



Arts & Entertainment

Therianthropes by Guy Thesen

by Jo Davis

One's first impression of artist Guy Thesen's sculptures is of a play of movement between sculptures and shadows cast on the walls, just like a shaman would see dancing figures of half-man and half-beast on a cave wall.

Therianthropes—derived from the Greek word, linking animal to human form—stimulated Guy's fascination to study San paintings; especially transformations of shamans in deep hallucinating trance. In this state, it was considered that they would be most useful to solve the tribe's physical and psychological needs as to rain making, ancestor connection and the hunt. This passion the artist shared with Professor Walter Battiss and his late father.

These five unique large (at least one metre) mythical bronzes depict stylised forms in striking pose. This very accomplished and versatile artist, born in Knysna, (worked for a period as Head of Art at Oakhill School) studied graphic art at the Michaelis School of Art at the

University of Cape Town. To his credit a solo and more than 20 group exhibitions; his works are represented in private collections. He effortlessly implements distortion and exaggeration, to be tempered by very fine detail and sensitivity. Yet every intriguing half man/half animal piece conveys intrinsic energy and is highly thought provoking. Creating these sculptures, Guy works from a foam block, carving away to the final core, which is cast in very limited edition of only 15.

Accompanying and enhancing the sculptures are 13 reversed oil paintings on glass in boxed frames. These magical, colourful, mesmerising paintings with their written poems relate the stories of San people and their close link with the animal world. Links are very important to Guy: links between nature, man and animals; links to his family; the continuation link with his father's passion and the supportive links of very close graphic artists friends like James Robinson and Gary and Andrew King.

