

F *Dumile Feni (1939 – 1991)*

THE ORDER OF IKHAMANGA IN GOLD (POSTHUMOUS)

AWARDED TO
DUMILE FENI
FOR EXCEPTIONAL
ACHIEVEMENT IN THE
FIELD OF ARTS AND
CONTRIBUTION TO THE
STRUGGLE AGAINST
APARTHEID



Dumile Feni was born in the town of Worcester outside of Cape Town. He worked as a sculpture apprentice at a plastics foundry in Johannesburg and started his career as an artist by drawing on and decorating walls in hospitals.

The eloquence of his drawings soon brought him recognition and in 1965, the 'Goya of the townships' as he was dubbed, was given support to work professionally by a Johannesburg Gallery. Two years later his work was exhibited at the Sao Paulo Biennale. In 1968, he went into exile in the United States from where he never returned. Although his work was exhibited in London in 1969 and appeared in group exhibitions in South Africa in the 1970s, by the 1980s his work was rarely exhibited. He died relatively unappreciated in New York in 1991.

Dumile Feni is one of South Africa's finest artists, who sadly, never tasted his country's freedom. His work embodies the suffering and turmoil of the oppressed under apartheid, the resilience of the human spirit, and the pathos of exile.