

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 94-07-12
 CULTURE AND RECREATION COMMITTEE 94-07-06
 ART GALLERY COMMITTEE 94-06-10

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CULTURE AND RECREATION DIRECTORATE
 (LIBRARIES AND MUSEUMS DEPARTMENT)

A13 DONATION OF WORKS OF ART

The Art Gallery Committee has recommended that the following works of art, offered as donations, be accepted into the Gallery's collection:

| Artist | Title | Medium | Donor |
|-------------------------|--|-----------------------|---|
| MANCOBA, Ernest | L'Ancêtre | oil on canvas | Anglo American Johannesburg Centenary Trust. |
| | Untitled | sepia on paper | Anglo American Johannesburg Centenary Trust |
| WEBSTER, Christopher | 8 images from the series : Riemland's Edge | colour photographs | the artist |

Ernest Mancoba (b 1903, Turffontein) received a BA degree from the University of Fort Hare in 1937. In 1938 he left South Africa and has not returned since then. After Mancoba left South Africa he achieved international recognition as a member of the COBRA Group. However, he has up till now been almost entirely neglected in his home country. A major retrospective exhibition of Mancoba's work is currently being organised by the Gallery and will open in October. Mancoba is at present not represented in the Gallery's collection. L'Ancêtre, 1969 - 1971, represents Mancoba's mature painting style. Source imagery includes a kota reliquary figure. Untitled is a representative example of his work in this medium. These two works would be valuable additions to the Gallery's collection as they represent different aspects and phases of the artist's career.

Christopher Webster (b 1965, Runcorn, Cheshire, England) obtained a National Diploma in Photography in 1988 from the Vaal Triangle Technikon, where he lectured for a number of years. He has participated regularly in group exhibitions since graduating and has recently returned to the United Kingdom after living in the Vaal Triangle for 11 years. This series of photographs explore Webster's vision of the impact of man on a particular landscape.

IT IS RECOMMENDED

That the donations detailed in this item be accepted and that the appreciation of the Council be conveyed to the donors.

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 (CR:D(LM) 12/94)

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| Artist | Title of work | Medium | Purchase price |
|------------------|--|----------------|----------------|
| MANCOBA, Ernest: | <u>L'Ancêtre</u> , 1969-71 92 x 60 cm | oil on canvas | R32 000 |
| | <u>Untitled</u> , late 1960s 50,3 x 32,7 cm | sepia on paper | R7 000 |

Ernest Mancoba (b 1903, Turffontein) received a BA in 1937 from the Native college of South Africa (now the University of Fort Hare). In 1938 he left South Africa to further his art studies in Paris and he has not returned to South Africa since then.

When Mancoba left South Africa he enjoyed acclaim as a sculptor. He stopped sculpting in 1950 and has since achieved international recognition as a member of the COBRA Group. He has, however, until recently been almost entirely neglected in his home country. He is not at present included in the collection of the Johannesburg Art Gallery, which is currently organising a major retrospective exhibition of Mancoba's work.

L'Ancêtre, 1969 - 71, represents the spiritualisation of the ancestral figure and evokes the imagery of kota reliquary figures. These figures are mounted on baskets containing the ancestral skull and bones. Although the people of Gabon will sell the carved reliquary figure, they will never sell the basket. In Mancoba's image the figure is shown without the basket so that in a spiritual sense she keeps on guarding the relics of the past. The prominent wedge of the "forehead" is open at the top, thus ensuring that the mind remains open to new insights and that thoughts are not stifled.

In Untitled, Mancoba explores the imagery of the messenger. Again source imagery includes a kota configuration but the lateral protrusions evoke the top section of a kanaga mask. The wearer of this mask dances on top of the roof of the deceased person's homestead to pacify the spirit of the deceased and to deflect evil from the bereaved ones.

These important works would be valuable additions to the Gallery's collection of historical South African art. Their inclusion would help ensure that this major artist achieves recognition in his home country.

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RK/jw

22 June 1994

Mr G W Relly
Chairman
Anglo American Johannesburg Centenary Trust
c/o Box 61587
2107 Marshalltown

Dear Mr Relly

As mentioned at the last meeting of the Trustees of the Anglo American Johannesburg Centenary Trust, the Gallery would very much like to acquire works of art by Ernest Mancoba. I enclose information on Mancoba and the two works selected by the Art Gallery Committee, for your consideration and that of the Trustees.

These works were brought back to South Africa recently by Dr Elza Miles, the art historian who is curating the Mancoba retrospective exhibition at our Gallery. Importation was undertaken for us by Freitan and I enclose the relevant invoices.

If the Trustees are agreeable that we purchase these works of art, it would be appreciated if the Freitan invoices are paid immediately.

Kindest regards

Yours sincerely

R Keene (Mrs)
DIRECTOR