



a donation from the
PELMAMA
Permanent Art Collection
Pretoria Art Museum

ANGELS, BEASTS AND BODIES IN THE DARK

by Judith Mason



MASON, Judith (Born 1938)

GABRIEL, 1968

Oil and mixed media on board

122 x 183

Donated: 2009

The Archangel Gabriel was an early attempt to explore ways of refreshing mythological and religious imagery. The Angel, who has pinions like rainfall on a vast landscape, is caught between heaven and earth, and is headless, indicative of his acting, not on his own volition, but that of God. The cruciform shape prefigures the Crucifixion itself, and the gold leaf reflects my interest in the visionary art of the Trecento. I painted this while I was first reading Dante's Divine Comedy and tried to capture Dante's notion of angels as great "birds of God".



MASON, Judith (Born 1938)

THE BODY ON A BEACH IN A DARK NIGHT, 1966

Oil on board

86 x 117

Donated: 2009

This abandoned, disintegrating figure surrounded by night-lit seascape elements reflects the pessimism I felt as a young political activist in the early '60's. South Africa was becoming increasingly polarised, the Hungarian Revolution was recent history, and people were becoming more aware of the ravages of Nazism and Stalinism. I was very affected by the writings of Nadesha and Osip Mandelstam and the latter's question: "Whose blood will mend the broken back of two long centuries?" The body here is a broken carcass, suggesting the animal inevitability of a life without transcendent grace, with personal history as detritus.



MASON, Judith (Born 1938)
MOVEMENT OF A LION, 1968
Oil and bone on board
90 x 183 x 4
Donated: 2009

This image is a response to a verse from Isaiah about a lion emerging from the thickets of Jordan to a perennial pasture. I have always been interested in combining the symbolic significance of animals with their reality and here I tried, using line and muted colour, to create a sense of horizontal suppleness in the lion's back and the landscape. To make the figure more monumental I borrowed from Goya, and set the beast behind the horizon line. To the lair/womb/pod shape in the foreground I added a slice cut from an ox skull. This transection serves to remind the viewer of both embryo and prey. I enjoy making images which can resonate with the viewer in a variety of ways. I also try to disrupt the flatness of some works by adding appropriate found objects to the surface.



MASON, Judith (Born 1938)
CRUCIFIX INTO SCARECROW, 1975
Oil on canvas
92 x 183
Donated: 2009

This painting illustrates my ambivalence towards the image of the Crucifixion. On the one hand it is an open-armed embrace, and on the other, a warning, like a scarecrow in a field. The skull-like head, often found at the foot of the cross in mediaeval renditions, is mounted to a central post. The punctured hands are like a puppeteer's, with ribbons symbolising blood and blessing flowing from the palms. An atrophied crow, irredeemable, impertinent, challenges the efficacy of the scarecrow. A dense indigo background adds to the conundrum.



MASON, Judith (Born 1938)

THESE FRAGMENTS I HAVE SHORED AGAINST MY RUINS, 1986

Tapestry woven by Marguerite Weavind

Design and mixed media by Judith Mason

206 x 235

Donated: 2009

The woven quotation is from TS Eliot's *Waste Land*. "Shoring fragments" of junk, scrap metal and bones have been part of my life as an artist. This mixed media tapestry, woven by Marguerite Stephens, with attached found-and-made objects, is intended as a sort of "cabinet of curiosities" so beloved of 18th and 19th century naturalists, which have always intrigued me. It also has the aspect of a shrine, and shrine-making eventually became a major part of my installation work, eg *The Pharaohs of Jo'burg*, and *Walking With and Away from Dante*.



MASON, Judith (Born 1938)

SHIVA DANCING, 1986

Oil on canvas

175 x 250

Donated: 2009

After my first visit to India in 1980 I developed an interest in Hindu philosophy and mythology. Shiva is the archetype of creation and destruction, and dances the world into, and out of, existence. Here I used the image of a headless, dancing figure which plaits itself with identical other images to create a sense of dynamic movement. The figures dance in a vortex which contains a smaller image of the same dance. The linear, unravelling grid is an attempt to suggest the conflict between the cyclic nature of Hindu cosmology and the linear nature of our occidental sense of time. The grid patterns used here I later developed into ways of destroying the two-dimensional nature of the picture plane without using illusionistic means.



MEERKOTTER, Dirk (Born 1922)
BOWL, 1986
 Stoneware
 H: 9 Ø: 32
 Donated: 1991



MEERKOTTER, Dirk (Born 1922)
GLOBULAR POT
 Stoneware
 H: 26 Ø: 24
 Donated: 1991



MEERKOTTER, Dirk (Born 1922)
PEBBLE
 Stoneware
 H: 23 Ø: 23
 Donated: 1991



MEERKOTTER, Dirk (Born 1922)
LARGE PEBBLE
 Stoneware
 H: 29 Ø: 30
 Donated: 1991



MEERKOTTER, Dirk (Born 1922)
BALL POT
 Stoneware
 H: 21 Ø: 22
 Donated: 1991



MORRIS, Tim (1941 – 1990)
FLASK, c.1972
 Stoneware
 16 x 16 x 13
 Donated: 1991



RAINER, George (1923 – 2004)
POT, 1968
 Stoneware
 13, 5 x 17, 5 x 8, 5
 Donated: 2009



RECK, Albert Christoph (Born 1922)
BONANZA, 1964
 Oil on board
 120 x 90
 Donated: 2009



RECK, Albert Christoph (Born 1922)
FLOWER, 1968
 Crayon and tempera on board
 79 x 31
 Donated: 1993



RIE, Lucie (1902 – 1995)
BOWL, 1968
 Ceramics
 H: 12, 5 Ø: 28
 Donated: 2009



RIE, Lucie (1902 – 1995)
DISH, 1968
 Ceramics
 H: 5 Ø: 15
 Donated: 2009



ROUX, Pieter (Born 1961)
ZEBRA, 1986
 Colour etching on paper, 6/10
 69 x 78
 Donated: 1993



SCHIMMEL, Fred (1928 – 2009)
EVOLUTIONARY LANDSCAPE, 1986
 Mixed media on board
 100 x 70
 Donated: 2009



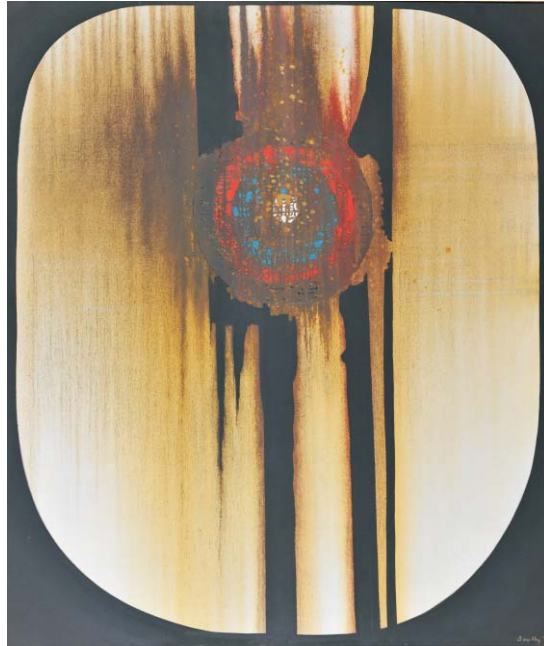
SCHIMMEL, Fred (1928 – 2009)
DIS (DISH), 1987
 Mixed media on hand-made paper
 66 x 52
 Donated: 1993



SCOTT, Louis (Born 1946)
JUNGLE LANDING, 1986
 Watercolour on paper
 30 x 48
 Donated: 1993



SCOTT, Louis (Born 1946)
UITTOG (EXODUS), 1986
 Watercolour on paper
 37 x 54
 Donated: 1993



SCULLY, Larry (1922 – 2002)
FRAGMENTATION OF THE CITY, 1972
 Oil on canvas
 (1x) 153 x 122 & (2x) 61 x 61
 Donated: 2009

PELMAMA ACADEMY 1993 -1997

By Gordon Froud

I was fortunate to teach at Pelmama Academy at a time when education went through a lot of change. I still consider that period to be one of my most fulfilling teaching experiences.

I was teaching at Bryanston High School when a post at Pelmama Academy became available. Pelmama Academy had been established through the Haenggi (SP) Foundation and offered one of the first tertiary level art courses in Soweto. The only other major art course was being offered by Funda Centre, but this did not have Department of Education status and as such could not offer the certificate courses that Pelmama could. The Pelmama art, music and dance school was set up on the grounds of Manu Technical College in Dobsonville, Soweto. Among the illustrious teachers that helped to establish the school were Guy du Toit (Art), James Mpahlele (Art), Jan Vermaak (Art), Cherry Brits (Art), Jeanette Ginslov (Dance), Jason Armstrong (Music) and Mapulani Koapeng (Music), all under the Head, Mike Muller. Later on Erika Hibbert took the place of Guy du Toit, and when she left I took the post.

Soweto and the township schools were still reeling from the effects of the changes in the educational system. General dissatisfaction resulted in school boycotts that affected the running of technical colleges. At this time,

Mike Muller was tasked to set up a similar college in Troyeville, and he ran the art school at arm's length from the Johannesburg College so to speak. This was soon found to be untenable and a decision was made to appoint a senior lecturer to run the art school under the auspices of Manu Technical College, thus subsuming the art school into the existing structure as a department. Even though this was a necessary step that allowed the school to stay open and receive state funding, it was also the beginning of the death knell for the art school. The obvious choice for the position of senior lecturer was Jan Vermaak with his years of teaching experience particularly at the Art, Ballet and Music School (as it was known then). Unfortunately Vermaak had never obtained a teacher's diploma and in spite of being an inspired teacher, could not take up the post – precipitating his decision to leave Soweto and join the Johannesburg College. This resulted in my appointment as acting Head of Department (HOD) and later as HOD of Art, Music and Dance. When the college's numbers in Music grew under the guidance of Mapulane Koapeng and Petru Reyneke, it was decided that a further HOD be appointed for Music. This post was taken up by the well-known musician and teacher Mokale Koapeng. A new deputy-principalship was established and headed by the HOD for Business Studies, Ansie Brink. Nico Aucamp

was appointed as Head of the College and was tasked with bringing the disparate departments of Engineering, Business Studies and the Arts together into a working college – a daunting task by anybody's standards.

Various other teachers worked in the Art Department over the next five years, including Karen Trollip, Flip Hattingh, Janina Pechova, Marina Aguiar, Helene Strauss, and Colleen Snyman (who was appointed as HOD when I left). During this time, the Academy was supported in part by the Pelmama and Haenggi Foundations and by donations of books from international donors coordinated by Ferdinand Haenggi. (We had a more impressive collection of contemporary art books in our library than most universities and technikons at the time. It was impeccably maintained by our Business English lecturer, Jeanette van der Lingen.)

From the time of the subsuming of Pelmama Academy into Manu College (which later became Dobsonville College and later lost the art components in an amalgamation with Roodepoort College and George Tabor Technical College), the ethos of an arts academy began to be lost and the academy became just another department in a college struggling to survive in the tough economic, political and fairly violent times in the township. Antagonism towards white teachers in the townships grew and the validity of our positions in the colleges was constantly questioned. (Part of the problem was that there were so few qualified black art teachers available at that time to replace the

white teachers.)

The great ideal of a township-based art academy as envisioned by Haenggi and Muller was eroded away and subsequently lost, leaving only two high schools and one tertiary institution that offered art. A very sad state of affairs indeed. At the end of my five-year stint as HOD, I felt that I had done what I could and had achieved an incredible amount, but that I was fighting a losing battle for any form of art autonomy in a township college. I decided to move on (spurred on by being awarded an Ampersand Award Fellowship to New York – which would have taken me away from the college for three months). I pursued my lecturing post at the University of Pretoria and later left South Africa to teach in London for five years.

During my time as senior lecturer and HOD I was fortunate enough to take a few hundred students from the level of Std 6 through to the equivalent level of first year technikon or perhaps even university. The greatest thrill for me was in taking students that had never held a paintbrush or pencil, and teaching them the basics of art, and seeing them graduate as artists-in-training within 18 months. Many of the students struggled to raise the R400 tuition fees, but once they were on track, they achieved results unparalleled in any other department. One group in particular obtained their N6 certificates, everyone scoring above 80% for drawing. These students were independently examined and moderated by the Department of Education (that also moderated all other art students at technical

colleges in South Africa). I was also privileged to assist in compiling the new syllabi for all the art and craft courses for technical colleges that were implemented and used till the demise of Art at most of these colleges. Many of our students went on to excel as artists (Nhlangtla Mbatha, Dienkies Sithole, Ignatius Molumo, Alfred Mofomolo, Stompie Selibi and many more), teachers (Daniel Tsoagong – Curriculum Development Program and arts administrators (Belina Leburu, first black female art graduate at Unisa, and Mthunzi Ndimande of the Department of Arts and Culture in Gauteng, to name a few).

Pelmama Academy was the dream of a few brave individuals who had a passion for art, history and education, and with the help of

inspirational teachers, it worked for a while. But as with all pipe dreams, when institutional support and financial aid dries up, the kernel of idealism dies. What it contributed, however, touched the lives of many and has continued to influence people. I feel extremely privileged to have had the opportunity to serve the Academy and the people of Soweto in an attempt to foster a love and appreciation of art as a worthwhile activity and as a career path. I raise my hat to all my colleagues who also believed in and contributed so selflessly to the Academy.



SCULLY, Larry (1922 – 2002)
HOMAGE TO THE UNKNOWN GOLD MINER, 1989
Oil on canvas
90 x 151
Donated: 2009

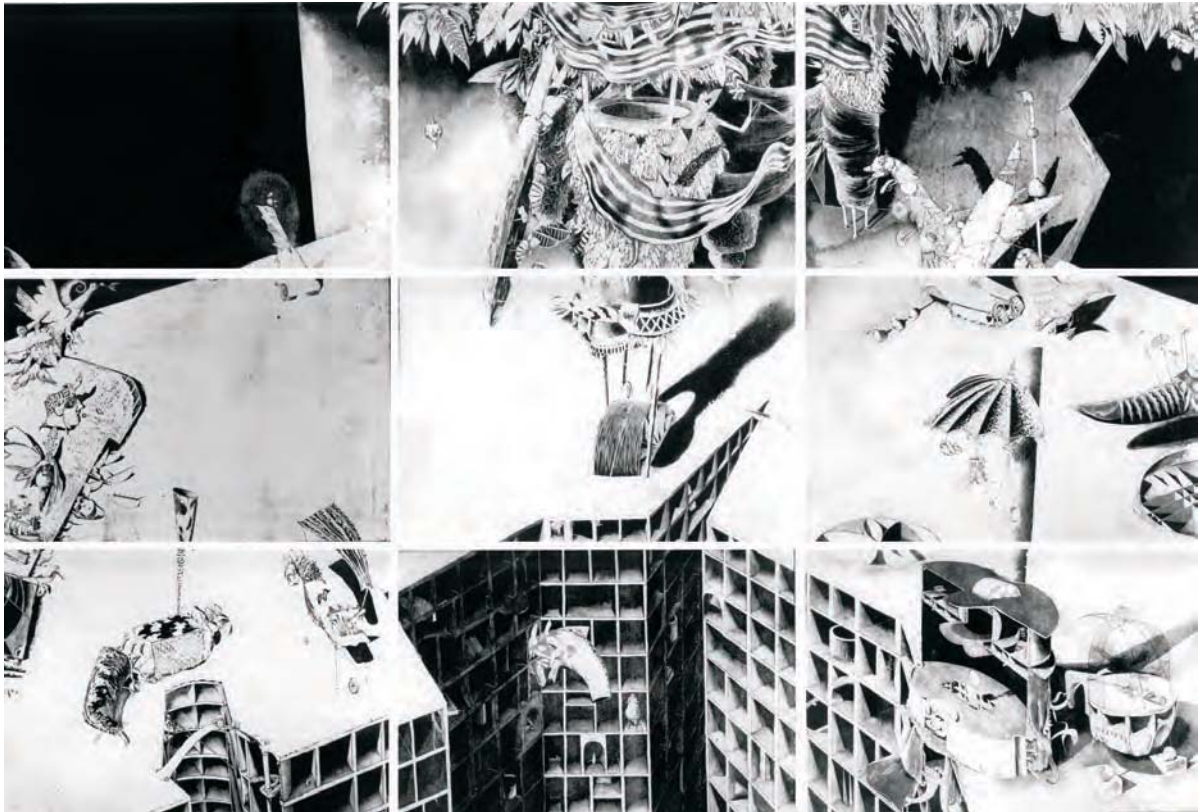


SITHOLE, Lucas (1931 – 1994)
VARIOUS UNFINISHED WORKS
 Wood
 Donated: 1995

SITHOLE, Lucas (1931 – 1994)
VARIOUS UNFINISHED WORKS
 Cement, resin and fibreglass
 Donated: 1995



TAMBELLINI, Giulio (Born 1968)
ROOF TOP EXPLORATIONS AND FACE FIELDS, 1988
 Etching on paper, proof 5/5
 (1) 31 x 87, 5 (2) 36 x 87, 5 (3) 31, 5 x 87, 5
 Donated: 1993



TAMBELLINI, Giulio (Born 1968)
MINING OUR MEANING, 1989
 Etching on paper, 1/10
 (9x) 61 x 88
 Donated: 1993



UYS, Anton (Born 1947)
SEASCAPE I, 1975
 Photographic silkscreen on paper, 29/30
 42 x 41
 Donated: 1991



VAN DER WAT, Hannatjie (Born 1923)
SOLID PIECE, 1973
 Hand formed stoneware
 15, 5 x 19 x 9
 Donated: 1991



VAN DER WAT, Hannatjie (Born 1923)
SCULPTURAL PIECE, 1973
 Hand formed stoneware
 6 x 11 x 8
 Donated: 1991



VAN DER WAT, Hannatjie (Born 1923)
STANDING PIECE, 1973
 Hand formed stoneware
 (1) 18 x 5 x 3 (2) 18 x 4, 5 x 4, 5
 Donated: 1991



VAN NAZARETH, Herman (Born 1936)
HEAD IN PINK, 1968
 Oil on board
 67 x 58
 Donated: 1993



VAN RENSBURG, Nico (Born 1935)
LANDSCAPE IN RED AND BLACK, 1980
 Acrylic on paper
 47 x 68
 Donated: 1993



VENTER, Julian (Born 1958)
WONDERPRENTE I (WONDER PICTURES I), 1985
 Acrylic and mixed media on board
 67 x 128
 Donated: 1993



VILLA, Eduardo (Born 1915)
ROOF, 1985
 Steel and bronze
 93 x 54 x 54
 Donated: 2009



WALFORD, Andrew (Born 1942)
DEEP BOWL
 Stoneware
 H: 12 Ø: 29
 Donated: 1991



WALFORD, Andrew (Born 1942)
BOWL
 Stoneware
 H: 17 Ø: 45
 Donated: 1991



WALFORD, Andrew (Born 1942)
SLAB SCULPTURE
 Stoneware
 42 x 50, 5 x 9
 Donated: 2009



WATSON, Stephanie (Born 1927)
GROWTH, 1975
 Silkscreen on paper, 14/20
 42 x 31
 Donated: 1991



WATSON, Stephanie (Born 1927)
COCAVADO, 1974
 Silkscreen on paper, 7/25
 59 x 43
 Donated: 1991



WATSON, Stephanie (Born 1927)
SUB AQUA, 1975
 Silkscreen on paper, 20/20
 38 x 39, 5
 Donated: 1991



WATSON, Stephanie (Born 1927)
AFRICA III, 1974
 Silkscreen on paper, 2/20
 45 x 39
 Donated: 1991



Acknowledgements

The Pretoria Art Museum acknowledges with appreciation:

Mr Fernand F Haenggi for his support, assistance with the documentation and the tremendous donation to the Pretoria Art Museum

The contributors to this catalogue: Fernand F Haenggi, Esmé Berman, Marilyn Martin, Dirk Oegema, Judith Mason and Gordon Froud

The Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture Department of the City of Tshwane for financially backing the exhibition and this catalogue

The Language Services Section of the City of Tshwane for editing the text

Helenus Kruger of the City of Tshwane for photographing the works of art

The Pretoria Art Museum staff for their hard work and support of this project



This publication has been produced by the City of Tshwane to show their appreciation for the generous donation of the Pelmama collection to the Pretoria Art Museum.