

SCRIPT SIMPSONS WORKSHOP KISII

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PR

Although the sales went down after the hype of the new Simpsons movie, a group of carvers in Kenya is still happy. They happen to be the only place in the world where soap stone carvings of the Simpsons are made. Home, Marge, Sideshow Bob, they're all there. It all started when the British business man Paul Young showed interest in selling these artifacts.

BETA

SOUNDBITE CAR PASSING BY

It's the place where you would least expect it. Here somewhere in rural Western Kenya, in a village named Tabaaka.

a workshop making Simpsons' carvings. They do it here, hidden behind from the main road. Here a group of carvers are making soap stone Simpsons characters.

SOUNDBITE CARVER

It's difficult, but I'll try.

It started three years ago, when a British business man entered... who wanted to start selling Simpsons carvings. He was already involved in soap stone statues, and wanted to give it a try with the Simpsons. So he first gave the carvers a few examples to practice.

ENOSH ONSOMBI

secretary Tabaaka Master Carvers's Group
*He came with Simpson cartoons in plastic forms.
So we were supposed to translate them from plastic to stone carvings.*

It took the Briton, we're looking at his website here, a year... to get the license from the film company behind the Simpsons to make the sculptures. Then the production could start in earnest. The carvers had to be trained to meet the quality requirements set by the film company.

QUOTE ENOSH ONSOMBI

*You must produce the real thing.
It took us almost three years to come to the bench mark.
Later on he started giving us jobs,
and by now we are doing it.*

All the main characters of the Simpsons are available now,
and they look very real and original.
The men make 100 pieces a week, and sell them for 6 Dollars each.
In London where the statues are sold, they go for much higher.
Homer for example will
set back the buyer 60 Dollars.
But that's including shipping,
and a beautiful gift box.
Still the carvers make good money
according to their standards.
The soap stone comes from a
nearby quarry and is cheap.

QUOTE ENOSH

*A piece like this we pay 50 Shillings
- And you sell for 400?
Yes.*

The Simpsons changed the lives of the Master Carvers.
Not only in the real world, also in the international press
last summer when a new Simpsons movie was released.

QUOTE ENOSH ONSOMBI

*We've met with even different journalists from all over the world.
So we're also very much interested in carving Simpsons.
We are very happy.
We want it to continu.*

The sales came down a bit after the hype of the movie
but still the men earn more
then they did in earlier days.

QUOTE ENOSH ONSOMBI

*Conditionally we were unable to support our children in school,
but by now we are somehow able.*

Ruud Elmendorp, Tabaka, Kenya.