



HOME

CLASSIFIED

SITEMAP

CONTACT US

ARCHIVE / SEARCH

ONLINE CALENDAR

TODAY'S NEWS

Call for township art to be returned

[Eastern Cape](#)

[South Africa](#)

[Foreign](#)

[Business](#)

[Stocks & Stats](#)

[Sport](#)

A COLLECTION of artworks depicting township life in apartheid South Africa was shown for the first time in decades at the weekend as a campaign for the return of "township art" was launched.

The 70 paintings, drawings and sculptures were brought together by the Ifa Lethu Foundation, a non-profit organisation funded by the culture ministry and private corporations to spearhead the repatriation of art that had been taken abroad during apartheid.

FEATURES

[Classified Online](#)

[Today's Columns](#)

[Chiel](#)

[Editorial Opinion](#)

[Leader Page](#)

[Letters to the](#)

[Editor](#)

[Features](#)

[Weddings](#)

[Farming](#)

[Motoring](#)

[Aircraft](#)

[Weather](#)

[Tides](#)

[Tenders](#)

[National Lottery](#)

The works, from the 1970s, portray the turmoil of township life at the height of apartheid repression although not all the pieces touch on political themes.

Already Ifa Lethu has identified pieces in the United States, Canada, Germany, Denmark and Sweden that it would like to repatriate.

But the foundation faces a daunting task in convincing collectors or museums to part with the works without financial compensation.

Ifa Lethu's collection is to go on the road in six months as part of a mobile gallery. - Sapa-AFP

[Eastern Cape](#)
[South Africa](#)
[Foreign](#)
[Business](#)
[Stocks & Stats](#)
[Sport](#)
[Editorial](#)
[Chiel](#)
[Letters to the Editor](#)
[Leader Page](#)
[Today's Columns](#)
[Features](#)
[Motoring](#)
[Farming](#)
[Arts & Entertainment](#)
[Television](#)
[Radio](#)
[Weather](#)
[Tides](#)
[Tenders](#)
[Aircraft](#)

LEISURE

[Arts &](#)

[Entertainment](#)

[Books](#)

[Cartoons](#)

[Lotto Number](#)

[Picker](#)

[Cinema Line-Up](#)

[Movies](#)

[Radio](#)

[Television](#)

[What's On](#)

[Calendar](#)

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[Accommodation](#)

[Online](#)

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[Businesses Online](#)

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