

SHOWTIME

Monnakgosi's Baboons At Thapong



John Monnakgosi with his daughter Motswana and the sculptors (from left) Rika Franken, Eunice Botes and Angelika Orford (showing one of his baboons).

taught ceramics at the former Polytechnic. Her current passion is Chinese Raku pottery.

Her mother, Else Franken, who is now 84, has some of her paintings on display in the exhibit that opened at TVAC on September 23. Rika Franken's apprentice, Wendy Phatsima and friend Angelika Orford, have their pottery on display too. Eunice Botes, sonable.

from South Africa, is also part of this exhibit with her assorted *Angels*. There is something here for every-

one, but the centre pieces are the 48 items from John Monnakgosi's private collection (none are for sale). There are over 130 other items on display. Most of the pottery and some of the paintings are for sale, and the prices are most rea-

Going west on the Gabane road, travellers have been entertained for years by a sculptured Baboon made of scrap metal. Few have ventured further to find out why it is there, or even who made it. The Baboons are the creation of John Monnakgosi, a unique Batswana artist who will soon be turning 75, and who has been making things since 1939. He is known locally as the "King of Baboons". He recycles scrap to make his works of art. He has never had any training, but he has the "eye". It is even less known that John Monnakgosi, is a textile designer who deals in used materials to create vibrant clothes. His Baboon trademark is imprinted on them or sewn on leather or other materials. He loves his old sewing machine. On the porch at the Thapong Visual Arts Centre there are a dozen different creations of his, most striking being a suit of recycled Barclays Bank bags. Joining to honour John Monnakgosi are a number of other artists, led by Rika Franken, who started the Pelegano Pottery in Gabane in 1984.

She first came to Botswana from Germany in 1982 and stayed. She loved the people and was attracted to traditional pottery. She married Mike Franken, an engineer, in 1993 and has