

Monday, 21 November 2005

SOME NEWS WON'T WAIT TILL SUNDAY

SEARCH

Past month

Sunday's Paper



2005/11/20 12:00:00 AM

Diplomats bring 'township' art back home Project repatriates works collected by envoys during apartheid years

"The names of artists in the collection will become as familiar as that of Gerard Sekoto"

BONNY SCHOONAKKER

Print Send to a friend

IN JULY 1974 a young Australian diplomat caused a racial incident that scandalised Pretoria.

"Blacks in flat — Aussie girl told to quit," read the headline on the front page of the Pretoria News, under a photo of a woman with tresses long and blonde enough to be Nordic

The newspaper reported that "Miss Diane Johnstone", a third secretary in the Australian embassy, had been kicked out of her flat in Sunnyside "following its use as a venue for an exhibition of Black art at the weekend".

Despite the headline's suggestion, the landlords denied that the race of Johnstone's guests had persuaded them to terminate their lease with her.

"The contract specifically states that the flat may only be used for dwelling purposes," an unnamed spokesman for Sentrakor was quoted as saying. Other tenants had complained "that the lift was continually being used by people attending the exhibition".

Much has changed over the past 30 years, and Johnstone is still in the business of promoting township art, but this time without fear of persecution.

In Sandton last night, she and another former Australian diplomat, Bruce Haigh, attended the official launch of Ifa Lethu (Our Inheritance), a non-profit company seeking to repatriate "township art" collected mainly by diplomats posted here during apartheid.

Funded by a grant of R4.5-million from the Department of Arts and Culture, and a R1-million donation from multinational mining group BHP Billiton, Ifa Lethu hopes to repatriate at least 170 artworks taken out of the country by former diplomats and businessmen based here during the

- Home
- Daily sections
- News
- Sport
- Business
- Entertainment
- Careers
- Motoring
- Education
- Mobile Games
- Sunday's Paper
- Special reports
- Photo Galleries
- Help desk
- Useful tools
- Search

- Sponsor
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

- Services
-
-
- HELP WANTED
- TV