

## QUESTION 1: Emerging artists of South Africa

### GLOSSARY:

**Apartheid** was the policy of the National Party who came to power in South Africa in 1948. The idea was that different races should be kept separate. Before 1948 – segregation between the races)

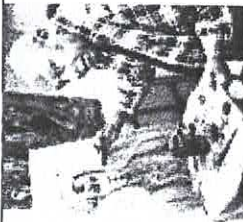
**Township art** is a term to describe the works of black artists that expressed township life in South Africa. It portrays everyday life such as shebeens, church, etc. It shows how the black population adapted to urbanisation.

### Historical Context:

In 1989 the Johannesburg Art Gallery presented an exhibition of black South African artists to the public called – **The Neglected Tradition: towards a new history of South African art (1930 – 1988)**. During apartheid there was very little written about the art of black people. This was an important exhibition to change perceptions and to see a more represented history of South African art.

#### GERARD SEKOTO (1913 - 1993)

He stayed in different SA townships such as Sophiatown, District Six and Eastwood, Pretoria. In 1947, Sekoto moved to Paris, France. He appears to have gone to broaden his artistic experience rather than as a political exile, although the injustices of the racial situation played a role. He never returned to South Africa, although his stay in Paris was not always happy.

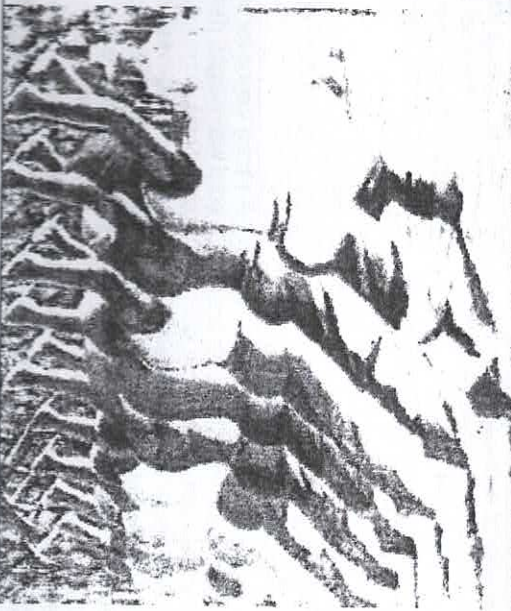


#### GEORGE PEMBA (1912 – 2001)

Pemba was born in 1912 in a small rural village near Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape. He received his school education in Paterson in the Eastern Cape and afterwards obtained his teacher's qualification at the Lovedale Teacher's College in Alice in the in Eastern Cape. Pemba can be seen as a self-trained artist having only brief contacts with formal art training.



INFLUENCES	SUBJECT MATTER/THEMES	INFLUENCES	SUBJECT MATTER/THEMES
<p>His surroundings in South Africa – the vibrancy of the townships such as Sophiatown and District Six.</p> <p><b>Post-Impressionism.</b> His intuitive sense of colour links his work with Post-Impressionism.</p> <p><b>MEDIA:</b> Mainly oil paintings</p> <p><b>STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTICS</b></p> <p>Figurative; highly subjective colours create an emotional impact; His shapes have a <b>roundness and solidity</b>; Love for patterns; for instance the sink roofs portrayed as parallel lines; <b>Distortion</b> and his <b>often-clumsy handling</b> of shapes; <b>Unusual perspective</b>; His figure compositions often do not depict faces of the people ; Emotional response/created a strong atmosphere.</p>	<p>Urban scenes of everyday life in the townships, figure compositions and portraits. A detailed and loving documentation of people and places he lived in</p>	<p>European styles such as <b>Realism</b> – his portrayal of the poor in the townships in a naturalistic way, <b>Impressionism</b> - the fleeting moment and <b>Expressionism</b> - subjective use of colour and distortion in some works.</p> <p><b>MEDIA:</b> Watercolours, oil paintings</p> <p><b>STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTICS</b></p> <p>A strong feeling for <b>shape</b> in his work - solid with weight, <b>descriptive</b> and sometimes simplified and with <b>expressionistic distortion</b>: Early watercolor works show subtle descriptive colors. In later works there are large <b>color contrasts</b> with sharp contrasts between light and dark. Primary and secondary colors together with white areas are characteristic of his works.</p>	<p>Portraits and group portraits, social documentation , religious works and protest works. Although Pemba painted some Eastern-Cape landscape, <b>man</b> was his most important theme. New Brighton and its people, where he spent most of his life, inspired a large part of his work.</p> <p><b>ISSUES THAT HIS WORKS RAISES/HIS CONTRIBUTION</b></p> <p>Underlying themes/issues such as fear, flight, joy, lost, everyday life, cultural traditions, human right, religion and political subjects form his work. His work gives an interesting view of the changes in South Africa – the traditional rural tribal life replaced by urbanisation, as well as political injustices. In his work one gets a feeling of togetherness between people – a society that stands together although they are suffering.</p>

<p><b>QUESTION 1:</b> Emerging artists of South Africa</p>	<p><b>STYLE OF WORK</b> Figurative</p>	<p><b>MEDIUM AND TECHNIQUE</b> Oil painting with strong brushstrokes</p>
<p><b>TITLE</b> Gerard Sekoto, <i>The song of the Pick</i>, oil painting, 1946 – 47.</p>		<p><b>MESSAGE AND MEANING</b> One of Sekoto's most political works with a contrast between the physical powers of the workers with the weakness of the white warden. The work shows that the black workers, although subordinated to the white boss, are actually the stronger figures. The title is suitable – the viewer can nearly 'hear' the song of the pick in this visual work.</p>
<p><b>SUBJECT AND DESCRIPTION</b> Figure composition. The <b>subject</b> is a group of black workers with their picks, while a white pipe-smoking warden watches them. All the focus is on the <b>workers with their identical postures</b> with their picks high above their heads.</p>		
<p><b>FORMAL ART ELEMENTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sekoto <b>simplified shapes</b></li> <li>• The black figures form a strong <b>diagonal line</b>.</li> <li>• The <b>colour</b> is predominantly in primary colours – red, yellow and blue.</li> <li>• The emotional impact of this work is result of his highly subjective colours.</li> <li>• He created <b>roundness and solidity in his shapes</b> by the strong contrasts between light and dark.</li> <li>• Sekoto cropped the top (not all the picks are visible) which places the viewer in the middle of the action.</li> <li>• The composition is strongly <b>asymmetrical</b> with the large group of workers on the left that are balanced by the small figure of the warden on the right.</li> <li>• <b>Rhythm</b> is created by the repetition of shapes and colours.</li> </ul>		

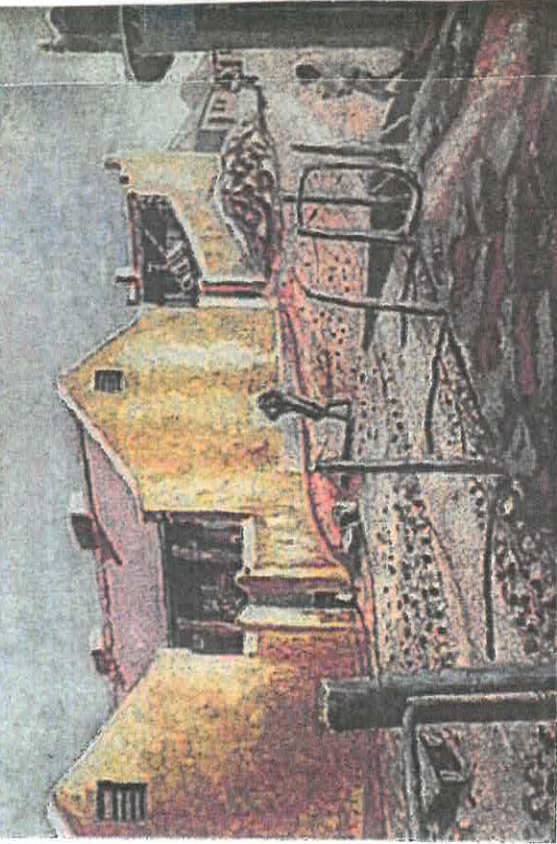
THE VOICE OF EMERGING ARTISTS

THEME I

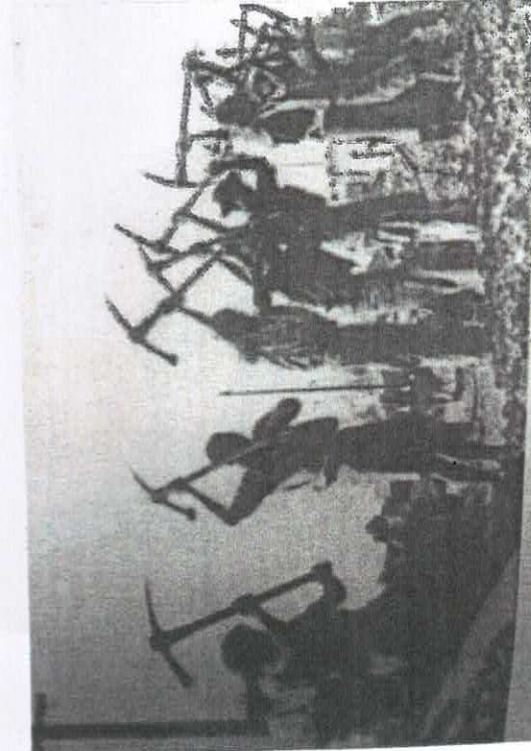
GRIZ



GERARD SEKOTO. YELLOW HOUSES IN SOPHIATOWN. C. 1939. GOUACHE ON PAPER.



GERARD SEKOTO. YELLOW HOUSES-- SOPHIATOWN. 1940. OIL ON BOARD.



THIS PHOTOGRAPH THAT SEKOTO HAD IN HIS POSSESSION THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE, WAS THE INSPIRATION FOR SONG OF THE PICK.

