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GIG NELSON MANDELA OPUS AT THE CONTEMPORARY ARTS FAIR

Original artwork by Nelson Mandela is going on show in Liverpool. The exhibition, at World Museum Liverpool in July, will form part of the city's inaugural international Contemporary Arts Fair.

It is also a key part of the cultural programme surrounding the International Festival for Business.

Organisers have worked with the late South African leader's family and widow, Graca Machel to create the Nelson Mandela Opus.

Images include The Hand of Africa, a pastel drawing done in 2002 and featuring the map of the continent with many colours – indicative of the 'rainbow nation' Mandela

loved so much, and a colourful drawing of his home town, Qunu, where the 95-year-old was laid to rest last December.

Along with three original works painted by Mandela, for exhibition only, there will be a number of lithographs which will be available to buy, from £6,000 to £15,000.

Liverpool Contemporary Arts Fair co-director, Shirley-Ann O'Neill, said: 'This will be a rare opportunity to view and buy original Mandela art.'

'We're very privileged to be entrusted with the sale of these iconic pieces to allow his vision to continue. This art collection will no doubt be a highlight of the fair.'

Mandela started painting

after his release from prison in Robben Island, and used his art to help raise millions of pounds for African children's charities. Meanwhile, the drawings and handwritten motivations written by him to accompany the works are of great historical significance.

The collective is being presented at the fair by prestigious London art house The Belgravia Gallery, ahead of an event with the Mandela family and Graca Machel later this year to launch the Nelson Mandela Opus publication.

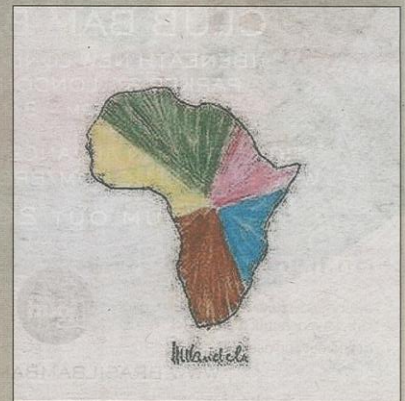
Liverpool Contemporary, which runs from July 3-6, will be the city's first internationally recognised commercial arts fair.

Visitors will be able to buy and view art from more than 50 leading galleries, and more than 7,000 people are expected to attend the event.

Liverpool Vision chief executive Max Steinberg said: 'We're pleased to be hosting the UK's newest international arts fair. It will provide an important platform for galleries, commercial art buyers and collectors to trade globally, as well as an important cultural experience.'

Catherine Jones

Jul 3 to 6, World Museum, William Brown Street, Liverpool, 10am to 5pm (opening night 6pm to 9pm), day ticket £7. Tel: 01244 893185. www.liverpoolcontemporary.com



A 'rainbow nation': Nelson Mandela's painting of Africa.