark, USA

1988, 'Voices from Exile, Seven South African Artists', Washington,
DC; Los Angeles, CA; Houston, TX; Philadelphia, PA, USA

1988, La Galleria, New York, USA

1990, 'Township Art from South Africa', Applecrest, New York, USA

1995 - 1996, exhibited 'African Guernica', a 1970 charcoal from the
University of Fort Hare, Munich, Chicago, New York

2001, exhibited 'The Railway Accident', National Gallery, Cape
Town, South Africa

2002, 'The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements
in Africa, 1945-1994', MOMA, New York, USA

AFRICAN ART TOUCHES THE CONSCIENCE

By TERENCE MULLALLY

A DISCOVERY at once heart-warming and sobering is to be made in the exhibition just opened at the Grosvenor Gallery, 30, Davies Street, Mayfair.

In this exhibition, drawings by a young African artist, Dumile, whose work has not previously been exhibited in London, strike through conventions. They remain on view until Sept. 9.

It comes as a surprise, when most London galleries are showing nothing more exciting than mixed exhibitions of what is left in stock, to come upon a new talent of sustained power.

Dumile's work, like all art that matters, is firmly rooted in his time, yet speaks for all time. What the Grosvenor Gallery is showing is a set of ink drawings.

*

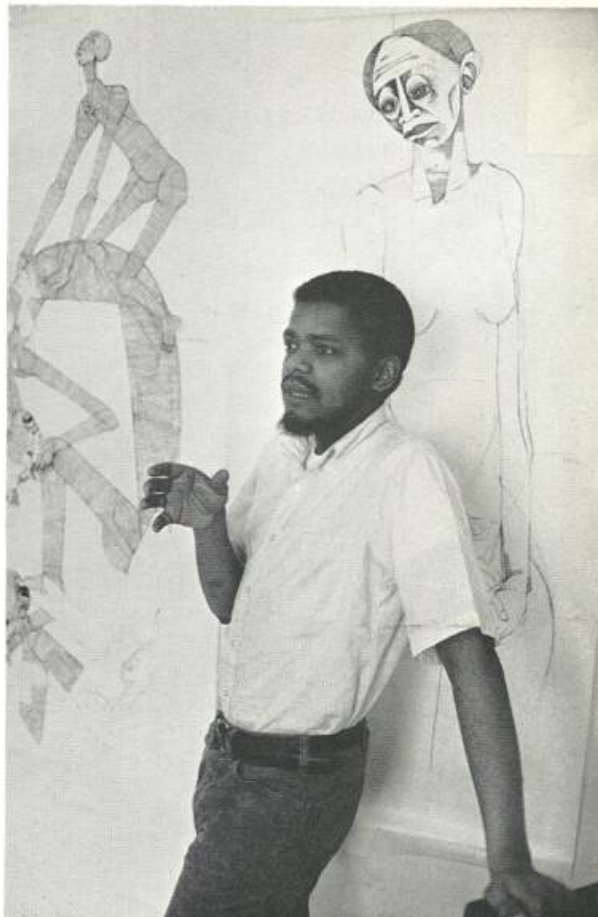
The pen moves in a thin line outlining or shading. This pen-line stands out against the stationery white paper yet in every case, and all these drawings are figure studies, bodies are defined, never established.

Dumile is an accomplished draughtsman. Yet to say not more is hardly to hint at the qualities that make his work so moving.

To drawing after drawing he touches the nerve ends of our consciences. This young artist's theme is the universal agony of man, rendered specific through his own experiences in South Africa.

His figures are frozen in a kind of agonized despair. In some cases, the twist of an arm, the sprawl of a leg, is as eloquent as a mask of pain for a face.

At other times it is as though the music of some wild ritual dance has suddenly stopped, its dying note ingers in the heart.



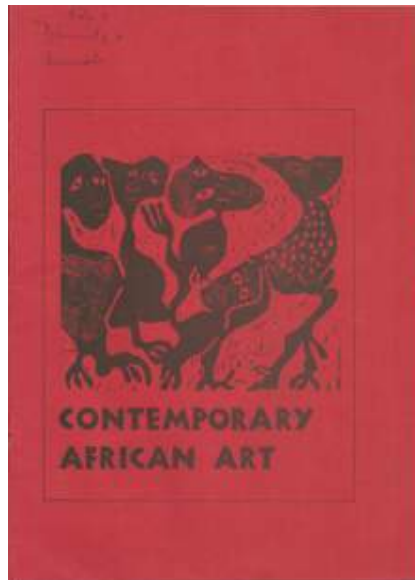
Review of the exhibition of works by Dumile at Grosvenor Gallery, London, unknown publication, 1968

Portrait of the Artist in front of Ray Charles, taken from exhibition catalogue for Contemporary African Art, Camden Arts Centre, London, 1969

The Classic, Quarterly, Volume 2, No. 4, 1968, South Africa, cover by Dumile

Exhibition cover: *Contemporary African Art*, Trinity College, Dublin, February-March 1970

Jabula, Jabula, 1975, album art by Dumile



UKUBAMBA AMADOLO
WORKERS' STRUGGLES IN THE
SOUTH AFRICAN TEXTILE INDUSTRY



BETTIE DU TOIT
FOREWORD BY NADENE GURDASHER
GNYX PRESS



DUMILE FENI
1939-1991

Saturday, October 26, 1991
3:00 p.m.

The Silverburg Center
For Research in Black Culture
Harlem, New York

Ukubamba Amadolo, 1978, Bettie
Du Toit, cover by Dumile

Memorial service for the life of
the artist, October 26, 1991

\$1.50

ART & ARTISTS

Published by the Foundation for the Community of Artists

Formerly *Arts and Artists*

Volume 12, Number 7, June 1983

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Our symposium on support for artists and letters opposed to the Soviet special report on South African artists follow and will continue on page 7.

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Watch out for radioactive elements and some headway is being made toward labeling asbestos-containing products.



Dumile Feni's "I Come from a Long Tradition," 1982. Oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm. Photo: Robert R. Taylor.

Dumile Feni: "I Come From a Long Tradition"

Dumile's portraits do not reproduce the features of the subject, but rather, portray the spirit of the man.

By Don Chakrabarti

Dumile Feni is a black South African who has been living in exile in New York. As I enter his small but cluttered studio on Sheela Street, I am surrounded by large, bulky, colorful

expressionist paintings coverings of green and black plastic. The windows are covered with white paper and the light is dim. For a moment, I feel as if I am in a museum. This is

back-up in the walls and I am amazed by the drawings which cover them from floor to ceiling. I see a group of five heads with faces that seem to be waiting in agony, a complex composition of a woman's head with several faces of a man composed of circles and triangles like a complex, stone-bringing structure of an African woman's head. All are highly done in black charcoal with lines strong lines and a gestural, dynamic, and in-breath-taking in its beauty.

I am reminded of the Cubists. These I remember that the Cubists, Picasso, Braque and others, were inspired and drew from African sculpture. They spent 100 years for their own inspiration. Yet, still I wonder about the inspiration comes from Dumile's work, and I ask him.

"I come from a long tradition," he tells me

in his deep voice, no stronger than a human whisper. He smiles in delight, but there is a never-ending in the voice the English will never discover. He is a brilliant, but still can be learned to accept his in which has from his family. "What some people call formalism—what I have a problem with—what I know that only depends on your point of view. I learned sculpture from childhood, I am from a family of sculptors. My family—those people were members in what they were doing. Formalism—maybe the law would not have allowed it."

Later, he looked about smiling through an open window in the background. Picasso and Pablo Picasso's *Family of Man* and *Les Femmes d'Alger*, South Africa, between 1957 and 1965. "In the foundation, that is just a sign-

Continued on Page 7

Art and Artists, New York, Volume 12 No.7, June 1983

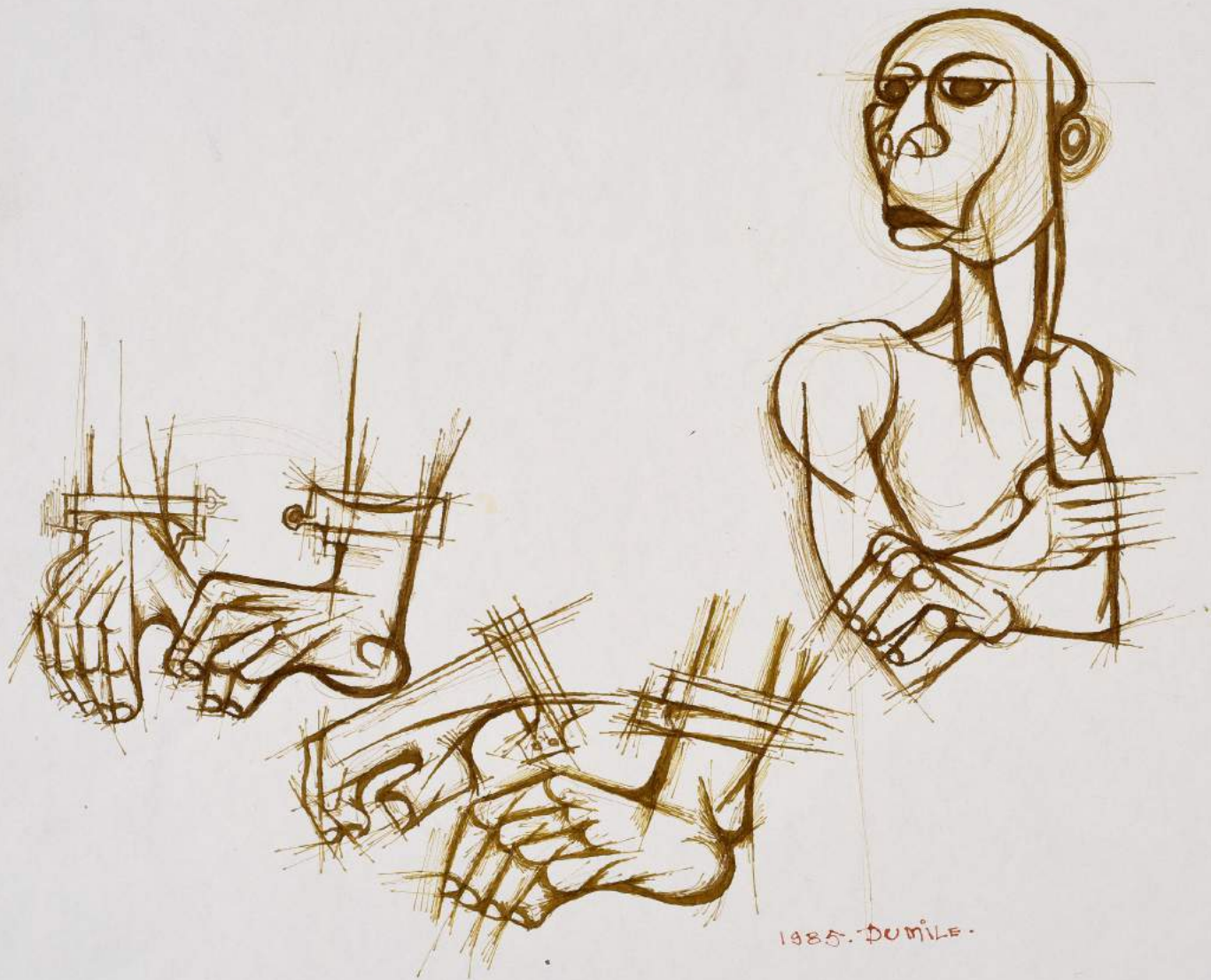
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1985. DUMILE.



**Grosvenor
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