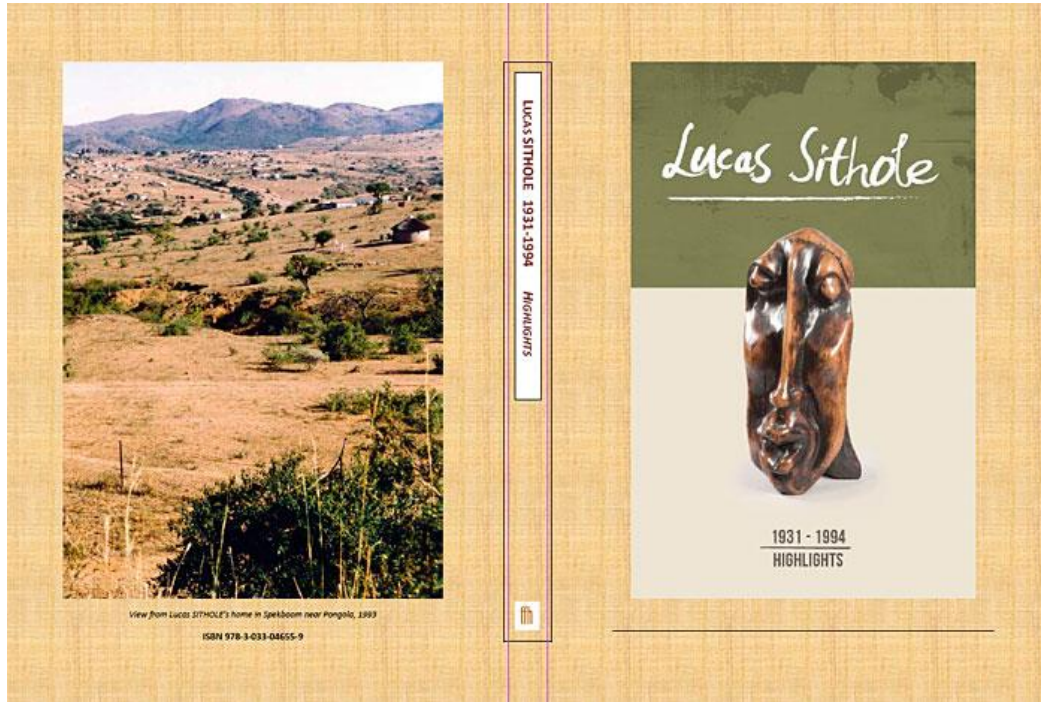


Book Review: Lucas Sithole 1931 - 1994

by Marilyn de Freitas posted on December 2, 2015 in

<http://www.art.co.za/news/reviews.php> + <http://www.art.co.za/news/review-lucas-sithole.php>



Lucas Sithole 1931 - 1994, published by Fernand F. Haenggi, features a photographic collection of major works by the artist in private, corporate and public collections throughout the world. The 204-page book includes a brief introduction covering 100 sculptures. Published 21 years after Sithole's death and more than 35 years after the first exhibition catalogue was printed in 1979, this book is a valuable historical document for museums, art libraries, researchers, educationalists, galleries and auctioneers as well as other art enthusiasts.

Sithole is best known for his sculptures in mainly indigenous woods, bronze, stone and other media and often contain a strong indigenous and mythological influence which led to his subject matter to become more distorted and complex. He searched for old and twisted trunks seasoned by nature from Zululand on the Swazi border never cutting down or damaging trees. His works contain both a highly polished surface in some sculptures and in others pitted and coarse textures.

Sithole was born in 1931 in KwaThema, Springs, Transvaal. He was one of ten sons of a Zulu lay priest in the Zion Christian Church, Richard Ndlala Sithole, and a Swazi mother. He attended the Polly Street Art Centre from 1959 - 1960, where he studied painting with Cecil Skotnes. In 1980, he moved to Pongola, Zululand. He died in 1994.

He created more than 800 sculptures, of which about 200 are in collections in the Americas and in Europe. Though he exhibited internationally, he did not travel abroad, the only exceptions being visits to Lesotho and Swaziland. During his life, he held 18 solo shows and his work had been featured in over 98 group exhibitions, including the 34th Venice Biennale in 1968 - where he was awarded the first prize for sculpture. This book covers a large selection of his more prevalent works featuring various subject matter such as animals and human beings as well as abstract and open sculpture.



Left: Charging Afrikander (Afrikaner Bull), 1967, Ironwood | Right: Mother of Tribes (Pregnant woman), 1967, Ironwood

"Having worked with Lucas since the early 1960s, admired his sculptures, understood and felt what they portrayed, seen the pain and joy, the messages and warmth flowing from them, seen the artist going through his personal ups and downs, battling with tradition and modern times: all I can recommend is for you to discover his works," states Haenggi in the introduction.

This monograph includes a brief biography, stories and legends about the sculptures, list of public and institutional collections, selected references and statements from the USA, Switzerland and South Africa, extracts from the artist's handwritten private diary from 1985, editor's notes and various online references to more information on Sithole.

There is an unnerving undercurrent in Sithole's works that have a haunting and lingering quality. Though the photographs (as most of them are low resolution) in this book do not do justice to Sithole's sculptures, the book provides a reasonable overview of Sithole oeuvre for interested collectors, art historians, and art enthusiasts alike.

Lucas Sithole 1931 - 1994

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204 pages, covering 100 sculptures includes 184 images in colour and black/white
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For more information and to order a copy, visit www.sithole.com.
