

African modern art: human rights



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Much of modern day African art focuses on the events which occur on a local level, yet reach out over the world. In cases of genocide, child soldiers, beauty of Africa, there are artists' renderings which allow a global eye to see the events that are shaping Africa, and this eye is allowed to see these events as they are portrayed by local artists, or artists who have been affected by a particular event.

This paper will analyze and discuss the art work created in lieu of the Sharpeville massacre: Sharpeville Remembered Exhibition in which local artists from Johannesburg area. There will be a compare and contrast between the Sharpeville works and the Voortrekker Monument, as both stand in remembrance of Africa's history.

An interesting remembrance initiated for Human Rights Day is the Sharpeville Remembered Exhibition. This is a commemorative portfolio involving 22 artists from the Vaal Triangle and Johannesburg. The portfolio includes 55 prints which depict each artist's reaction to the Sharpeville Massacre.

The artists reacted to the killings of 8 women and 10 children which ultimately marked the end of the Apartheid regime. In total there were present 7, 000 people who came to the Sharpeville police station.

The artists recognized the peaceful demonstration but they also took into account for their art that the police present (300 reinforcements). Other drastic measures the police took were to disperse the crowd using low flying aircraft.

The artists' rendition of this event could also have centered around reports that a scuffle initiated outside of the police station and the crowd's front row lurched forward and this is when the police opened fire. The crowd was so dense that escape was an illusion.

One main area of interest that the artists also focused their rendition was that 80% of those killed were shot in the back (Sharpeville Remembered Exhibition).

Other visual or narrative elements that the artists brought into the exhibition was that the police claimed the crowd had been throwing rocks at them and that there were guns and weapons in the crowd. Photos taken before and after this demonstration turned massacre revealed only hats, ties, bicycles and other harmless objects were left behind and no weapons were left behind as the police reported.

The following pictures are the artists' renditions of these events taken from an online source as cited.