

DUMELA



Newsletter from Botswana Sweden Friendship Association No4/2011

Dear BOTSFA members!



As the year comes to a close and we celebrate the holidays with our families, friends and colleagues, we should be thankful to all that the year has given us and welcome the New Year with open arms. As Chairperson, I have greatly appreciated the contributions made by our members and the enthusiasm in making BOTSFA a brand name. I thank each and every member of the Association for the financial and other contributions

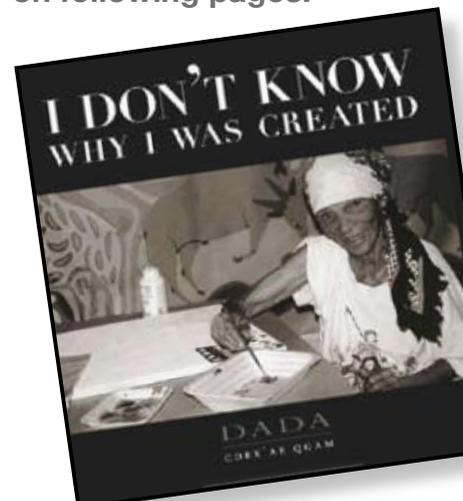
made during 2011 and look forward to a continued interest in building it into a stronger friendship entity during the coming year.

In this issue of Dumela, you will read an article on an interview with Ann Gollifer about her and co-author Jenny Egner's recently published book »I don't know why I was created«. The book covers the life and work of Botswana artist Dada Coex'ae Qgam and the legacy she left behind for Botswana's future generations. Dumela 4-2011 also introduces a diary kept by Eyvor Holstein-Ranégie, an accompanying spouse, during her stay in Botswana (1979-81).

*Dumela joins me in wishing you
a Merry Christmas and
a Happy New Year 2012!*



In a new book, **»I DON'T KNOW WHY I WAS CREATED«**, Botswana's foremost artist Dada (Coex'ae Qgam) is portrayed by Ann Gollifer and Jenny Egner. Read an interview with Ann on following pages.



VISIT OUR HOMEPAGE www.botsfa.nu

I don't know why I was created

– sharing a legacy

TEXT Mats Ögren Wanger PHOTOS Courtesy of the authors



Dumela met Ann Gollifer, co-author of the book »I don't know why I was created«, during the launch of the book in London and a recent visit to Botswana. In this interview, Ann describes Dada's work and the friendship that evolved between the artist and authors of the book over the years.

–DADA Coex'ae Qgam was a personal friend of mine, says Ann Gollifer. When she started getting ill in the early 2000s, Jenny Egner proposed writing a book about her, as she felt that Dada was an important figure in the community as well as the arts in Botswana. Jenny was afraid Dada might die and be forgotten. She felt a book would preserve Dada's unique personality and her work for Botswana's future generations.

–I asked Dada if she was interested in the idea and she happily agreed with the understanding that I be involved. We started making formal interviews with Dada in 2003. These interviews were recorded in shorthand by Jenny as well as tape-recorded. I also kept diaries of all

my visits to D'Kar over the years and began writing about our friendship—making notes of memories from our first meeting in 1991, onwards.

– The interviews were setup in a professional manner with a translator. Both Dada and the translator were paid for every interview we conducted. These payments helped Dada with her cash flow problems, which were chronic. They also helped our friendship avoid the pitfalls of a one-sided cash dependency. We were able to remain true friends throughout without much financial strife between us. One of the things I learnt about working with Dada was that it is important to be clear and honest about one's aims and to conduct mutual business in a professional manner.

–When we made the interviews, Jenny and I asked our questions in English. Nododonyane Ditsheko, who was our main translator, interpreted our conversations back and forth. When Dada and I were alone we talked »Setswenglish« and sign language. I think we had a natural rapport.

– I got to know Dada very well, as I nursed her through some traumatic times and illnesses. Jenny also helped me on many occasions and was intimate with Dada too. We, all three, shared many good times, stories and jokes over the years. Dada was an extremely humane woman who

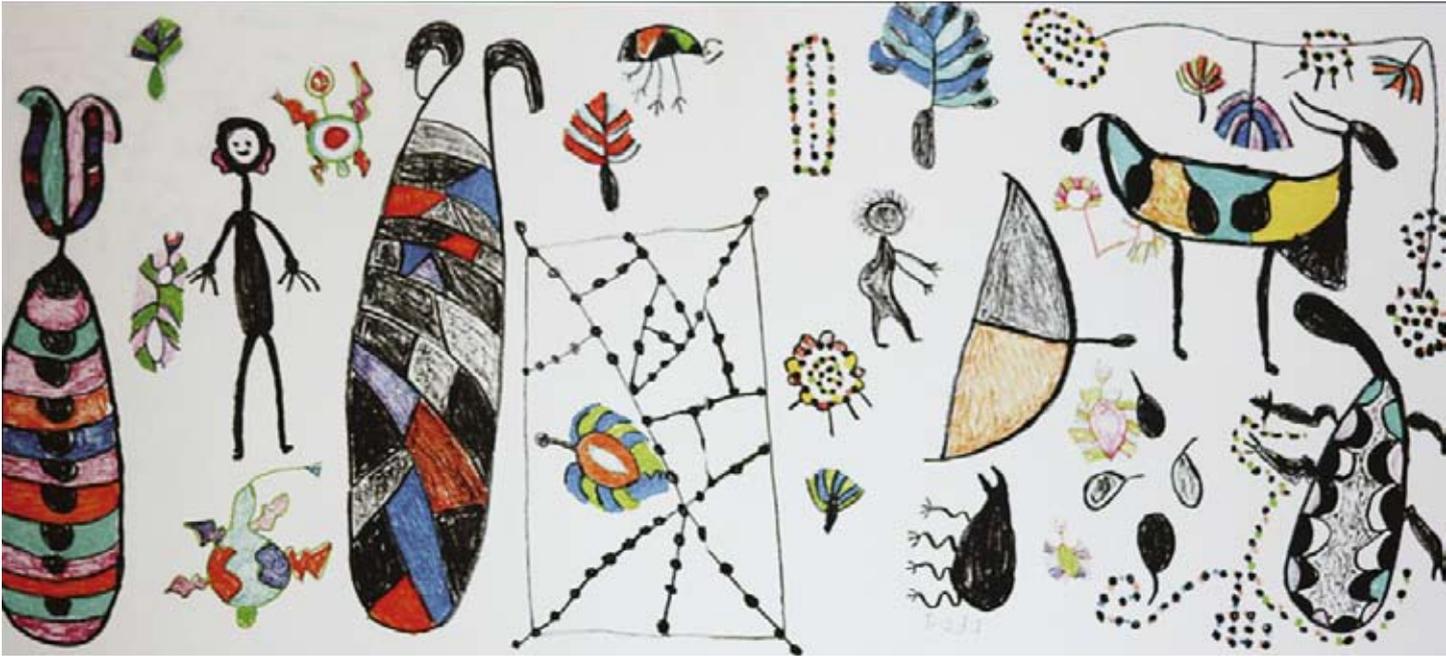
understood people and empathised easily with them, whoever they were and where ever they came from. She had no need for social barriers.

–We trusted each other. We had to learn to be honest with each other, as many of the decisions we made together concerned life and death. I loved her and feel lucky to have been her friend. We both understood that every person's blood is red, whether the person is rich or poor, white or black.

Ann described the work that went into self-publishing, and the experiences that she and Jenny had with the process.

–It took 9 years to get to the point of the book being published! We started by collecting information, research through interviews and written memories from friends, colleagues, fellow artists, passers-by. Jenny did all the transcribing of the written shorthand notes and the tapes and my diary fragments. I continuously collected images from whatever source I could and began to build a catalogue of every piece of her work I could find in the *Kuru Art Project* records, posters, calendars, exhibition catalogues, other people's collections and photographs from all over the world.

–We put the text and images and catalogue together but felt unhappy



with the wholesomeness of our collection. So we went back to work on collecting information and thinking about formats. In the meantime, we sent out project descriptions and proposals to publishers in South Africa and the UK. The few publishers interested wanted us to fundraise for the project. Eventually we felt that we would be able to go through the whole process of design, production, printing and distribution ourselves, and make more money in the end, to cover our costs and pay out fees. We finally came up with the concept for the book's layout. After 9 years of deliberation and editing, we were sure we had a fine product that self-publishing could make, and come alive in the shape, quantity and quality we wanted.

– Self-publishing made it possible for us to define the quality of the book for ourselves and insist on the absolute best solutions for reprinting and materials without compromise. The biggest challenge, in the end, is the distribution – but the launches we have organised in London, Gaborone, Johannesburg, Maun and D'Kar will see the first edition of 1000 books well distributed, and continuing to sell well. If an established Publishing House wants to negotiate a re-print, we are ready. If not, we are ourselves ready to consider a second edition in the coming year.

On the question by Dumela on how the authors will market the book, Ann says:

– I have been invited to give a lecture in Edinburgh next September for the National Galleries of Scotland. Both Jenny and I are ready and willing to continue working on behalf of the book, and give talks on the subject.

– We did not manage to persuade the BBC World Service to come to the launch in London although they approached us for an interview before the UK launch. The Swiss-based magazine »Art and Cultures« has asked the Keeper of Anthropology from the British Museum, Jonathan King, to write an article on the Kuru Art Project – which he has done. He has referenced our book in the piece which will be published later this year. The Italian »Africa e Mediterraneo« Magazine has also advertised the book and will review it in their next issue.

– The press and media in Botswana have been incredible, with three newspapers giving us serious reviews and two others filling full pages with images of our launch and Dada's work. Cecilia Wanger wrote a short review for the Gaborone based »Lapologa« magazine, September issue. Botswana Television attended and filmed the launch in Gaborone for their Cultural Programme. Mats

Ögren Wanger is writing a review for the Air Botswana inflight magazine »Peolwane« and we hope for more publicity through the »Mail and Guardian« during the Johannesburg launch.

The book can be ordered through BICHA Gallery, 7 Gabriels Wharf, South Bank, London, or through Botswana Craft in Gaborone.





My Botswana...

Eyvor Holstein-Ranégie, born in 1923, grew up in Göteborg/

Gothenburg, Sweden and trained as a secretary. In 1977 she moved to Botswana with her husband Lars Ranégie, a roads planner, who worked on a Sida contract for the Department of Roads. They moved back to Sweden in 1989. Lars died in 1995. While stationed in Ghana, Lebanon, Saudi-Arabia and Portugal before going to Botswana, Eyvor engaged in writing and always kept a diary.

You will find Eyvor's diary from 1979–81, beautifully illustrated by Albio Gonzales, a good friend of the Ranégies, on www.botsfa.nu. Albio worked at the Department for Town and Regional Planning (DTRP) in Gaborone.

Here follows a brief extract of the 46 pages long diary translated into English.

March 1979. Gaborone

Monday. Work starts for Lars, we have an early breakfast. I choose the mealie-meal porridge, it is mild and

salty – I add extra salt – no sugar – to Lars' horror. This way I need no salt pills. At 7.30 a.m. Saba, my »African labrador« and I take our morning walk towards Tlokweng village. We are being friendly greeted by each and everyone we meet, they ask about my health and wish me a good day. Many of them start work at an early hour and have to go a long way to walk – thus having to start walking early. The women keep patiently walking, some of them carry a child on the back and are carrying in some cases another one in the womb and a shopping bag on their head.

...They might think that I am a strange intruder who lazily wanders around in the early mornings, talking to my dog, chit-chatting with the small monkeys in the trees near Notwane River, taking pictures, strolling around among cows, donkeys and goats.

...They tell me to be careful because snakes try to find their winter-quarters at this time of the year and are moving around in the bush. Winter seems far away, because when I start walking back home, the heat is already arduous, the sweat finds its way down the spine. It is already 29 degrees Celsius Centigrade...

Christmas Jazz at
THE No. 1 LADIES' OPERA HOUSE

P60 per person
Under 12—P30

Starts 14h30—15h30

Sunday
11th December

All welcome

Light refreshments
will be on sale!

A collaboration

The Swedish Jazz singer Anna Christoffersson and the drummer/percussionist Robert »Ikiz« is visiting Botswana from the 10–18 of December. Anna and Ikiz will work with local artists there among Shanti Lo and John »Blackie« Selolwane, on guitar.

CORRECTION

Dumela 3/2011 mistakenly provided a wrong surname for the late Svenolof Forsman's three grandchildren. The surname is the same as the deceased's, i.e. Forsman. Svenolof is also survived by his brother Anders Forsman. Dumela regrets the inconvenience this may have caused.



»I don't know why I was created« book launch at Sanitas, Gaborone



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