

Shona Sculptors from Zimbabwe at Ste. Anne's Spa

Grafton, Ont., - September 1, 2009 – On Tuesday September 1st Singi Chihota, an artist-in-residence at ZimArt, accompanied by Biggie Chikodzi, ZimArt's Zimbabwean representative, will be carving on site at Ste. Anne's Spa. They will both be available to answer questions on the history of the Shona sculpting movement and the process of direct stone carving. They can also talk about the three grassroots HIV/AIDS projects ZimArt is assisting in Zimbabwe.

Ste. Anne's has had a selection of work from the Rice Lake Gallery on display both on the grounds and in the spa since last year. "We were looking for a way of making a closer connection for our guests between the sculptures they have been admiring and the whole story behind it," explains operations manager, David Navia. "When Singi and Biggie offered to come on site we thought this would be a perfect way to do that."

Fran Fearnley, who founded ZimArt in 2000, travels to Zimbabwe every year to select the work which she buys directly from the artists. She has represented Singi since 2001, and says he already has a following among Canadian art lovers. "There's an emotional expressiveness in his sculptures that draws us into his world and his dialogue with the stone is extraordinary, but then he did start when he was 12 years old!"

Three weeks ago Singi was the featured artist at Shona D'Afrique V, the fifth annual outdoor exhibition held on Montreal's West Island, hosted by ZimArt in collaboration with the City of Beaconsfield. Now he's holding sculpting workshops at the Rice Lake Gallery, and the students are loving it. Outside under tents, using only hand tools and carving in stone from Zimbabwe, both aspiring and accomplished sculptors (aged 16 - 70) are making their own masterpieces, with Singi's expert guidance.

ZimArt's artist-in-residence program is structured so that it will be a successful experience for each new artist who comes, explains Fran. "The last four artists have gone home and bought a house. Singi knows that's what he can look forward to, so he can see this as his time to shine as an artist and as a teacher."

Singi will also be the featured artist at Rice Lake X, the tenth annual exhibition which will be held at the Rice Lake Gallery in September. "It's going to be a stunning exhibition which will showcase the exceptional talent of the 50 artists we represent."

Rice Lake X begins on September 12 and runs to September 27, noon to 7.00 p.m. daily. Preview visits can be made anytime by appointment from September 4 - 11. Admission is free with donations for HIV/AIDS orphans in Zimbabwe welcomed. For more information on Rice Lake X call 705.939.6144 or visit www.zimart.ca.

Ste. Anne's is one of a small group of Aveda destination spas in the world, offering a range of day spa and overnight experiences to spa goers for more than 17 years. Ste. Anne's Spa is located 90 minutes east of Toronto, near Grafton, Ontario. To inquire about rates and availability, please call 1-888-346-6772.

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