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| Kappata, Stephen (1936-2007) |
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| Stephen Chipango Kappata was born in Zambia in 1936 to Angolan migrant parents who had fled Angola during the Portuguese wars of conquest during the First World War. Kappata began painting in 1969-1970, following a meeting with an artist who sold paintings depicting Victoria Falls in the local tourist market. At first Kappata sold his paintings to a largely local market centred around the town of Mongu. Following a brief period abroad in Britain, where he received some training in film, photography, and illustration, Kappata returned to Zambia. It was there, in 1982, that he met Anna-Lise Clausen, the Danish woman who helped organise Kappata’s first solo exhibition at the Mpapa Gallery in 1986. Kappata went on to take part in numerous international shows, including the Third Havana Biennial in Cuba in 1989. Kappata’s work is a complex interplay between satire and education, his paintings generally addressing three main themes: Zambians traditions, customs, and culture; the historical experience and injustice of colonialism; and social commentary on contemporary issues including alcoholism, AIDS, sexual promiscuity, and workers’ rights. Although Kappata’s work was in many ways marketed by a western driven African art market as ‘naïve’, ‘self-trained’ and ‘folkloristic’, today his paintings stand out as an important testament of Zambian and South African political and social history. |
| Stephen Chipango Kappata was born in Zambia in 1936 to Angolan migrant parents who had fled Angola during the Portuguese wars of conquest during the First World War. Kappata began painting in 1969-1970, following a meeting with an artist who sold paintings depicting Victoria Falls in the local tourist market. At first Kappata sold his paintings to a largely local market centred around the town of Mongu. Following a brief period abroad in Britain, where he received some training in film, photography, and illustration, Kappata returned to Zambia. It was there, in 1982, that he met Anna-Lise Clausen, the Danish woman who helped organise Kappata’s first solo exhibition at the Mpapa Gallery in 1986. Kappata went on to take part in numerous international shows, including the Third Havana Biennial in Cuba in 1989. Kappata’s work is a complex interplay between satire and education, his paintings generally addressing three main themes: Zambians traditions, customs, and culture; the historical experience and injustice of colonialism; and social commentary on contemporary issues including alcoholism, AIDS, sexual promiscuity, and workers’ rights. Although Kappata’s work was in many ways marketed by a western driven African art market as ‘naïve’, ‘self-trained’ and ‘folkloristic’, today his paintings stand out as an important testament of Zambian and South African political and social history.  Kappata’s father was a migrant labourer and woodcarver who made drums, mortars, and baskets. Stephen was the only child out of seven pregnancies to survive. He was brought up in the Watchtower faith, a popular movement, especially among migrant communities in the Baroseland district during the 1930s, which was considered suspiciously anti-European and anti-nationalistic both by British colonialists and independent African nations alike. Kappata began drawing in primary school despite receiving no formal art education or training. After completing his primary education, he worked as a cleric in Zambia, and in 1960 as a labourer in the gold mines in South Africa during the great political upheaval following the massacre of Sharpeville. In 1962, Kappata returned home to witness the collapse of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland and the birth of the independent nations of Zambia and Malawi. For a short period Kappata became secretary and then chairman of the United National Independence Party (UNIP), but his political career ended due to conflict with his family’s beliefs.  [File: Likishi.jpg]  Figure Likishi, Oil on Canvas, 46 x 68.5 cm, Collection: Glasgow Museums  <http://ichef.bbci.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/images/paintings/gm/624x544/gl_gm_a_1990_41_624x544.jpg> |
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