

American artists teach on public art installations

• Thapong Acting Board chairperson calls for US/Botswana cultural exchanges

BG Reporter

Art installation is one of the most creative and interesting ways that a visual artist who is passionate about engaging their audience can use to tell a story. Although a few artists are presently doing it such as Ivy Radipodi and Kate Kwati, and a group trading under the name 20-III (comprising Beullah Serema, Eric Johane as well as Rapelang Rapalai) that recently gave the Old Gaborone Station Bridge a new lease of life through their Public Art Installation, this is something that other local artists can explore and take their craft to a different level.

Michigan born artist, Peter Clouse has assured local visual artists that this is something that they can take up, and showcase a different type of art. Clouse was speaking on the sidelines of a public presentation at the ongoing Art in Embassies (AIE)

workshop held at Thapong Visual Arts Centre. Clouse who used the platform to showcase some of his installation works during his presentation, observes that this type of art allows an artist to receive feedback and that an audience can engage in the subject/topic that they are pursuing. He also says that for those who wish to try their hand at installations, all that they need is to have an idea, concept and figure out the environment that they will display that particular artwork. "Anyone wishing to explore installations needs to talk to others and get their feedback on whether that particular piece makes sense or not. Otherwise if they don't understand it, it doesn't make sense to display for the public," he cautions. For his various works, Clouse uses recycled materials and anything that he can lay his hands on that is easily affordable. "I see potential in everything around me," he says. His materials range from chicken bones, orange peels, and any

sies Cultural Exchange project. It is organised by the American Embassy in collaboration with Thapong Visual Arts Centre. A similar programme organised by the Embassy in association with Poetavango will be extended to artists in Maun and surrounding areas from October 24-27th. The Maun programme is a special one, as it will take place alongside the annual Maun International Arts Festival. Speaking at the event on Monday evening, Acting Board Chairperson for Thapong, Mesh Moeti explained that earlier this year, some members of the Board, the Coordinator of the Centre and Phillip Segola paid a courtesy call to Ambassador Miller. He said that their discussions centred on the possibility of a cultural exchange programme between Thapong and similar centres in the US. "Our interest was driven by the desire to expose our artists to new skills and techniques, as well as to take Botswana's art to the outside world,"

he said. He also pointed out that an interaction such as this one can bring attention to the outside world of the art coming out of Botswana. AIE was established in 1963, and has worked in 171 countries targeting over 20 000 participants including artists, museums, galleries, universities and private collectors. Over the past decade, AIE has provided artists the opportunity to travel abroad

on more than 200 cultural exchanges. Conducting events at area schools, universities, and art institutions while often collaborating with local communities to make site-specific works of art, AIE exchange participants help bring art to life through the power of shared experience.



U.S. visiting artists, Jacquelyn Gleisner, Peter Clouse and Jill Galarneau.

(PIC: BOTSANG MOITOI)

material that speaks and calls his name. "I go for materials that talk to me," he explains advising local artists to also do the same. Clouse, alongside two other artists from the US - Jacquelyn Gleisner and Jill Galarneau - are in the country as part of the Art in Embas-