The Secrets of Beads

Imfihlo Yobuhlu

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Abbreviations

AAC  The African Art Centre, Durban
DAG  Durban Art Gallery
JHB  Johannesburg
KZN  KwaZulu-Natal
SC  Study Collection
Global human society is not culturally static; it is definitely marked by elements of dynamism. The Zulu community, too, has always been culturally dynamic, responding to both internal and external stimuli and attendant existential requirements. One such stimulus has been the community’s need to use culture as a tool for communication.

In the introduction of ‘The Secrets of Beads’ Jannie van Heerden, an acknowledged authority on Zulu crafts, articulates the social significance of Zulu beadwork from the nineteenth century up to the present. The Durban Art Gallery hosts such an important exhibition of its beadwork collection at an opportune moment given that the current global cultural upheavals should not be allowed to erode what has always been known as ‘Zulu culture’ in this region of sub-Saharan Africa. However, curators Anthea Martin and Hlengiwe Dube have crafted this exhibition to highlight the fact that traditional Zulu society has never been monolithic in terms of their usage of body adornment as a form of cultural expression. The Durban Art Gallery is honoured to have collaborated with such experts who have been immersed in this genre during their long careers at the African Art Centre.

The content of the exhibition, as well as text and images of the catalogue, based on both primary and secondary research efforts imbue this catalogue with a profound element of authenticity in that Hlengiwe, as a cultural insider, was born and raised within the Zulu culture, absorbing highly nuanced elements of the knowledge of her culture. Given that the Zulu community did not use modern letters to communicate their messages among themselves, beadwork has always been used not only as a communication tool but also as a currency of trade, especially with European traders who brought glass beads. This is just one of the examples of how beadwork can be seen a vehicle for cultural dynamism. Before the Zulus encountered such traders from across the seas, seed beads were dominant and the introduction of more colour into beadwork might have immensely expanded the scope for utilising this genre for communication purposes.

Foreword
Dr M. Mduduzi Xakaza
Director: Durban Art Gallery
Van Heerden’s text also highlights that such glass beadwork played a role in the definition of social prestige and hierarchy in that the most beautiful glass beads were normally hoarded and reserved by monarchs. But it is mainly within the context of regional variations of the use and meanings of beadwork that this catalogue plays a very profound role in empowering modern society with knowledge around meanings based on various colours. Focusing on specific regions such as Msinga, Maphumulo, Mkhomazi, Ndawedwe, Mahlabathini, Nongoma, Estcourt, Bergville, Mtubatuba, Eshowe, Nkandla and Melmoth, this catalogue enables one to decipher various meanings carried by beadwork and how the youth, adults and the elderly use it to communicate relevant messages among themselves. Meanings decoded by curators of this exhibition show, inter alia, what role beads play within the context of romantic relationships forged by the youth in preparation for marriages. One may also highlight that this aspect was also reinforced by the fact that body adornment with beads varied from stage to stage, with young girls exposing more parts of the body as a sign that they were not engaged or married. The catalogue takes the reader through cultural nuances which have to do with how much beadwork would be used for various purposes.

One of the major curatorial aspects here is the authentic use of language in defining various bead artefacts. This, too, shows just how diverse the regions are and how that, in turn, has affected the language. But research that has gone into this project clearly articulates such differences without losing sight of the fact that there were common cultural and traditional practices that could be found across the community. Birth, growth, adolescence, adulthood, betrothal, marriage, initiation into the cult of divinity, as well as so many other life stages, were marked by various uses of beads. Though Dube and Martin curated the exhibition, with its tangible and visible artefacts, they have remained conscious of the spiritual significance of beads since the Zulus are very spiritual in their cosmology. They also highlight how diviners, novice diviners and healers, for example, use beads within their professional parameters and what the colours mean.

In this age of globalisation and tourism, one cannot deny that beadwork has been largely appropriated as a component tourist attraction and modern fashion. Hlengiwe Dube, as one of the experts of beadwork, also produces modern, cutting-edge articles which serve as a testimony that beadwork’s versatility transcends known cultural parameters. Her work is appreciated and collected by people from various cultural backgrounds here and abroad. Today, beadwork is still a commercial commodity exactly as it used to be in the olden days; the only difference is the purpose of consumption. This form of appropriation simply reflects our contemporary global economic reality; human beings should be innovative in order to ensure their economic survival while the heritage component is preserved and archived for posterity. I genuinely hope that this catalogue and the exhibition that it accompanies will serve as a relevant source of enjoyment and intellectual empowerment especially for the benefit of our youth and scholars who are actively engaged in the enterprise of knowledge production. I hope that it has the potential to promote deeper critical inquiry into the culture of the Zulu-speaking Africans in contemporary age.
As early as a thousand years ago, Arab boats were travelling down the African coast, trading beads from Egypt and India with the indigenous inhabitants in exchange for gold and ivory. Glass beads were a highly desirable commodity, as no glass blowing technology existed amongst the African tribes. Mapungubwe (AD 850-1300), Great Zimbabwe (AD 1300-1450) and Thulamela (AD 1400-1640) were some of the sites that traded for beads, and plenty of beads were found there in archaeological digs. We can surmise that beads were a symbol then of prestige and rank, as it became in later Zulu society under the rule of Kings Shaka and Mpande.

The Portuguese arrived in Delagoa Bay (Maputo in the 16th century) and traded with the indigenous tribes, exchanging glass beads and copper for slaves, ivory and gold. In 1824, the first British traders such as Henry Frances Fynn and Captain Allen Francis Gardiner arrived in Port Natal and found the Zulus wearing beadwork that was reserved for royalty. Shaka demanded that traders gave him first choice of colours and, as can be seen in The Kaffir’s Illustrated (1849) by George French Angas, blue, white and red were the preferred colours. Angas states that some of the dancers wore beadwork weighing up to 25 kg and the preference was for large sized beads. As the women of the Royal Kraal gradually married, they spread bead-making skills to other areas.

The early 19th century traders from Port Natal (Durban) who dealt with Zulu royalty obtained their glass beads from Bohemia and Venice. As bead-making spread throughout the districts of KwaZulu-Natal, regional colour preferences originated and today (post 1900) beadwork can be identified by its colour combinations:

Msiminga is one of the most traditional parts of KwaZulu-Natal and even today women are adorned with beads. Two styles of beadwork can be distinguished here:

The old style (early 1900-1950’s) termed isishunka, utilising seven different colours of beads: ‘vaseline’ yellow, pale blue, deep red, deep green, white, black and pink. The colours were combined in bands of varying sizes.
The modern style uses bolder colours and since 1960 strong geometric designs were introduced. According to Frank Jolles in his work 'Traditional Zulu Beadwork of the Msinga Area', (African Arts; January, 1993) three different styles based on colour combinations are found - this is not a hard and fast rule, as other variations exist:

*Isithembu*, using the following five colours: black, red, dark green, yellow and bright green

*Umzansi*, four colours: white, red, dark green and dark blue

*Isinyolovane*, four colour combinations: white, red, dark green and dark blue

Some of the other areas of KwaZulu-Natal that have distinct bead colour combinations are:

**Nongoma / Ulundi**
Here bead makers use large fields of white with triangular or diamond shapes cut up and combined in ingenious ways using red, green and black, or blue, yellow and red. The beadwork worn by the rickshaw drivers is typical of this area.

**TRADITIONAL MEANING OF BEADWORK**
Although beadwork is frequently worn today as mere decoration, it is essential to view beadwork within the context that it was originally worn and to be aware of the symbolic meaning attached to the various rituals in which the wearers of beadwork were involved.

Beadwork indicates marital status or sex. Married women have certain items reserved exclusively for their use, for example the bridal capes from Estcourt area (zokolo) or the beaded headbands (zenzobozoa) from Maphumulo. Also worn are legpieces (zingusha) and shawls (amateko) anklets (amadhuthi) front aprons (zinshoza) and beaded belts (umutsha).

A pregnant woman wears a pregnancy apron (incayi) made from the hide of an animal which is sacrificially killed to appease the ancestors and it is studded with brass buttons and beads; the apron is meant to symbolise good luck.

Young girls wear front loin covers (zishapa) and back loin covers (obezwanja).

Males are often attired in a beaded waistcoats (into-Elibhantshi) and bandoliers (imimatamatana).

Beadwork is also worn on special occasions such as weddings, funerals and coming-of-age ceremonies.

When beadwork relates to courtship it frequently contains secret messages.

A love letter (umgexo) is given by a young girl as a token of affection to her lover. It contains encoded messages in colour sequences, and sometimes lettering is also used.

There is a lot of speculation amongst researchers about the meaning of colour sequences used in Zulu love letters and one needs to be cautious about ascribing meaning to colour in beadwork as the messages that young girls were writing in colour combinations for their lovers were personal. These messages could only be understood by the parties involved. B.M. Mthethwa stated that these messages in colour were often in the form of puzzles which would be decoded by those persons for whom they were intended. Decoding Zulu Beadwork, (Sienaert and Bell (eds.); 1988).

J. W. Crosser interviewed Princess Magogo, the late mother of Chief Buthelezi, in respect of colour symbolism. She grew up in the Royal Kraal and had an intimate knowledge of traditions. She ascribed a lot of different meaning to some single colours and emphasized that one needed to know Zulu traditions in order to comprehend the meaning of colour combinations.

In Know the Past, Wear the Future, published by the Local History Museum, a list of Princess Magogo’s explanations of colour meanings appear (pp 21-30).

Plastic beads have, in many instances, replaced glass beads but they lack the translucency and brilliance found in old beads. However, enterprising institutions like the Durban African Art Centre and creative beadmakers such as Hlengiwe Dube and Alexia Mkhize still create exquisite and original bead pieces.
THE EXHIBITION AT THE DURBAN ART GALLERY
The Secrets of Beads — Imfihlo Yobuhlalu
celebrates the richness of Zulu culture through beadwork and throws light on the existence of the social structures and of the changing of customs in the different areas. The catalogue looks at the Zulu belief systems of their ancestors and how they affect the community at large. These beliefs were crystallized through the intervention of traditional healers who used beads to express themselves through instruction from the ancestors.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN AS ARTISTS
Women are the creators who fashion the beads that pass on messages to their menfolk and to the community at large. Young women wear very different beads showing their availability, in contrast to the rich beadwork of married women which include magnificent skirts, shawls and headdresses. This beadwork is worn at coming-of-age ceremonies, engagements and weddings.

STATUS AND CHOICES
These are declared using the private language of love letter necklaces. In the splendid ‘lock and key’ necklaces, the fact that a woman is married and faithful is suggested by the locks which cannot be opened or unlocked for any dalliance.

ASPIRATIONS AND WISH FULFILMENT
This is demonstrated by the use of fertility dolls expressing the desire for a child, or also used for sympathetic healing in lieu of the patient being unable to attend the doctor. The ornate marriage capes of the Drakensberg areas talk to us through the many layers of beadwork, showing the aspirations of the young bride who would like a car, a house, children and fields of corn, which appear in abstracted designs along with coded patterns and colours.

BEADED SOFT SCULPTURE
These reflect the lives of the women who made them and their wishes and desire for children, health, and special events and even news items.

HISTORICAL CHANGES
Changes in beadwork are due to the pressures of fashion, social changes and difficulties, some of which were caused by the onset of migrant labour from the homelands to the cities, the AIDS epidemic and economic reasons. The use of cheaper plastic beads, plus the use of brightly coloured wool for tassels and pompoms to augment the use of expensive glass beads is one of the major changes in beadwork. Sometimes it is just the desire of the young for something new.

There is still much to be learnt about the past of the Zulu people through the skills of symbolic interpretation. This requires the understanding of the colour selection, the rules of arrangement. There are also certain colours preselected for certain types of articles. There is also rejection evident in beads inappropriately strung next to one another.
One can easily recognise where a person comes from by the way he/she is dressed, as each region has its own style and colour coding of beadwork. The styles worn by people from the north will be different from those of people who come from the south or east of the province. The outfits of each age group will also be different for men and women.

During the past three decades, the Durban Art Gallery has collected a range of beadwork from different districts of KwaZulu-Natal. These items were sourced from the Goodman Gallery in Johannesburg, the Durban African Art Centre, the Dube family from the Njengabantu clan of New Hanover in KwaZulu-Natal, and from the collector Mpostoli Mzila of Keats Drift who is a member of the Mzila family of sculptors in the Msinga Valley. This catalogue and accompanying exhibition are from selected items from the entire collection of the Durban Art Gallery. The selected items were chosen for their quality and as representatives of each area.

AREAS REPRESENTED

Msinga, Maphumulo, Mkhomazi, Ulundi, Nongoma, Estcourt, Loskop, Bergville, Mtubatuba, Eshowe, Nkandla, Melmoth and Ndwele.
Photographic portrait cards
Permission granted for reproduction
Hlangana Zube Collection

1918
Zithethele Ndlovu and Ntozakhe Ndlovu.

Unknown.

Ntozakhe Blose
Maphumulo.

MaNgubane and MaNdlovu Nene.
Mbumbulu, 5 May 1969.

MaNdlovu’s husband.

Zonjani Blose, husband of Jabu MaGcaba Blose.
Maphumulo, Bobsons Studio Durban.

Jabu MaGcaba Blose.
Maphumulo.

MaNgubane Nene.

MaNdlovu Nene’s husband.

MaNdlovu Nene.

Zungani Blose, husband of Jula Mlakazana Blose.
Maphumulo, Dobson’s Studio Durban.

Jula Mlakazana Blose.
Maphumulo.

Jula MaGcaba Blose.
Maphumulo.
Horn Necklaces

TRADITIONAL HEALER, ISANGOMA, IZINYANGA, AMATHWASA

The sangoma in Zulu culture is connected to ancestor worship and is loosely termed a witch, wizard, witchdoctor, diviner or seer. The sangoma can be male or female and uses beads and colours indicated by the ancestors. They wear highly distinctive beadwork styles and colours but generally favour white and red beads.

A special necklace made from horn and beads, is worn by the head of the family to protect him/her against the evil practices of witchdoctors. Inside the horn there is some umuthi (powder and medicinal herb) to prevent the family from getting sick and also to protect and strengthen the wearer. It can also be worn by amathwasa or traditional healers. Inside the horn there is some umuthi to prevent the family from getting sick from lightning strikes, izulu elibi. It is made from the horn of a bushbuck or antelope killed during a hunt and the inyanga will then put medicine into the horn. It can be worn by males or females.
Love Protection necklace
With mirror and handkerchief
Zulu name: Ubhangqiwe
Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
Age of the piece: 1960s
Date of acquisition: 1988
Collector: Mpostoli Mzila
Design: Isithembu
Purpose of the piece: Necklace made by girl for her beloved man
Material used: Glass beads, cotton, horn, mirror, brass studs
Size: L132.4 cm

Protection necklace
Zulu name: Isikhonkwane
Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
Age of the piece: 1970s
Date of acquisition: 1995
Collector: Mpostoli Mzila
Maker: Nomusa Zakwe
Design: Isithembu
Purpose of the piece: Worn by married women as a protection
Material used: Glass beads, animal horn, cotton thread
Size: H20 x L24.6 cm

Protection necklace
Zulu name: Isikhonkwane
Geographical location: Maphumulo, KZN
Age of the piece: 1970s
Date of acquisition: 1989
Purchased: The Goodman Gallery, JHB
Design: Uheshe - called open fence because of its structure
Purpose of the piece: Worn by the head of the family to protect his family
Other purpose: As a container to store medicine for a sangoma
Material used: Glass beads, animal horn, cotton thread
Size: H20 x L24 cm

Protection necklace
Zulu name: Isikhonkwane
Geographical location: Maphumulo, KZN
Age of the piece: 1970s
Date of acquisition: 1989
Purchased: The Goodman Gallery, JHB
Design: Uheshe - called open fence because of its structure
Purpose of the piece: Worn by the head of the family to protect his family
Other purpose: It can also used to store medicine for a sangoma
Material used: Glass beads, animal horn, cotton thread
Size: H24 x L26.5 cm

Protection necklace
Zulu name: Isikhonkwane
Geographical location: Maphumulo, KZN
Age of the piece: 1970s
Date of acquisition: 1989
Purchased: The Goodman Gallery, JHB
Design: Uheshe - called open fence because of its structure
Purpose of the piece: Worn by the head of the family to protect his family
Other purpose: It can also used to store medicine for a sangoma
Material used: Glass beads, animal horn, cotton thread
Size: H24 x L26.5 cm
LOVE LETTER NECKLACES, ISIBEBE, ITEMBU, IBHEQU

Love letter necklaces are closely associated with courtship and marriage, and with the period of maximum adornment spanning the time of feminine fertility.

There is a misconception that every piece of beadwork is decipherable in the same way as written correspondence. However, the Zulu ‘love letter’ (incwadi yothando ucu or ubhala abuyise meaning ‘one writes in order that the other should reply’) has a symbolic message associated with certain types of beaded necklaces.

Love among the Zulu people was a very private matter. A traditional woman will never say ‘yes, I love you’ because love must always be kept secret. Love messages are transmitted in a most confidential manner — through beads. At the beginning of the courtship between a young girl and boy after they have agreed to become involved with each other, the girl might start with an ucu (simple necklace) made of two strings of twisted white beads to which she attached one
Love letter necklace

Zulu name: Nkubhu
Geographical location: KwaMashu
Age of the piece: 1970s
Date of acquisition: 1989
Purchased: The Goodman Gallery, JHB
Design: Xhosa

Purpose of piece: Worn by a young man
Material used: Plastic beads, glass beads, wood, cotton string
Size: H10.5 x L40 cm

Another necklace is worn by a young woman,
beaded white ring, signifying she was a virgin.
Another ring would be green, meaning she was
very young, but nonetheless she accepted his
proposal, and as the relationship progresses
she will add another ring to show how she feels
about him. The black ring stands for an isidwaba,
a leather skirt, meaning that she is ready to be
married, and a dark blue meaning ‘I will always
love you’.

As soon as the man receives this kind of necklace,
he will go home to hang up a white handkerchief
as a symbol showing that he is in love. The girl
does not give it to the man himself, this is all done
via the older sister (iqhikiza). The second love letter
will have more red beads and a few other colours
to communicate her desire to her boyfriend
and the boy will by that time take down the white
handkerchief and replace it with a red one. The
ucu can be worn by both young men and women
whose relationship has become known and
generally accepted within their peer group.
Love letter necklace
Zulu name: Umgexo/Ipasi
Geographical location: Maphumulo, KZN
Age of the piece: 1960s
Date of acquisition: 1989
Purchased: The Goodman Gallery, JHB
Design: Isigcwensa
Purpose of the piece: Worn by young man as necklace
Material used: Glass beads, cotton
Size: H3 x L38 cm
SC308

Love letter necklace
Zulu name: Ipasi
Geographical location: Eshowe, KZN
Age of the piece: 1960s
Date of acquisition: 1992
Collector: Mpostoli Mzila
Maker: Zandile Zakwe
Design: Umpondweni - plaited together with net stitch
Purpose of the piece: Worn by a young man who is engaged, this is a gift from his wife-to-be before their wedding
Material used: Plastic and glass beads, cotton string
Size: H4.5 x L183.9 cm
SC553

Love letter necklace
Zulu name: Umphunyama
Geographical location: Maphumulo, KZN
Age of the piece: 1960s
Date of acquisition: 1989
Purchased: The Goodman Gallery, JHB
Design: Kuyaphumla
Purpose of the piece: Worn by young man as necklace
Material used: Glass beads, wood, brass studs, plastic beads, cotton string
Size: H8.5 x L69.7 cm
SC361
The obvious place of adornment is the neck, as it is usually the first thing that is observed, so naturally its importance in Zulu beadwork is paramount. A variety of styles, colours and attachments are made to enhance the wearer, for women, men and children. The colour combinations have been mentioned, but the construction of some of the necklaces tell a story of their own.

Isijumba means bunches of beads to show abundance, some of them interspersed with metal locks, some with keys which imply that within this abundance is a faithful spouse intent in keeping the relationship under lock and key.

The ipasi or choker worn snugly around the neck, shows off a young and beautiful neck of young women and men. The fabulous umtshebebe/ isiphka beaded collars are made with the uheshe open net stitch and are a grand statement on the occasion of marriage and very special ceremonies.

The cascade isiyeye necklace for men, is a wondrous waterfall of looped stitches with white as the predominant colour, but also using the clan colours of isishunka, in the Msinga area. Some of the necklaces are named after plants such as the three-sided Euphorbia tree trunk isiphapha/ umhlonhlo and others for the florets that come from the dwarf Euphorbia Uvovo.

Others are inspired by the structure of household items, such as the beerstrainer necklace ivovo/ ikhama, which shows the strands of beads imitating the straining of the beer through a long, woven-grass cylinder. These are just some examples of the inventive art of beadwork.
Necklace
Zulu name: Uhaqa
Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
Age of the piece: 1960s
Date of acquisition: 1987
Collector: Mpostoli Mzila
Maker: Balungi Ntenjwa
Design: Umzansi
Purpose of the piece: Worn by men and women
Material used: Glass beads, brass studs, cotton string
Size: H4 x L62 cm
SC 234

Necklace
Zulu name: Isijumba
Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
Age of the piece: 1950s
Date of acquisition: 1988
Purchased: The Goodman Gallery, JHB
Design: Umzansi
Purpose of the piece: Worn by bride on her wedding day
Material used: Glass beads, brass studs, cotton string
Size: H4.5 x L76 cm
SC 118

Necklace
Zulu name: Isijumba
Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
Age of the piece: 1950s
Date of acquisition: 1988
Collector: Mpostoli Mzila
Design: Isishunka
Purpose of the piece: Worn by bride on her wedding day
Material used: Glass beads, brass studs, cotton string
Size: H5 x L62 cm
SC 236

Necklace
Zulu name: Ipasi
Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
Age of the piece: 1950s
Date of acquisition: 1986
Collector: Mpostoli Mzila
Maker: Mbazane Mzila
Design: Isishunka
Purpose of the piece: Worn by men and women
Material used: Glass beads, cotton string
Size: H4 x L38 cm
SC 80
Necklace with safety pins
Zulu name: Isiska
Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
Age of the piece: 1940s
Date of acquisition: 1986
Collector: Mpostoli Mzila
Maker: Bongekile Mchunu
Design: Imvalimvali
Purpose of the piece: Worn by men and women who are engaged or married
Other purpose: It can also be worn by men at a wedding ceremony to show their status as being unavailable for other relationships
Material used: Glass beads, wire safety pins
Size: L144 cm
SC130

Wedding necklace
Zulu name: Isijumba
Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
Age of the piece: 1940s
Date of acquisition: 1986
Collector: Mpostoli Mzila
Maker: Cashephi Zuma
Design: Ikhulu
Purpose of the piece: Worn by the bride at a wedding ceremony
Material used: Glass beads, brass studs, cotton threads
Size: H7.5 x L48.5 cm
SC128

Brass necklace
Zulu name: Indondo
Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
Age of the piece: 1940s
Date of acquisition: 2002
Purchased: The African Art Centre
Design: Umqgalaza - large beads
Purpose of the piece: Worn by men and women
Other purpose: The brass beads were also awarded to a warrior
Material used: Brass beads, brass studs, glass beads, cotton
Size: H3 x L68 cm
DAG3554

Fluffy necklace
Zulu name: Isihlahla
Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
Age of the piece: 1950s
Date of acquisition: 2003
Purchased: The African Art Centre
Maker: Mamsongelwa Sithole
Collector: Lindiwe Nxumalo/ Ntombela
Design: Uthihlithihli - bunches of beads
Purpose of the piece: Worn by engaged women
Material used: Glass beads, brass studs, cotton threads
Size: H3 x L64 cm
DAG3595
Cascade necklace
Zulu name: Isiyeye
Geographical location: Msinga, Mashunka, KZN
Age of the piece: 1920s
Date of acquisition: 2002
Purchased: The African Art Centre
Collector: Gugu Ntombela
Maker: Malozane Khuzwayo
Design: Isishunka
Purpose of the piece: Worn by married men
Material used: Glass beads, cotton
Size: H35 x L68 cm
DAG 3564

Cascade necklace
Zulu name: Joype
Geographical location: Msinga, Msinga, KZN
Age of the piece: 1940s
Date of acquisition: 2002
Purchased: The African Art Centre
Collector: Cabangani Ntombela
Maker: MaJobe Mchunu
Design: Isilomi mixed with isishunk
Purpose of the piece: Worn by married men as a necklace at special ceremonies
Material used: Glass beads, cotton
Size: H35 x L36 cm
DAG3563

Cascade necklace
Zulu name: Umtshebhe/Isiphika
Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
Age of the piece: 1950s
Date of acquisition: 1987
Collector: Mpostoli Mzila
Maker: Malozane Khuzwayo
Design: Uheshe, the open net stitch
Purpose of the piece: Worn by young men and women at special ceremonies
Other purpose: Young woman can also wear it on her wedding day
Size: H15 x L49 cm
SC177
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**Collar**
- Zulu name: Uthela
- Geographical location: Nquthu, KZN
- Age of the piece: 1950s
- Date of acquisition: 2003
- Purchased: The African Art Centre
- Collector: Thembelihle Nomusa Dube /Sibisi
- Design: Isishunka
- Purpose of the piece: Worn by married women
- Material used: Glass beads, cotton
- Size: H20 x L120 cm
  
**Beer strainer Necklace**
- Zulu name: Ivovo
- Geographical location: New Hanover, Mt Elias, KZN
- Age of the piece: 1960s
- Date of acquisition: 1989
- Purchased: The Goodman Gallery, JHB
- Design: Iduna
- Purpose of the piece: Worn by married women
- Material used: Glass beads, cotton thread
- Size: H2 x L67 cm
  
**Necklace**
- Zulu name: Undlela
- Geographical location: Mabovini
- Age of the piece: 1950s
- Date of acquisition: 2003
- Purchased: The African Art Centre
- Collector: Nomusa Dube
- Owner: Maximba Sithole
- Design: Isithembu
- Purpose of the piece: Worn by married women
- Material used: Glass beads, rope and cotton thread
- Size: H4 x L62 cm
  
**Beer strainer necklace**
- Zulu name: Ivovo
- Geographical location: Maphumulo, Esidumbeni, KZN
- Age of the piece: 1960s
- Date of acquisition: 1989
- Purchased: The Goodman Gallery, JHB
- Design: Isigcwensa
- Purpose of the piece: Worn by young men
- Material used: Glass beads, cotton thread
- Size: H3 x L46 cm
Beaded rope necklace
Zulu name: Imfacane
Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
Age of the piece: 1960s
Date of acquisition: 1992
Collector: Mpostoli Mzila
Maker: Zazele Ndlovu
Design: Isijozi
Purpose of the piece: Worn by both men and women
Other purpose: It can also be used as headband for unmarried women
Material used: Glass beads, cotton fabric, fibre
Size: H 15.8 x L 50 cm
SC142
Double necklace
Zulu name: Ugnqapho
Geographical location: Mzimba, KZN
Age of the piece: 1950s
Date of acquisition: 1987
Collector: Mpostoli Mzila
Maker: Maduka Chidoce
Design: Isijozi, amazinyo embuzi - goat’s teeth
Purpose of the piece: Worn by men and women on special days
Material used: Glass beads, brass studs, cotton string
Size: H8.4 x L18 cm
SC179

Choker necklace
Zulu name: Uqosana/Inshubhala
Geographical location: Nkupha, KZN
Age of the piece: 1950s
Date of acquisition: 1994
Collector: Mpostoli Mzila
Design: Isishunka
Purpose of the piece: Worn by both men and women
Other purpose: It can also be worn at ceremonies
Material used: Glass beads, fibre
Size: H7.5 cm x L36 cm
SC825

Beaded twist necklace
Zulu name: Undlela ziya egoli (the way to Johannesburg)
Geographical location: Maphumulo, KZN
Age of the piece: 1950s
Date of acquisition: 1989
Purchased: The Goodman Gallery, JHB
Design: Iduna - railway line stitch
Purpose of the piece: Worn by men and women
Material used: Glass beads, fibre
Size: H1.8 cm x L62.1 cm
SC320

Beaded tie
Zulu name: Umntuse
Geographical location: Mzimba, KZN
Age of the piece: 1940s
Date of acquisition: 1994
Design: Isishunka
Purpose of the piece: Worn by men at special ceremonies
Material used: Glass beads, cotton thread
Size: H8 x L 54 cm
SC860
Belts

Beaded belts are worn by both men and women and are multi-functional. Some pieces can be worn by both sexes at different times. Women wear a greater variety of styles which depend on the social status of the wearer and the function of the belt. Young women wear decorative belts for coming-of-age ceremonies and engagements. A narrow version (imfacane), covers a single strand of rope and sits on the hips. An example in the Durban Art Gallery collection (SC76), has a message that reads ngibhekisise (look at me carefully).

Umutha use wide bands of beads sewn around strands of rope to adorn hips, accenting the curves of young beauties. In some areas these can reach an impressive five to seven strands making it extremely heavy to wear. These and some of the looped belts are also worn on the wedding day. Married women wear the isibhambha - a firm grass-backed belt to hold in the stomach muscles after giving birth. It is tied in front using grass or wool cords to cinch in the waist. Narrower versions of this type of belt indicate the clan colour conventions e.g. Majozi clan, from the Msinga area. Young men are seen at social functions wearing uNqhenya (slim beaded belts) decorated with rows of metal studs, chains and glass or plastic bicycle reflectors.

Married woman at Tugela Ferry, Msinga with Majozi style belt
Photo: Anthea Martin
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Zulu Name</th>
<th>Geographical Location</th>
<th>Age of the Piece</th>
<th>Date of Acquisition</th>
<th>Purchased From</th>
<th>Design</th>
<th>Purpose of the Piece</th>
<th>Material Used</th>
<th>Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Belt</strong></td>
<td>Ixhama</td>
<td>Hluhluwe, KZN</td>
<td>Late 1950s</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>The African Art Centre</td>
<td>Unhlamvunye</td>
<td>Worn by married women</td>
<td>Glass beads, wool, cotton string</td>
<td>H7.7 x L86.7 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Belt</strong></td>
<td>Imfacane</td>
<td>Maphumulo, KZN</td>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>The Goodman Gallery, JHB</td>
<td>Umginqgo</td>
<td>Worn by young men and women</td>
<td>Glass beads over cloth</td>
<td>H1 x L88.9 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beaded Belt</strong></td>
<td>Isibhambha</td>
<td>Msinga, KZN</td>
<td>1940s</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>The African Art Centre</td>
<td>Isishunka</td>
<td>Worn by married women</td>
<td>Glass beads, Incema grass, brass studs, fibre</td>
<td>H6 x L78.2 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Waistband Belt</strong></td>
<td>Uthela</td>
<td>Maphumulo, KZN</td>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>The Goodman Gallery, JHB</td>
<td>Isigcwensa</td>
<td>Worn by young, unmarried men and women</td>
<td>Plastic beads, glass beads, brass studs, wood, cotton string</td>
<td>H6 x L106.0 cm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Facing page (top)

Waist belt with multi ropes
Zulu name: Umutsha
Geographical location: Maphumulo, KZN
Age of the piece: 1950s or 1960s
Date of acquisition: 1992
Collector: Apostoli Mzila
Maker: Ganephi Zuma
Design: Umgingqo - rolling stitch over tightly rolled cloth
Purpose of the piece: Worn by young girls
Other purpose: Girl also wears the belt on her wedding day
Material used: Glass beads, cotton fabric, fibre
Size: H9.5 X L96.6 cm
SC521

Facing page (below)

Waist belt
Zulu name: Umtshebhe
Geographical location: Msinga
Age of the piece: 1950s
Date of acquisition: 1986
Collector: Mpostoli Mzila
Maker: Simangele Zondi
Design: Isiheshe - open net stitch with looped strands of beads
Purpose of the piece: Worn by young unmarried girls
Other purpose: Girl can also wear the necklace at her wedding ceremony
Material used: Glass beads, cotton thread
Size: H13.1 cm x L112 cm
SC141

Above

Belt
Zulu name: Ukhe
Geographical location: Msinga, Keats Drift, KZN
Age of the piece: 1970s
Date of acquisition: 1988
Collector: Mpostoli Mzila
Maker: Nonkululeko Zuma
Design: Isiphalafini - open net stitch with horizontal strands of beads
Purpose of the piece: Worn by young girls during special ceremonies
Material used: Glass beads, brass studs, nylon thread
Size: H3.5 x L198 cm
SC221
**Imfacane/Umutsha Beaded rope belt**

Worn by young, married women before having children, she will wear this belt until she falls pregnant. The imfacane belt is replaced by a belt called Isifociya which is worn after the birth of the first child.

*Imfacane*:
- Zulu name: Imfacane
- Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
- Age of the piece: 1940s
- Date of acquisition: 1987
- Collector: Mpostoli Mzila
- Maker: Nono Hlela
- Design: Isishunka
- Purpose of the piece: Worn by married men at special ceremonies
- Material used: Glass beads, brass studs, fibre
- Size: H5 x L72.6 cm
- SC181

*Umutsha*:
- Zulu name: Umutsha
- Geographical location: Maphumulo, KZN
- Age of the piece: 1960s
- Date of acquisition: 1992
- Collector: Mpostoli Mzila
- Maker: Phumzile Zondi
- Design: Umgingqo
- Purpose of the piece: Worn by a young married woman
- Other purpose: Also worn on the girl’s wedding day
- Material used: Glass beads, plastic beads, cotton fabric, fibre
- Size: H8 x L85 cm
- SC503

*Isifociya*:
- Zulu name: Isifociya
- Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
- Age of the piece: 1970s
- Date of acquisition: 1986
- Collector: Mpostoli Mzila
- Maker: Thembiso Mzila
- Design: Isijosini
- Purpose of the piece: Worn by young men and women during special ceremonies
- Material used: Glass beads, metal studs, plastic bicycle reflectors, metal chain, cotton thread
- Size: H6 x L102.5 cm
- SC126
### Facing page (centre)

**Belt**

- **Zulu name:** Uthela
- **Geographical location:** Msinga, KZN
- **Age of the piece:** 1945
- **Date of acquisition:** 1992
- **Donor:** Mrs Olga Booth, Durban
- **Design:** Umkhambathi - knitting stitch
- **Purpose of the piece:** Worn over leather skirt by married women
- **Material used:** Glass beads, incwalpha grass, cotton thread
- **Size:** H7.5 x L76 cm

### Facing page (top)

**Belt**

- **Zulu name:** Isibhamba
- **Geographical location:** Msinga, KZN
- **Age of the piece:** 1950s
- **Date of acquisition:** 1995
- **Collector:** Mpostoli Mzila
- **Maker:** Kanyisile Dlamini
- **Design:** Umbijo - weaving with grass
- **Purpose of the piece:** Worn by a woman Sangoma as a belt
- **Material used:** Glass beads, incwama grass, cotton thread
- **Size:** H3 x L65.1 cm

### Facing page (bottom)

**Belt**

- **Zulu name:** Umutsha
- **Geographical location:** Msinga, KZN
- **Age of the piece:** 1950s
- **Date of acquisition:** 1986
- **Collector:** Mpostoli Mzila
- **Maker:** Thandi Zondi
- **Design:** Ngibhekisise - Look at me carefully
- **Purpose of the piece:** Worn by young girls as belt
- **Material used:** Glass beads, cotton fabric, cotton
- **Size:** H2.4 x L63.9 cm

### Beaded belt

**Zulu name:** Isijumba

- **Geographical location:** Msinga, KZN
- **Age of the piece:** 1960s
- **Date of acquisition:** 1988
- **Collector:** Mpostoli Mzila
- **Design:** Isithembu
- **Purpose of the piece:** Worn by unmarried women
- **Material used:** Glass beads, brass studs, cotton thread
- **Size:** H2.5 cm x L83.8 cm

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**SC548**

**SC884**

**SC76**

**SC237**
Belt
Zulu name: Isibhamba
Geographical location: Nongoma, KZN
Age of the piece: 1950s
Date of acquisition: 1989
Purchased: The Goodman Gallery, JHB
Design: Umkhambathi - open net stitch
Purpose of the piece: Worn by married women
Other purpose: Used for holding in stomach after having a baby
Material used: Glass beads, cotton fabric, cotton string
Size: H10 x L69.8 cm
SC282

Belt
Zulu name: Isibhamba
Geographical location: Ndwendwe, KZN
Age of the piece: 1960s
Date of acquisition: 1989
Purchased: The Goodman Gallery, JHB
Design: Umhlonhlo
Purpose of the piece: Worn by married women
Material used: Glass beads, plastic beads, cotton
Size: H6.5 x L77 cm
SC295

Belt double rope belt
Zulu name: Imfacane
Geographical location: Maphumulo, KZN
Age of the piece: 1960s
Date of acquisition: 1989
Purchased: The Goodman Gallery
Design: Isigcwensa
Purpose of the piece: Worn by young girls as belt
Material used: Glass beads, plastic beads, cotton fabric
Size: H2 x L82 cm
SC284

Belt
Zulu name: Ulele
Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
Age of the piece: 1940s
Date of acquisition: 1987
Collector/Donor: Apostoli Mzila
Maker: Zamile Zuma
Design: Isishunka
Purpose of the piece: Worn by a man on his wedding day
Material used: Glass beads, brass studs, cotton thread
Size: H 3.5cm x L76 cm
SC174
WOMEN wear several types of aprons depending on the occasion. The isicwayo/isibhodiya is worn by a young married women as a front apron. It consists of a piece of fabric which has a heavily-beaded bottom border or panel. In later versions the beads are plastic and interspersed with metal buttons.

Idikazi, a shoulder apron, is worn around her shoulders as a mark of respect – ukuhlonipha. The usthodo which is a beaded apron used daily by married woman on top of the isidwaba skirt. Usthodo comes from the word totha meaning ‘the drink that which was left overnight’ and has now turned into something else, as milk would become maas (sour milk).

An itete, a back apron, worn by married woman as a back apron on top of a leather skirt. Itete comes from the word teta (ukubeletha) meaning to give birth or carrying a child on the back. As she is married she will have more children.

APRONS FOR YOUNG GIRLS
Zulu girls are always proud of their bodies and not ashamed of showing them. The breasts and the legs of amatshitshi must be seen. Irrespective of whether she is fat or, she will wear short skirts.

Aprons
Udidla are worn by young girls until they get engaged. The isigege/udidla are often made from large beads (umqgalaza) and twisted wool or cotton. They wear a pubic cover — isibunjanga/isigege just to cover their fronts, but many necklaces, as they are still young enough to be attractive to men.

Ubheshwana is a special apron for young women, but it may be worn by men as well as women.

Most aprons serve to define both the sexual and marital status of the wearer. Both men and young women used to wear these aprons daily or for festive occasions and ceremonies. When a woman gets married, she usually gives her bsheshwane to her bridegroom or keeps it for her own children. It is often made up of two or three identical rectangular panels and is worn over the buttocks.

Bridal front or maternity apron
Zulu name: isicwayo/isibhodiya
Geographical location: Cato Ridge, Ntusweni, KZN
Age of the piece: 1965
Date of acquisition: 2001
Purchased: The African Art Centre
Collector: Nesta Zondi
Design: Umkhambathi stitch used as an edging
Purpose of the piece: Worn by bride on her wedding day, also worn as maternity apron
Material used: Animal hide, brass studs, plastic beads
Size: H70 x L125 cm
DAG3529

Pregnancy apron
Zulu name: isicwayo/isibhodiya
Geographical location: Maphumulo, KZN
Age of the piece: 1960s
Date of acquisition: 1989
Purchased: The Goodman Gallery, JHB
Collector: Nesta Zondi
Design: Isigcwensa
Purpose of the piece: Worn by pregnant women as maternity apron
Material used: Glass beads, animal skin, brass studs, brass bells, fibre
Size: H66.5 x W90 x L118 cm (includes legs of buck)
SC273

The Secrets of Beads | Imfihlo Yobuhlala
Pregnancy apron
Zulu name: Isicwayo / Isibhodiya
Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
Age of the piece: 1940s
Date of acquisition: 1986
Purchased: The Goodman Gallery, JHB
Design: Isishunka
Purpose of the piece: Worn by pregnant women as maternity apron
Material used: Canvas, glass beads, animal skins, brass studs, fibre
Size: H43.5 x L64 cm
SC 94

Front apron
Zulu name: Isicwayo / Isibhodiya
Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
Age of the piece: 1960s
Date of acquisition: 2003
Purchased: The African Art Centre
Collector: Nomusa Dube
Design: Umhlonhlo - herringbone stitch
Purpose of the piece: Worn by young married women as front apron
Material used: Cloth, plastic beads, studs, cotton
Size: H53 x L40 cm
DAG3599

Front apron
Zulu name: Isibhaxelo
Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
Age of the piece: 1955
Date of acquisition: 1993
Purchased: The African Art Centre
Design: Unonxa - X pattern in combination with Isishunka colours
Purpose of the piece: Worn by married women as front apron
Material used: Cotton fabric, glass beads, brass studs
Size: H54 x L49 cm
SC 634
Itete (back apron)
Worn by married woman as a back apron on top of a leather skirt. Itete comes from the word teta (ukubeletha) meaning to give birth or carrying a child at the back. Being married, she will have more children.

BRIDAL CAPE AND APRON – IBHAYI/ISIKOTI
During the wedding ceremony, the bride will wear a shoulder apron as a symbol of respect to her in-laws. The apron is made out of thirteen to fifteen beaded panels each made by members of the family and relatives, and she will also make some. When a woman gets married before giving birth to a child, the apron will have long beads tassels added as a symbol of virginity. The long beads will be taken from the belt that she was wearing when she was a girl at the coming out ceremony. The beaded panels will be joined into one big piece, isikoti, before the wedding ceremony takes place. It can be used during the ceremony as a cloak around the shoulders to show respect to the new family. After the marriage has taken place, the bride can wear a single apron under the isidwaba called ubhekindoda (looking after husband). This apron is made from a thin beaded panel with more white and a few colours such as dark blue.
Shoulder apron for woman
Zulu name: Abele
Geographical location: Maphumulo
Age of the piece: 1950
Date of acquisition: 1995
Purchased: The Goodman Gallery, JHB
Design: IsiZulu
Purpose of the piece: Worn by married women around the shoulder
Material used: fabric, glass beads, cotton string
Size: H44 x L47 cm
SC291

Shoulder apron for woman
Zulu name: Abele
Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
Age of the piece: 1960s
Date of acquisition: 1995
Purchased: The Goodman Gallery, JHB
Design: IsiZulu
Purpose of the piece: Worn by married women around the shoulder
Material used: fabric, glass beads, cotton string
Size: H44 x L47 cm
SC291

Decorative front panels
Zulu name: Isibhaxelo
Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
Age of the piece: 1960s
Date of acquisition: 1995
Collector: Mpostoli Mzila
Maker: Fisani Sokhela
Design: Isijozi
Purpose of the piece: Worn by a young bride as a front decorative piece over the leather skirt.
Material used: Plastic leather, glass beads, metal studs, cotton string
Size: H75 x 115 and H72 x 115 cm
SC916 and SC917

Bridal cape/apron
Zulu name: Ibhayi
Geographical location: Bergville, KZN
Age of the piece: 1950s
Date of acquisition: 2003
Purchased: The African Art Centre
Collector: Zinhle Zondi
Design: Isikoti
Purpose of the piece: Worn by the bride at her wedding ceremony
Material used: Glass beads, cloth
Size: H99 x L95 cm
SC3606

Shoulder apron for woman
Zulu name: Itete
Geographical location: New Hanover, Mount Elias, KZN
Age of the piece: 1950
Date of acquisition: 1995
Collector: Mpostoli Mzila
Design: Iduna
Purpose of the piece: Worn by married women around the shoulder
Material used: Fabric, glass beads, cotton string
Size: H78 x L70 cm
SC296
Front apron
Zulu name: Isigege
Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
Age of the piece: 1960s
Date of acquisition: 1986
Purchased: Mpostoli Mzila
Design: Isishunka
Purpose of the piece: Worn by young girls
Material used: Glass beads, wood, brass studs, cotton, shoelaces, string
Size: H12 x L32 cm
$125

Apron for young girls
Zulu name: Udidla
Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
Age of the piece: 1960s
Date of acquisition: 1988
Purchased: Mpostoli Mzila
Maker: Ganephi Khoza
Design: Umqgalaza - large beads
Purpose of the piece: Worn by young girls
Material used: Glass beads, wood, brass studs, cotton string
Size: H20.5 x L90 cm
$253

Loskop area, coming-of-age ceremony (Umzelv) wearing back aprons and belts
Photo: Anthea Martin
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artwork</th>
<th>Zulu Name</th>
<th>Geographical location</th>
<th>Age of the piece</th>
<th>Date of acquisition</th>
<th>Collector</th>
<th>Designer</th>
<th>Purpose of the piece</th>
<th>Material used</th>
<th>Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apron</td>
<td>Udidla</td>
<td>Msinga, KZN</td>
<td>1970s</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Mpostoli Mzila</td>
<td></td>
<td>Worn by young girls as skirt</td>
<td>Glass beads, cotton string</td>
<td>H13.15 x L93 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apron</td>
<td>Udidla</td>
<td>Msinga, KZN</td>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Mpostoli Mzila</td>
<td>Zanele Dhlomo</td>
<td>For young girls</td>
<td>Glass beads, cotton string</td>
<td>H15 x L85 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back Waist Belt with beaded rope tassels</td>
<td>Imfacane</td>
<td>Estcourt, Lenge clan, KZN</td>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>The African Art Centre Centre</td>
<td>Nathi Zondi</td>
<td>Zibuyile MaSithole Mbhele</td>
<td>Worn by young girls at a special coming-out ceremony</td>
<td>Glass beads, plastic beads, studs, wool, plastic, leather</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MENS APRONS - UMKHAMBATHI

Apron decorated with beads were usually more for women than men, although in some areas such as Bergville and Estcourt, there were aprons made out of leather tassels with beads that were also worn by men at special ceremonies. Other areas such as Nquthu, Nongoma and Indwedwe area, used heavily-beaded aprons named Umkhambathi which were worn by married men to cover the sides when wearing the traditional leather outfit (Imvunulo/Izinyamazane). Men will also wear a back apron made out of animal hide called an ibeshu and front tassel apron, isinene, also made out of hide.

Side apron for a man
Zulu name: Umkhambathi
Geographical location: Bergville, KZN
Age of the piece: 1940s
Date of acquisition: 1989
Purchased: The Goodman Gallery, JHB
Design: Uhele - open net stitch
Purpose of the piece: Worn by men at special ceremonies
Material used: Glass beads, cotton
Size: H83 x L100 cm
$129

Front and back apron
Zulu name: Umkhambathi
Geographical location: Estcourt, KZN
Age of the piece: 1970s
Date of acquisition: 2001
Purchased: The African Art Centre
Presented: Friends of the Durban Art Gallery
Design: Amabutho - tassels
Purpose of the piece: Worn by men at special ceremonies
Material used: Glass beads, plastic leather, good leather, cloth
Size: H82 x L75 cm
IN/03/00

Back apron for a man
Zulu name: Idayini
Geographical location: New Hanover, KZN
Age of the piece: 1960s
Date of acquisition: 1995
Collector: Mpostoli Mzila
Design: Iduna - combination of colours
Purpose of the piece: Worn by men at special ceremonies
Material used: Leather, glass beads, cotton string
Size: H59 x L76 cm
SC446
Body Decorations

LEG DECORATIONS - IZIGQIZO / IZINGUSHA

On special occasions, the bride can wear as many beads as she has, but izigqizo are very special for her. At these special events everyone present dances, and the young bride must come out to congratulate the dancers by performing a special dance called ukugqiza wearing izingusha anklets tied below the knees. The bride also wear a second pair of anklets called amadavathi. These are tied behind the heels. The word amadavathi comes from the word dava-dava meaning to walk slowly. They are also called amakhaba.
ANKLET DECORATIONS - AMADAVATHI

Together with the izigqizo (the first anklet), the bride can wear a second anklet amadavathi below it and tying them behind the heels.
Top 
Leg decorations
Zulu name: Igango
Geographical location: Maphumulo, KZN
Age of the piece: 1960s
Date of acquisition: 1989
Purchased: The Goodman Gallery, JHB
Design: Illaha
Purpose of the piece: Worn by married women at special ceremonies
Material used: Glass beads, cotton string
Size: H12.5 x L48 cm  
SC277

Below 
Leg decoration
Zulu name: Lxiqusha
Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
Age of the piece: 1960s
Date of acquisition: 1986
Purchased: Mpostoli Mzila
Maker: Utho Ngubane
Design: Illasha
Purpose of the piece: Worn by young men and women
Material used: Galvanised wire, leather, brass studs, metal studs
Size: H13 x 8.5 cm (diameter)  
SC137

Leg decoration
Zulu name: Amusha
Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
Age of the piece: 1960s
Date of acquisition: 1989
Purchased: The Goodman Gallery, JHB
Design: Illasha
Purpose of the piece: Worn by young and old women at ceremonies
Material used: Galvanised wire, leather, brass studs, metal studs
Size: 12.5 cm (diameter)  
SC279
**BEADED PANELS FOR MEN – IZIQHANA ZOBHESHWANA**

These long beaded strips are formed by squares of beadwork with an image that is repeated. They are detachable. The whole strip can be pinned onto the sides of trouser legs to form decorative panels, typically worn on special occasions or for ceremonies.

---

**Trouser decoration**

*Zulu name: Izhlobiso*

*Geographical location: Msinga, KZN*

*Age of the piece: 1960s*

*Date of acquisition: 1995*

*Collector: Mpostoli Mzila*

*Maker: Ntombi Sokhela*

*Design: Isijozi*

*Purpose of the piece: Skirt decoration*

*Other purposes: Can be worn by young women and men as necklaces*

*Material used: Metal studs, glass beads, metal, cotton string*

*Size: H7.5 x L89 cm*

SC930

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**Trouser decoration**

*Zulu name: Izihlobiso*

*Geographical location: Ulundi, KZN*

*Age of the piece: 1970s*

*Date of acquisition: 1995*

*Collector: Mpostoli Mzila*

*Maker: Fikile Zondi*

*Design: Raisheke*

*Purpose of the piece: For young men to decorate the side of trousers for special ceremonies*

*Material used: Glass beads, wood, plastic, cotton fabric, cotton string*

*Size: H11 x L64 cm*

SC878

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**Trouser decoration**

*Zulu name: Izhlobiso*

*Geographical location: Nongoma, KZN*

*Age of the piece: 1960s*

*Date of acquisition: 1995*

*Collector: Mpostoli Mzila*

*Maker: Fikile Zondi*

*Design: Railway line*

*Purpose of the piece: For young men to decorate side of trousers for special ceremonies*

*Material used: Glass beads, cotton fabric, cotton string*

*Size: H17 x L63.8 cm*

SC877

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**HEAD DECORATIONS – IFESKAMU**

These are beaded items to drape around the head, or on hats worn by married women.

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*Photo: Anthea Martin*
Head decoration
Zulu name: Ikholo
Geographical location: Inanda KZN
Age of the piece: 1960s
Date of acquisition: 1986
Purchased: The Goodman Gallery, JHB
Design: Izihibe Ukhulu
Purpose of the piece: Worn by married women who are Shembe members during the dancing ceremony
Material used: Cotton, studs, glass beads, cotton rope
Size: H 29 x L 114 cm
$550

Head drapes
Zulu name: Inkhenwe
Geographical location: Maphumulo, KZN
Age of the piece: 1960s
Date of acquisition: 1986
Purchased: The Goodman Gallery, JHB
Design: Isigcwensa
Purpose of the piece: Worn by young unmarried girls as decorative head piece of special ceremonies
Material used: Plastic beads, glass beads, metal 3d ‘tickey’ coin, plastic comb, cotton thread
Size: H 11.5 x L 25.5 cm
$254

Head decoration
Zulu name: Imhlobo
Geographical location: Tugela Ferry, Msinga, KZN
Age of the piece: 1990
Date of acquisition: 1995
Collector: Mpostoli Mzila
Design: Iqhovela
Purpose of the piece: Worn by young unmarried women at special ceremonies. Also worn by a woman engaged to be married
Other purposes: Worn by married women
Material used: Cotton, studs
Size: H 10.5 x L 167 cm
$651
Ingane /ishungu are the names given to beaded sweet tins. These were very popular among young people, both men and women, all over KwaZulu-Natal but especially in the Drakensberg area. Young girls will carry the beautifully-beaded sweet tin full of sweets with lots of money hanging from it which was given to her by her relatives at the ukuphuma kwezintombi, a coming-out ceremony (ukuphuma kwezintombi), which will normally happen once every two years.

A young man will carry the beaded sweet tin full of sweets when he attends a special ceremony and also when he goes to propose love (ukuyashela). He will give the sweets to the girls at the water hole or to the girls from the area where he proposes. By doing that he is creating a relationship with them. The designs and the shapes are made according to the area and the age.
Beaded Dolls and Soft Sculpture

Dolls were used for many purposes in traditional African societies and come in many varieties. They were originally not made to be sold. Dolls play a role in fertility, healing, courtship and children’s games. Beaded dolls and animals were also made for play by young girls and boys. Older girls made dolls in connection with courtship customs.

*amaSangoma*, traditional healers, use dolls to heal patients. If the patient is too sick to visit the *sangoma*, the members of her/his family will dress the patient’s doll with belongings and take it to the *sangoma* for healing. It is believed that whatever the *sangoma* does to the doll, will automatically help the patient. Dolls made as an ornament to decorate a car were also used for protection from accidents. The *sangoma* would put umuthi inside the stomach of the doll so that the umuthi could remove bad spirits from the car.

A beaded doll can also be hung over a woman’s bed as a lucky token if she is longing to have a baby. After the birth of her baby the doll will be destroyed. The mother will make a doll for the child when it is ready to play with toys.

Hluphekile Masgubhu Zuma from Mabomvini, Msinga area in KwaZulu-Natal, has been making beaded dolls for sale since 1978, the same year in which she lost her husband. She sold dolls at the roadside and to the community. Hluphekile taught her skills to her daughter, Lobolile, who has married into the Ximba family. Lobolile started making traditional-type dolls as toys for her children. This is a departure from the original use of beaded dolls in the courtship context, a custom which had lapsed before Lobolile’s time. Lobolile is now known for her large dolls wearing ‘takkies’ (rubber tennis shoes), which she dresses in the same way the married women would dress in her area.

The beaded dolls and beaded sculptures from Inanda and surrounding areas, known as Valley of a Thousand Hills, were not part of traditional life in Inanda. This form of expression was seen as new in the early 1980s. The artists well known for making beaded sculptures are the Mchunu family, comprising sisters, sisters-in-law and relatives.

The Durban Art Gallery has collected dolls and beaded soft sculptures from Thembi Mchunu, Sizakele Mchunu, Celani Nojiyeza, Khulumelaphi...
Hlambisa, Gcinani Mchunu, Khulumelaphi Mlaba, Zanele Shangase, Gabigabi Nzama, Busaphi Ngubane, Tholani Mchunu and Thokozile Gwala.

Zanele Shangase and Busaphi Ngubane were the first two artists to make this form of sculpture and they were encouraged by Jo Thorpe to make more. Themba Mchunu was very well known for her tall dolls, winning an award in 1984 at the Things People Make exhibition at The Durban Art Gallery. She began to bring new beaded sculptures to the African Art Centre including a horse and rider, and animals including monkeys and birds. The animals were very well received and she encouraged her sisters to make more of this kind of sculpture. Each had their own unique style of bird or animal.

Sizakele Mchunu married into the Nojiyeza family and was well known for her outstanding creativity. She was innovator of beaded tableaux. Sizakele died in 1989 giving birth to twins. When Sizakele was still alive she shared her skills with her sisters Tshologi and Mavis Mchunu. Celani Nojiyeza was married to the same husband as Sizakele, when Sizakele died Celani took care of the surviving twin. Gabigabi Nzama was an extended member of the Nojiyeza family, she become known for her flying machine (mehlo kahulumeni).

### DOLLS

**Married Woman doll with baby in sling**
- Zulu name: Udoli
- Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
- Clan: Emabomvini
- Age of the piece: 1970s
- Date of acquisition: 1987
- Collector: Apostoli Mzila
- Maker: Masigubhu Hluphekile Zuma
- Purpose of the piece: Fertility Doll
- Material used: Glass beads, cotton thread, fabric, wool, metal studs, human hair, telephone wire
- Size: H15 x L7 cm
- SC213

**Fertility doll for young woman**
- Zulu name: Udoli
- Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
- Age of the piece: unknown
- Date of acquisition: 2005
- Collector: Apostoli Mzila
- Maker: Tshengisile Dlamini
- Design: Holding hands necklace
- Purpose of the piece: Fertility Doll
- Material used: Glass beads, cotton thread, fabric, wool
- Size: H29.2 x L13 cm
- DAG3653

**Fertility doll for married woman**
- Zulu name: Udoli
- Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
- Clan: Kambohono
- Age of the piece: 1989
- Date of acquisition: 1990
- Collector: Apostoli Mzila
- Maker: Celiwe Duma
- Design: Hanging doll
- Purpose of the piece: Fertility doll for married woman, with beaded string for hanging over bed, or for hanging down the back of the neck; to wish for a child
- Material used: Glass beads, plastic beads, cotton thread, fabric, wool
- Size: H18 l x 138 cm
- SC245

**Fertility doll for the wearer**
- Zulu name: Udoli
- Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
- Age of the piece: 1960s
- Date of acquisition: 1988
- Collector: Apostoli Mzila
- Maker: Celiwe Duma
- Design: Hanging doll
- Purpose of the piece: Fertility doll for the wearer, with beaded string for hanging over bed, or for hanging down the back of the neck; to wish for a child
- Material used: Glass beads, plastic beads, cotton thread, fabric, wool
- Size: H18.1 l x 138 cm
- SC245
Young married woman doll
Zulu name: Umakoti
Geographical location: Msinga
Clan: Muden
Age of the piece: 1990s
Date of acquisition: 2001
Purchased: The African Art Centre
Maker: Lobolile Ximba
Purpose of the piece: For sale
Material used: Glass beads, wool, corrugated cardboard skirt, wire, metal studs, ‘takkies’ – rubber and canvas shoes, shoelaces
Size: H80.4 x L30 cm

Sangoma doll
Zulu name: Udoli wesangoma
Geographical location: Msinga
Clan: Mabomvini
Age of the piece: 2003
Date of acquisition: 2004
Collector: Mpostoli Mzila
Maker: Hluphekile Masigubhu Zuma
Purpose of the piece: For sale
Material used: Glass beads, imfebinga seedbeads, wool, plastic leather, wire, metal studs, wood, grass, animal hide, wooden legs and stand
Size: H75 x L19 cm

Married woman doll
Zulu name: Unkosikazi
Geographical location: Ndwedwe, KZN
Clan: Maqadini
Age of the piece: 1994
Date of acquisition: 1994
Purchased: The African Art Centre
Maker: Kulumelaphi MaCele Hlambisa
Purpose of the piece: For sale
Material used: Glass and plastic beads, wool, corrugated cardboard skirt, fabric, cotton, brass studs
Size: H75 x L19 cm

Married woman doll holding woven grass basket
Zulu name: Unkosikazi
Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
Clan: Mabomvini
Age of the piece: 2004
Date of acquisition: 2004
Collector: Mpostoli Mzila
Maker: Hluphekile Masigubhu Zuma
Purpose of the piece: For sale
Material used: Glass and plastic beads, wool, corrugated cardboard skirt, fabric, cotton, brass studs, grass weaving
Size: H74 x L27 cm

Married man doll
Zulu name: Umnumzane
Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
Clan: Kholweni
Age of the piece: 2004
Date of acquisition: 2004
Collector: Mpostoli Mzila
Maker: Hluphekile Masigubhu Zuma
Purpose of the piece: For sale
Material used: Glass and beads, wool, human hair, fabric, cotton, wool stand, metal studs, animal skins, dyed feathers, rubber and canvas shoes with ornaments
Size: H88 x L21 cm

Married man doll
Zulu name: Umnumzane
Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
Clan: Kholweni
Age of the piece: 1994
Date of acquisition: 2004
Collector: Thembi Mchunu
Maker: Thembi Mchunu
Purpose of the piece: For sale
Material used: Glass and plastic beads, wool, corrugated cardboard skirt, fabric, cotton, wood stand
Size: H76 x L29 cm
### Man and wife dolls, Sangoma and his wife

- **Zulu name:** Odoli
- **Geographical location:** Msinga, KZN
- **Clan:** Amabomvini
- **Age of the piece:** 1970s
- **Date of acquisition:** 1987
- **Collector:** Mpostoli Mzila
- **Maker:** Masigubhu Khuphekile Zuma
- **Material used:** Glass beads, plastic leather, cotton thread, fabric, animal skin, human hair, telephone wire
- **Size:** Man: H17 x L8 cm; Woman: H18 x L10 cm

### Married woman doll with hooded cape

- **Zulu name:** Odade
- **Geographical location:** Msinga, KZN
- **Age of the piece:** 1960s
- **Date of acquisition:** 1987
- **Collector:** Mpostoli Mzila
- **Maker:** Nompazamo Madlala
- **Purpose of the piece:** Unknown
- **Material used:** Glass beads, plastic leather, cotton thread, fabric, animal skin, human hair, telephone wire
- **Size:** (A) doll: H25 x L12cm; (B) doll: H27 x L12cm; (C) doll: H27 x L12 cm

### Married woman doll with beaded cape

- **Zulu name:** Inkosikazi
- **Geographical location:** Ndwedwe, KZN
- **Clan:** Maphephetheni
- **Age of the piece:** 1989
- **Date of acquisition:** 1989
- **Purchased:** The African Art Centre
- **Maker:** Kulumelaphi MaCele Hlambisa
- **Purpose of the piece:** For sale
- **Material used:** Glass and plastic beads, wool, corrugated cardboard skirt, fabric, cotton, plastic mould under hat, wooden legs and stand
- **Size:** H47 x L29 cm

### Married woman doll with maternity apron

- **Zulu name:** Umakoti
- **Geographical location:** Msinga, KZN
- **Age of the piece:** 2005
- **Date of acquisition:** 2005
- **Collector:** Mpostoli Mzila
- **Maker:** Unknown
- **Design:** Isishunka
- **Purpose of the piece:** For sale
- **Material used:** Glass and plastic beads, wool, fabric, cotton, wooden legs, wire, metal studs, tinsel on hat, plastic leather, animal hide for shield
- **Size:** H40.5 x L19 cm

### Married man doll with ceremonial stick

- **Zulu name:** Inkosana
- **Geographical location:** Msinga, KZN
- **Age of the piece:** 1980s
- **Date of acquisition:** 1992
- **Collector:** Mpostoli Mzila
- **Maker:** Thembi Mchunu
- **Purpose of the piece:** For sale
- **Material used:** Glass beads, fabric, cotton, synthetic fur
- **Size:** H39 x L14 cm
Travelling doll
Zulu name: Udoli wohambo
Geographical location: Hillcrest, KZN
Age of the piece: 2005
Date of acquisition: 2005
Purchased: Hillcrest Aids Centre Trust
Maker: Nokuthula Phewa
Design: Title of doll Lusha
Material used: Glass and plastic beads, wool, fabric, cotton, wire
Size: H 77 x L 30 cm
DAG3675

Traditional healer doll
Zulu name: Sangoma
Geographical location: Msinga, KZN
Age of the piece: 2005
Date of acquisition: 2005
Maker: unknown
Purpose of the piece: For sale
Material used: Glass and plastic beads, wool, fabric, cotton, wood
Size: H 40.5 x L 19 cm
DAG3652

Soccer team
Zulu name: Abadlali bebhola
Geographical location: Ndwedwe, KZN
Age of the piece: 1996
Date of acquisition: 1996
Purchased: The African Art Centre
Maker: Mavis Mchunu
Purpose of the piece: For sale
Material used: Glass beads, fabric, cotton, wood
Size: H x W 25 x L 65 cm
SC994

Mother with sick child in bed at the hospital
Zulu name: Umama nengane egulayo esibhedlela
Geographical location: Ndwedwe, KZN
Clan: Inanda
Age of the piece: 1989
Date of acquisition: 1989
Purchased: The African Art Centre
Maker: Sizakele Mchunu
Design: Izihibe - looped stitch
Purpose of the piece: For sale
Material used: Glass and plastic beads, wool, fabric, cotton, wood
Size: H x W 23 x L 27 cm
SC114
Helicopter: The Eyes of the Government
Zulu name: Abahlwakhe-Akahlwakhe
Geographical location: Mbatha Hill, KZN
Clan: Xhosa-Nxambo
Age of the piece: 1992
Date of acquisition: 1992
Purchased: The African Art Centre
Maker: Goli - Goli Nyomo
Design: open net stitch
Purpose of the piece: For sale
Material used: Glass and plastic beads, fabric, cotton, galvanized wire
Size: H15 x L36 cm
SC585

Child on a swing
Zulu name: Uxolwile-zengezelo
Geographical location: Maweshwe, KZN
Clan: Xhosa
Age of the piece: 1990
Date of acquisition: 1990
Purchased: The African Art Centre
Maker: Colleen Ntshichembe Ngqusa
Design: Nhlabathi - looped stitch
Purpose of the piece: For sale
Material used: Glass and plastic beads, fabric, cotton, galvanized wire
Size: H15 x L36 cm
SC585

Night Rider on a baboon
Zulu name: Umkhulu-umxomweni
Geographical location: Mdaweshwe, KZN
Clan: Xhosa
Age of the piece: 1993
Date of acquisition: 1993
Purchased: The African Art Centre
Maker: Colleen Ntshichembe Ngqusa
Design: Nhlabathi - looped stitch
Purpose of the piece: Describing witchcraft
Material used: Glass beads, wire, fabric, cotton, galvanized wire
Size: H21 x L19 cm
SC724

Strange animal
Zulu name: Isicathuleni-esezinhlele
Geographical location: Mdaweshwe, KZN
Clan: Xhosa
Age of the piece: 1990
Date of acquisition: 1990
Purchased: The African Art Centre
Maker: Stella Mchunu
Design: Nhlabathi - looped stitch
Purpose of the piece: For sale
Material used: Glass beads, fabric, cotton, galvanized wire
Size: H20 x L12 cm
SC995

Man on a bicycle
Zulu name: Umphakwazi umfandla
Geographical location: Mdaweshwe, KZN
Clan: Xhosa
Age of the piece: 1994
Date of acquisition: 1994
Purchased: The African Art Centre
Maker: Goli - Goli Sfiso
Design: Nhlabathi - looped stitch
Purpose of the piece: For sale
Material used: Glass beads, fabric, cotton, galvanized wire
Size: H25 x L25 cm
SC831

Dog
Zulu name: Izile
Geographical location: Cato Ridge, KZN
Clan: Xhosa
Age of the piece: 1989
Date of acquisition: 1989
Purchased: The African Art Centre
Maker: Goli - Goli Sfiso
Design: Nhlabathi - looped stitch
Purpose of the piece: For sale
Material used: Glass beads, fabric, cotton, galvanized wire
Size: H16 x L26 cm
SC390

Chicken
Zulu name: Inkukhu
Geographical location: Cato Ridge, KZN
Clan: Xhosa
Age of the piece: 1989
Date of acquisition: 1989
Purchased: The African Art Centre
Maker: Khulumela MaMchunu Mlaba
Design: Nhlabathi - looped stitch
Purpose of the piece: For sale
Material used: Glass and plastic beads, fabric, cotton, galvanized wire
Size: H27 x L32 cm
SC270
The Secrets of Beads | Imfihlo Yobuhlulu

Ram
Zulu name: Imvu
Geographical location: Cato Ridge, KZN
Clan: Esithumba
Age of the piece: 1994
Date of acquisition: 1994
Purchased: Artist
Maker: George Welcome Zondi
Purpose of the piece: For sale
Material used: Glass beads, fabric, cotton, galvanized wire
Size: H11 x L10 cm
SC811

Crab
Zulu name: Inkalankala
Geographical location: Cato Ridge, KZN
Clan: Esithumba
Age of the piece: 1994
Date of acquisition: 1994
Purchased: Artist
Maker: George Welcome Zondi
Purpose of the piece: For sale
Material used: Glass beads, fabric, cotton, galvanized wire
Size: H4 x L13 cm
SC815

BEADED RADIOS

Left
Radio, portable and beaded
Zulu name: Unomathotholo
Geographical location: Cato Ridge, KZN
Age of the piece: 1985
Date of acquisition: 1985
Purchased: The African Art Centre
Maker: Busaphi Ngubane
Design: Izihibe - loop stitch
Purpose of the piece: For sale
Material used: Glass beads, wood, pearl bead on aerial, wire
Size: H33 x L16 cm
SC48

Right
Portable radio with working radio inside
Zulu name: Unomathotholo
Geographical location: Ndwedwe, KZN
Age of the piece: 1985
Date of acquisition: 1985
Purchased: The African Art Centre
Maker: Khulumelaphi MaCele Hlambisa
Clan: Emaphetheni
Purpose of the piece: For sale
Material used: Glass beads, wood, pearl bead on aerial, wire
Size: H42 x L34 cm
SC587

Ceasar Mkhize from KwaMashu Township, born: 1970

His talent was noticed when he was at primary school at the Nkulisa Bantu LP School. When he moved to
Mandelit to continue his high school education, he was introduced to traditional Zulu dance, music and
performance art. He participated in the number of school visual art competitions where he won several awards.

Ceasar moved back to KwaMashu after completing high school. He joined the African Art Centre Melinda Group
Saturday classes. It was here that he discovered his main interest was in making beaded sculptures.

He became a well-known artist for producing the colorful, bright, beaded creatures. He also enjoyed drawing
and painting in his spare time. He likes to introduce himself as an artist specializing in craft, music, painting,
and acting and enjoy playing the guitar.

Ceasar introduced his wife Thafa Dlamini to making beaded sculptures. They both have gained great exposure
through their art work and have exhibited both locally and internationally. Their work appears in many public
and private collections. Ceasar tries to share his knowledge of craft to those who admire his art, especially the
younger generations.

The Cross of Evil
Zulu name: Isiphambano sedimoni
Geographical location: KwaMashu, KZN
Age of the piece: 2001
Date of acquisition: 2002
Purchased: The African Art Centre
Maker: Ceasar Mkhize and Thafa Dlamini
Purpose of the piece: To be exhibited at Abalumbi Exhibition
Material used: Glass beads, fabric, cotton, galvanized wire
Size: H47 x L27 cm
DAG3581

Ceasar Mkhize
from KwaMashu Township, born: 1970

His talent was noticed when he was at primary school at the Nkulisa Bantu LP School. When he moved to
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and private collections. Ceasar tries to share his knowledge of craft to those who admire his art, especially the
younger generations.
**Pot Covers**

**BEER POT COVER – IMBENGI/ UNYAZI**

This is a woven grass saucer-shape used to cover the beer pot (ukhamba) and also used to serve dry food such as millet, maize or pulses. It is made by wrap-stitching a slim foundation coil of grass (incema grass with ilala palm), opening a small hole at the edge of the inner coil with an awl, binding them tightly together and then decorating with beadwork. Good examples of the Imbenge were found in Melmoth, Msinga and Nkandla areas where they were also decorated with beadwork and mirrors. The mirror decoration was very useful - when people were drinking they could look at themselves to see whether they had a bubble of the beer (ingwebu) in the corner of their mouths (called ukuzishiyela).

The other decorations used were plastic lids, tops and sometimes a wooden stand was attached to the bottom of the Imbenge. This could be used as a handle to lift it, or as a support to make it stand when not in use.

When the beer pot is full with beer (utshwala), the Imbenge will face down to show that there is still beer in the pot. When the ukhamba is empty the Imbenge faces up and the people who have been offered the beer will get the message that there is none left. Special Imbenge are made for wedding ceremonies, for the bride to give as gifts to the male members of the in-law family.
| Beer pot cover | Zulu name: Imbenge | Geographical location: Msinga, KZN | Age of the piece: 1960s | Date of acquisition: 1992 | Collector: Apostoli Mzila | Design: Isishunka | Purpose of the piece: To cover beer pot | Material used: Glass beads, cotton thread, grass | Size: H6 x 19 cm (diameter) | SC53 |
| Beer pot cover | Zulu name: Imbenge | Geographical location: Maphumulo | Age of the piece: 1960s | Date of acquisition: 1992 | Collector: Apostoli Mzila | Maker: Nkosinathi Masoka | Design: Maphumulo stitch | Purpose of the piece: To cover a beer pot | Material used: Glass beads, cotton thread, grass | Size: H7 x 20 cm (diameter) | SC523 |
| Beer pot cover | Zulu name: Imbenge | Geographical location: Msinga | Age of the piece: 1960s | Date of acquisition: 1995 | Collector: Apostoli Mzila | Maker: Fikile Sokhela | Design: Isithembu | Purpose of the piece: To cover a beer pot | Material used: Glass beads, cotton thread, grass, metal lid for top | Size: H8 x 19 cm (diameter) | SC925 |
| Beer pot cover | Zulu name: Imbenge | Geographical location: Msinga, KZN | Age of the piece: 1940s | Date of acquisition: 2005 | Collector: Apostoli Mzila | Owner: Dubile Ntombela | Donor: Ithala | Design: Umgqalaza | Purpose of the piece: To cover a beer pot | Material used: Glass beads, cotton thread | Size: H7 x 19 cm (diameter) | DAG3660 |
| Beer pot cover | Zulu name: Imbenge | Geographical location: Msinga, KZN | Age of the piece: 1950s | Date of acquisition: 2005 | Collector: Apostoli Mzila | Design: Isishunka | Purpose of the piece: To cover a beer pot | Material used: Glass beads, cotton thread | Size: H8 x 17 cm (diameter) | DAG3659 |
| Beer pot cover | Zulu name: Imbenge | Geographical location: Melmoth, KZN | Age of the piece: 1960s | Date of acquisition: 1992 | Collector: Apostoli Mzila | Maker: Gxaleni Zakwe | Design: Uheshe | Purpose of the piece: To cover a beer pot | Material used: Glass beads, cotton thread | Size: H6 x 20 cm (diameter) | SC551 |
Necklaces For Men and Women Using Traditional Colour Arrangements

**ISISHUNKA IS A COMBINATION OF SEVEN COLOURS USED IN THE MSINGA AREA UP TO THE 1950’S**

This combination is used by women and men. The colour sequence is as follows:

- **Green**: obuluhlaza
  - "I am going to wait for my husband as he works in Johannesburg. ‘Ngizomlinda umyeni wami njengoba esebanza Egoli’.

- **Red**: obubomvu/umgazi
  - "Isicholo represents living cows. She is referring to the lobolo cattle which were paid for before the marriage took place, now I am returning the big cow to you. In this way she is telling her husband that although you paid the lobolo, it is nothing because what I will do is fill that empty spot in your father’s kraal. (The allegory here is intended to show that by bearing children, she will bring much more into the marriage, herself, her work, and children)."

- **Black**: obumnyama
  - "Isidwaba, the colour of the leather skirt is very important as it is made from the hide of the cow slaughtered during the wedding day. Once the woman is married she must wear a leather skirt as a symbol of marriage."

- **White**: obumhlophe
  - "She is a virgin. Ngiyinkosazane emhlophe.

- **Pink**: isiphofu
  - "Even though I know, my husband, that you don’t have much, I still love you. Noma ungenalutho ngiyakuthanda myeni wami.

- **Blue**: ubulwandle
  - "I feel free like a sea breeze as I am married to the one I love. Inhliziyo yami ikhululeke njengolwandle njengoba ngishade nomuntu othandwa inhliziyo yami.

- **Yellow**: income
  - "You are beautiful to me. The girl is telling her friend that as far as she is concerned, the boy is good enough. Muhle kimi noma ningathini angisazoshintsha ngiyamthanda.

Left: Imfacane (beaded rope necklace) in traditional isishunka colours
This sequence is also found in the Nquthu area, which is in between Msinga and Vryheid, only five isishunka colours are used.

**Isithembu** is a combination of five colours

Isithembu comes from the Ebathenjini clan. The colours are arranged as follows: grass green, yellow, red, black and light blue.

**Grass green** (obuluhlaza satshani)
The right time will come, I will wait.

**Yellow** (income)
I have applied the oil and I am so smooth even my heart can fill it.

**Red** (obubomvu)
I love you with all my heart.

**Black** (obumyama)
I cannot see the way to come to you.

**Light blue** (obulwandle)
I love you, you are faithful to me.

**Isilomi** is a combination of four colours

Isilomi is originally from the Bathenjini clan in Msinga area. Bottle green, red, white, shiny dark blue.

**Bottle green** (inyongo yenkukhu)
I am still young but old enough to be chosen.

**Red** (umgazi)
I love him.

**White** (obumhlophe)
I am a young woman, still a virgin.

**Shiny dark blue** (ijuba)
I am missing you.

**Isiphalafini** is a combination of four colours

Shiny dark blue, orange, grass green and white.

**Shiny dark blue** (inkankane)
I am missing you.

**Orange** (iputukezi)
I am happy that you are working. Ngiseyintombinto.

**Grass green** (ithunzi)
Wherever I go I will be welcomed.

**White** (obumhlophe)
You are faithful to me.

**Nquthu**

Isithembu is a combination of five colours

Isithembu comes from the Ebathenjini clan. The colours are arranged as follows: grass green, yellow, red, black and light blue.

**Grass green** (obuluhlaza satshani)
The right time will come, I will wait.

**Yellow** (income)
I have applied the oil and I am so smooth even my heart can fill it.

**Red** (obubomvu)
I love you with all my heart.

**Black** (obumyama)
I cannot see the way to come to you.

**Light blue** (obulwandle)
I love you, you are faithful to me.

Isilomi is a combination of four colours

Isilomi is originally from the Bathenjini clan in Msinga area. Bottle green, red, white, shiny dark blue.

**Bottle green** (inyongo yenkukhu)
I am still young but old enough to be chosen.

**Red** (umgazi)
I love him.

**White** (obumhlophe)
I am a young woman, still a virgin.

**Shiny dark blue** (ijuba)
I am missing you.

Isiphalafini is a combination of four colours

Shiny dark blue, orange, grass green and white.

**Shiny dark blue** (inkankane)
I am missing you.

**Orange** (iputukezi)
I am happy that you are working. Ngiseyintombinto.

**Grass green** (ithunzi)
Wherever I go I will be welcomed.

**White** (obumhlophe)
You are faithful to me.
UMZANSI IS A COMBINATION OF FOUR COLOURS

Blue, red, white, green. It can be used by anyone. It was called umzansi indicating that it originated in the low Umvoti area.

The combination formed by the following colours:

Blue (ubulwandle)
When I am with you I feel the sea breeze. Uma nginawe ngizwa kushaya umoya wolwandle.

White (obumhlophe)
Whenever I see you my heart goes white as milk. Uma ngikubona inhliziyo yami iba mhlophe njengobisi.

Red (umgazi)
I love you so much. Ngiyakuthanda.

Green (uhlaza)
I will wait for you for the right time to be together. Ngiyohamba ngikhala inkumbulo yengimthandayo.

IDUNA COLOURS

Red
I am in love with you. Ngiyakuthanda.

Dark amber
Do not drink the beef-soup of your new family as you are still not eating their meat in accordance with custom. Ungawuphuzi umhluzi wasezimzini ungaayidli inyama yakhona.

Black
I am married. Ngishadile.

White and mixed colours.

MAPHUMULO DISTRICT BEADWORK ALSO INCLUDES NEW HANOVER, SWATIMANI, ESIDUMBENI.

Beadwork from Maphumulo comes in four different styles such as Ilunga, Aduna, Inqama and Isigcwensa.

Ilunga: Specially worn by young married women, it is a combination of the following colours:

Black
It is dark on my side no one loves me. Kunmyama kimi akekho ongithandayo.

Dark blue
I will cry as I miss the one I love. Ngiyohamba ngikhala ngibulawo inkumbulo yengimthandayo.

Cobalt blue
I feel free and cool the same way the sea is. Inhliziyo yami icwathile njengolwandle.

Grass green
I remember the day when we were sitting under the shade of the tree. Ngiyakhumbula shieli sobabili emthunzini wesibhualo.

White
I love you. Ngiyakuthanda.

Yellow
I have your love inside me like the flower that comes out in summer. Ngikugcobele enhliziweni yami, kuhle kwembali ephakaza ehlazo.
**ISIGCWENSA COLOURS**

This beadwork was originally worn by people from Nsuze area which also falls under the Maphumulo district. This beadwork was named after Gcwensa, Chief of Nzuze. As people move from clan to clan, either for ceremonies, or because they married into that area, their style then becomes common with the other clans of the district.

*ISIGCWENSA* consists of mixed shiny colours which also includes the blue/dark blue striped beads. Whom can I expect to visit me since I have now heard that I stink like a certain type of grasshopper? *Ngingabheka bani mina ongangivakashela njengoba sebeshilo ukuthi nginuka intothoviyane?*