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KWA-THEMA CAN BOOST OF AN
INTERNATIONAL ARTIST

Kwa-Thema's Lucas 'Bra-Lee' Sithole is an internationally known artist, and although known as a gentle person, he has carved a name for himself in the South African art world during the last 15 years.

His name brings to mind the superb "Wounded Buffalo", commissioned by the Bracken Mines at Evander. The almost life-size bronze statue is familiar to all who visit the Recreation Centre at the mine. The expression in the stricken animal's eyes is a most pathetic and moving feature in this competent work.

Mr Sithole went to St. Louis Catholic School when he was adopted by Mr. A.J. Archibald, the then Chief Springs Engineer and Chairman of the Rotary Club.

To-day Bra-Lee has not forgotten that it was the Rotary Club which provided him with a bursary to study art.....

He makes his own chisels for carving and the effects on some of the wood carvings are remarkable. The wood comes from Swaziland and Zululand.

Sometimes he works in the country to avoid distractions, at other times, when he finds a piece of suitable wood, he says it speaks to him

and demands that he starts working on it immediately. He does this and brings the partly finished piece back to his workshop in Kwa-Thema.

One of the problems of the artist is that he can be influenced by recently completed work if it is all around him. Painters usually turn canvases to the wall and sculptors cover their work with drapes.

Lucas Sithole's wood carvings have a different fate: he buries them.

There are two reasons for this, he says: one is he gets them effectively out of the way, and when they are exhumed he has a completely fresh look at them and can rework them if necessary.

The other is that the slow nibbling of ants often gives an interesting effect to the wood surface. The secret is to dig the pieces up before the ants get too enthusiastic!

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