

## ROSEMARY KARUGA



Born in Meru in 1928 of a Ugandan father and Kenyan mother, Karuga had her early schooling in both Uganda and Kenya later becoming the first woman to attend the prestigious Makerere University Faculty of Fine Art (1950-52). Karuga taught art in Kenya from the late 50s to early 90s before retiring into full art practice. She developed a form of art "collage" using local materials including newspapers and magazines. One of her students is the world celebrated ceramist Professor Emerita Magdalene Odundo (OBE) who was recently named Chancellor of the University of Creative Arts in Farnham, UK.

As a full time artist, Karuga exhibited around the world alongside famed African artists such as El Anatsui, Bruce Onobrakpeya and Ablade Glover. One show hit the spotlight in 1992 'Contemporary African Artists: Changing Tradition' at The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York. The show featured over 75 artworks from top artists of the continent with Rosemary Karuga being the only woman artist in this pathbreaking exhibition.

In 2006, Karuga became the first ever East African woman to receive a Lifetime Achievement Award, which is an accolade presented to Africans in Ireland for their achievements and contributions to Irish society. To honour Karuga, Kenya, through its embassy in Ireland, organized a special celebratory event for her.

At home, Karuga's work is collected by the National Museums of Kenya, the National Archives as well as private collectors.