



Dr Recsei and the Wald sculpture he is offering as a gift to East London.

## EL refuses gift statue

EAST LONDON — A statue by the South African sculptor Herman Wald, which was offered to the Ann Bryant Art Gallery as a gift, has been declined.

The sculpture, a reclining nude in white marble composite and called *The Introverted Mermaid*, belongs to Dr L. Recsei, of Bonnie Doon.

Dr Recsei made the offer in June this year. "East London has been good to me since I settled here and I thought I would give something back to the city in the form of this sculpture," he said.

He received a prompt reply from the Ann Bryant Advisory Board to say that his offer had been accepted in principle and the board was looking into the costs of transportation and designing a plinth on which to rest it.

He was asked to insure the sculpture to the value of R5 000 for the removal, which he did.

On September 9, he received a second letter from the municipality informing him the board had decided to decline his offer "because of the high cost involved in moving the statue."

Mr Errol Spring, chairman of the board, confirmed that this was the reason the offer had been turned down.

"We would accept it very gratefully if Dr Recsei could deliver it to us, but we feel the cost of transport is prohibitive. There is also a large crack at the base of the piece and we felt that moving it could prove a little dicey," Mr Spring said.

Dr Recsei said the crack was "inconsequential," and added: "As for the transportation costs being prohibitive, I cannot accept that argument.

"I transported it back from my holiday home in Hogsback to East London and it was not unduly expensive. The municipality has hundreds of employees and dozens of trucks. If they give me ten men and a truck for two hours I will move the thing myself."

The sculpture, which is also a fountain, was done about 25 years ago. Wald's work includes the Oppenheimer Memorial in Johannesburg, which depicts jumping Springboks.

If the art gallery stands by its decision not to accept the sculpture, Dr Recsei said he will offer it to Johannesburg.

"You can be sure they will jump at such an opportunity," he said. — DDR.