

mixed bunch — different ages, sexes, levels of education and abilities, and with different experiences of employment, alcohol, drugs and petty crime.

The book is largely descriptive and includes a brief history of the Street People's Organization, which developed after one major eviction, and details of the various places where they settled. Bourdillon then focuses on the problems that face the community and suggests certain solutions, while making clear his own opinion on their causes.

One of the most compelling features of the book is the drive for survival that is implicit in the stories of the individuals who feature in it — in particular, their attempts to find ways to be independent and earn money, including by 'minding cars' — and the support that members of the community give each other. A number of key community characters, who are either formal or informal leaders, feature prominently throughout the book. In particular, Teddy Dende, a member with a disability who has had the longest experience of the city's streets, seems to have developed a mutually beneficial patron-client relationship with many members of the community.

Many of the various authorities who feature in the stories, particularly the police, the local council and the Department of Social Welfare, are described with disdain. They appear to have no appreciation of the lives of Harare's homeless, of the reasons why this group even exists, or of how to deal with the situation. Bourdillon notes that the frequent 'round-ups', the police harassment, the burning of homes and property, the treating of these homeless people as criminals and worse is totally out of keeping with the philosophy of a democratic and socialist government. While some appreciation is expressed for the work of officials in the lower echelons of various local and national government structures, the lack of communication with and sympathy from those in control is condemned.

Poor, Harassed but Very Much Alive is not intended to be an academic study of the homeless. Bourdillon has written a brief, easy-to-read account of the Street People's Organization and the life and trials of the members of one community of homeless people. He succeeds in presenting a sympathetic account of members of this group, a group of people in need and struggling for survival but able to cope if they are given minimal support.

Harare

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Stone Sculpture in Zimbabwe: Context, Content and Form By Celia Winter-Irving. Harare, Roblaw Publishers, 1991, xviii, 210 pp., ISBN 0-908309-14-7, Z\$99,00.

Celia Winter-Irving's book is a major advance on the two books written so far on Zimbabwe's world-renowned sculpture, those by Marion Arnold and Ferdinand Mor.¹ As Winter-Irving points out, both of these works deal

¹ M. I. Arnold, *Zimbabwe Stone Sculpture* (Bulawayo, Books of Zimbabwe, 1981); F. Mor, *Shona Sculpture* (Harare, The Author, 1987). See the essay reviews 'Shona Sculpture', *Zambezia*

essentially with *Shona* sculpture, and neither pays much attention to 'the thoughts and processes which have directed the artists' work'.

Winter-Irving attempts to go much further, to give 'an aerial view of Zimbabwe's visual culture', and to elucidate what can be learned 'from the links and connections between a variety of art practices, and from the ideologies, policies and activities of those institutions, organizations and individuals who have provided enlightened official, institutional, commercial, philanthropic, personal, and informal support for the visual arts in Zimbabwe since colonial times'. This is a massive project which goes well beyond the scope of the book's title, and, unfortunately, the book suffers because of it.

Australian-born Celia Winter-Irving, herself an artist and erstwhile director of a Sydney sculpture gallery, is now a Research Fellow at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe, and her loyalty to that institution is evident both in a long chapter on the Gallery itself and in her unwillingness to probe beneath the surface of what she relates of government policy.

Indeed, throughout this very patchily constructed book, the sharper edge of analysis is curiously lacking. The almost encyclopaedic attempt to contextualize the last thirty years' explosion of sculpture against earlier history, within traditional culture, among other contemporary visual arts, and in the stream of commerce (and there are useful but disembodied chapters on each of these), robs the analysis of focus. Thus Winter-Irving fails to make meaningful links between sculpture and nineteenth-century painting, or between Great Zimbabwe and modern *Shona* sculpture. Since she rightly insists that the sculpture has no overt cultural antecedents (the Zimbabwe birds hardly qualify), one wonders what purpose these chapters really serve, apart from exposing Winter-Irving's unfamiliarity with fields outside her own (such as the dated and stereotyped synopsis of 'militarist' Ndebele history, Mzilikazi being Shaka's 'general', and other inaccuracies).

The real value of the book lies, however, in the revelation of precisely that condition which makes focus difficult: that there is really no such thing as 'Shona sculpture': that the astonishing efflorescences of talent at Tengenenge and Chapungu Village are shot through with 'foreignness', both because many of the sculptors are not Zimbabwean at all and because, from its earliest days, the sculpture was fostered by White patrons with close connections with the worlds of academia, art-display and commerce. Nothing emerges more clearly here than the extraordinary variety of approaches to the craft.

Winter-Irving grapples sturdily with the non-question of whether Frank McEwen and Tom Blomefield's formative patronage has compromised some putative purity of 'traditional' cultural reference. Despite her own characterization of McEwen as 'highly selective', with 'strict quality control' (and in her contempt of 'airport' sculpture, she clearly supports this), she consistently falls back defensively on an often vaguely-articulated assertion of the cultural independence of the sculptors' works. In effect, though,

Winter-Irving demonstrates the futility of a 'Western vs. traditional' dispute: the sculpture has been produced at a time of massive cultural flux and culture-clash, which is precisely what generates its variety.

Nowhere is this clearer than in the 70-page section entitled 'The Sculptors Speak'. Although most of the sculptors are lucky to get a word in edgewise, this comes closest to the heart of what the book purports to be about; it is a pity the prose is often bafflingly loose, seldom closely tied to the illustrations, and sometimes grammatically wayward. This chapter also highlights the book's slightly disconcerting mixture of specialist interest (lists of exhibitions, for instance) and explanations which, at times, appear to be aimed at the layman.

Densely informative if not provocative, clearly if not profusely illustrated, *Stone Sculpture in Zimbabwe* is, for all its faults, a very welcome addition to the literature on the subject, a genuine foray towards a more holistic view than we have seen so far, and a genuine tribute to the individual sculptors. Paradoxically it demonstrates both how rich that subject is, and how much more fruitful analysis might be done.

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