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**Special Exhibition to Open Sept. 14 at South Haven Center for the Arts**

**Giving Voice to the Contemporary Art of Africa**

SOUTH HAVEN, Mich., Aug. 22, 2007 -- The South Haven Center for the Arts is partnering with Saugatuck-based Amazwi Contemporary Art Gallery to present a special exhibition on the contemporary arts and artists of today's Africa. The exhibit is entitled *Africa Today* and will run from Sept. 14 to Nov. 4 on the first floor gallery of SHCA at 600 Phoenix in downtown South Haven. A special opening reception is planned for Sept. 14 from 7 to 9 p.m. at which complementary food and beverages, including South African wines, will be served. The event is free and open to the general public.

Since first opening for business in 2004, Amazwi has offered original contemporary paintings, sculpture, jewelry and unique craft items from throughout Africa – Zimbabwe and South Africa to the South, Ghana to the West, and Kenya, Tanzania and Sudan to the East. There is not another gallery with this unique focus for several hundreds of miles.

Amazwi is a Zulu and Ndebele (two separate tribes in southern Africa) word for “voices”. Gallery owners Mike Tischleder and Wally Petersen, along with gallery manager Audrey Cavanaugh, are delighted to be giving a voice to and raising awareness of the vivid, colorful, soulful, joyous and often unexpected work being created by native artists living and working in Africa today.

“Part of our mission at the SHCA is to open people’s minds to the limitless potential of creativity and artistic expression both here at home and around the world,” said Sharon Mack, executive director of the South Haven Center for the Arts.

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“Many people have a deep fascination with all things Africa that stems back to their childhoods, but due to time, distance, expense, and in some cases fear, they are not able to experience it firsthand. That’s why we wanted to expose our patrons to the beautiful art being created in Africa under sometimes very trying circumstances,” adds Mack. “We usually hear and focus on the bad news coming out of Africa, while the Amazwi exhibition celebrates the power of the human spirit.”

Tischleder and Petersen have been on several trips to Africa, both to buy art and to go on photo safaris. Nothing pleases them more than to be able to personally meet with their artists and to see and hear how proud and grateful the artists are that their work has struck such a positive chord with so many of Amazwi’s customers in a faraway and exotic-sounding (to them) place like Michigan.

In addition to the exhibit, there will be an informative talk about contemporary African art during the opening reception and a children’s activity related to the exhibit which will be announced at a later date. Please call SHCA at 269-637-1041 for further information or Amazwi ([www.amazwi.com](http://www.amazwi.com)) at 269-857-5551.

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