

Transval Tsonga - head-rest Jacques Collection

1987-3080
STOVEN!



Not in the file

~~purchase~~ / donation / ~~bequest~~: Anglo American Johannesburg Centenary Trust

price paid: - (R168 000 incl. GST paid by Trust for Collection)	physical description:
insurance value: R346 291 (114 objects in Jaques Collection) (1990)	
authority: AGC 1987-03-26 MC 1987-03-30	
original collection no: Jaques Coll./ Africana Mus. 50/981	
object type translation:	
catalogues: Wanless, <u>AN&N</u> 27(5):210	

object type: head-rest	acc no: 1987.3.80		
vernacular:	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; width: fit-content; margin: auto;"> contact prints </div>		
sub-type:			
community: Transvaal Tsonga			
sub-group:			
geographical location:	location:	shelf:	
	b/w:	c/t:	c/s:
	dimensions:		
date and place collected:	h: 11 cm	diam:	
Elim, Transvaal, c.1930	w: 15,5 cm	mounted:	
date executed:	d: 6 cm		
artist name, sex:	medium: wood		
male			
use: for resting the head while sleeping			

JOHANNESBURG ART GALLERY
ARCHIVE SHEET II
PROVENANCE

ARTIST:

ACC. NO.:

Collected by Rev. A. A. Jaques

Lent to the Africana Museum in 1950

JOHANNESBURG ART GALLERY
ARCHIVE SHEET IV
REFERENCE

ARTIST:

ACC. NO.:

Wanless, A Africana Notes and News, see acc. card
for vol. and page no.

JOHANNESBURG ART GALLERY
ARCHIVE SHEET V
LOANS / LOCATIONS REGISTER

ARTIST:

ACC. NO.:

Placed in [REDACTED] 1987

Placed on display in [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] early 1989. Area closed off in early 1990.



**SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE
ENDANGERED SPECIES PROTECTION UNIT
PRIVATE BAG X 302
PRETORIA
0001
FAX NO. (012) 803-8379**

TO: Johannesburg Art Gallery
FAX NO: (011) 720 6000
DATE: 2000-06-05
FOR ATTENTION: Ms Rochelle Keene
YOUR REFERENCE: 9/4
MY REFERENCE: 26/118/2
FROM: Capt B Benson

**WHEN COMPLETE THIS TRANSMISSION SHOULD CONSIST
OF A TOTAL NUMBER OF 2 PAGE/S INCLUDING THIS ONE
THEFT OF A TSONGA HEADREST : JOHANNESBURG ART GALLERY :
HILLBROW CAS 1213/4/00 : ESPU**

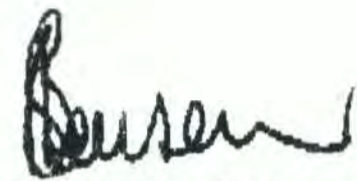
MESSAGE:

1. Herewith, reply to your correspondence reference 9/4 dated 11 May 2000. Confirmation that the item was circulated with Interpol on 2000-04-26. The photograph will be forwarded on 2000-06-05. Anybody you think might be able to assist with the tracing of the item can receive the photograph.
2. With regard to the follow up investigation, please inform this office when it will be convenient to interview Themba and yourself. This will be to commence with the compilation of an "identi kit". The particulars of the film company is also needed. Also inform this office when Mr Jackson will be available for further interview.



...2/

3. Also let this office know when the photographs as requested, can be expected with regard to the Soulages.



CAPTAIN

for/ COMMANDER : ENDANGERED SPECIES PROTECTION UNIT

B BENSON

tsonga:00-06-05

PHONE (012) 803-9900/7 IF THIS TRANSMISSION
IS INCOMPLETE

A REPORT ON A STOLEN WORK OF ART AT THE GALLERY

On Friday 14 April 2000 there was a film shoot which started in the morning. I was with the film crew for the rest of the morning until 11:45 when I left for the Heritage Forum Meeting. The meeting ended up around 15:30.

When I came back to the Gallery the film crew was still shooting. I walked back to my office to put my bag. When I return to the exhibition area there were couple walking by without any supervision. The red room area was without a security. I started to check if everything was in order. I walked around and when I was at the Southern African Traditional art room, I discovered that one of the work was missing since there was no sign that said "Temporary removed. I immediately contacted Peter Jackson who came with me to observe. He knew nothing about the work. We also called Mr. Fani Malatjie who was posted at the Northern entrance. He was not aware that the work was missing. At first we thought that the work was taken by the film crew.

Peter told me that they took Bongi Dhlomo's painting on my absence. This prompted us to suspect them. We stopped them from shooting and asked about the missing work. They knew nothing about it. We searched the props and other areas but in vain.

We were shocked about this hence we had enough security staff deployed at the Gallery due to the film shoot. The worse part is that our close circuit cameras were not recording during that time. Our hope was that one of the staff member might have removed the work but forgot to put the sign. The next Monday we asked all staff member about the work. It became clear that the work was really missing. We reported the stolen work to Hillbrow police station and the case number is as follows: **1213/04/00**

Details of the work of art:

Object type: Head-rest
Community: Tsonga
Acc. No.: 1987.3.80
Dimensions: h: 11cm; w: 15.5 cm; d: 6 cm
Medium: Wood

REPORT OF THE MISSING ART WORK 14TH APRIL 2000

XIKHENGELO (HEAD-REST): SHANGAN (JSONGA)

DURING THE FILM-SHOOT ON FRIDAY THE 14TH APRIL 2000 AT 16^H30 THEMBA MABASO WAS CHECKING THE LIST OF WORKS OF ART WHICH WAS BEING USED FOR THE FILM-SHOOT.

IN THE COLLECTION OF "SECULAR AND SPIRITUAL OBJECTS OF MEDIATION" THEMBA FOUND THAT THE ABOVE MENTIONED HEAD-REST WAS MISSING.

DURING THE MORNING WILLY CHILOANE HAD REPORTED THAT HE WITNESSED A LADY OF THE FILM UNIT TAKING A WORK OF ART OFF THE WALL WITHOUT A CURATOR PRESENT, AND TOOK IT TO THE PHILLIPS GALLERY. SHE THEN TOOK IT BACK AND LEFT IT ON THE FLOOR. WILLY REPORTED IT TO PITSO CHINZIMA AND LATER ON REPORTED TO ME. THE WORK OF ART IN QUESTION "ARTIST UNKNOWN AT THE END OF THE DAY" BY BONGI DHLOMO-MAUTLOA COINCIDENTALLY IS ALSO OF A HEAD-REST, BUT IS ON THE EAST-WING IN THE COLLECTION "VIEWS FROM WITHIN."

PATRICK BARTLESON WAS STATIONED ON THE WEST-WING AND QUESTIONED BY THEMBA MABASO ABOUT THE MISSING OBJECT BEFORE HE WENT HOME. BUT HAD SEEN NOTHING UNUSUAL. HE SAID HE WAS FOCUSED ON THE FILM-SHOOT.

THE ART GALLERY HAD VERY FEW VISITORS THAT DAY. THE GRAND TOTAL BEING 85 OF WHICH 42 BELONGED TO THE FILM UNIT.

P. JACKSON.

CASE No: 1213/04/00

WUKA SA

JBL ✓
NL ✓
EK
SS
TM
BM
515

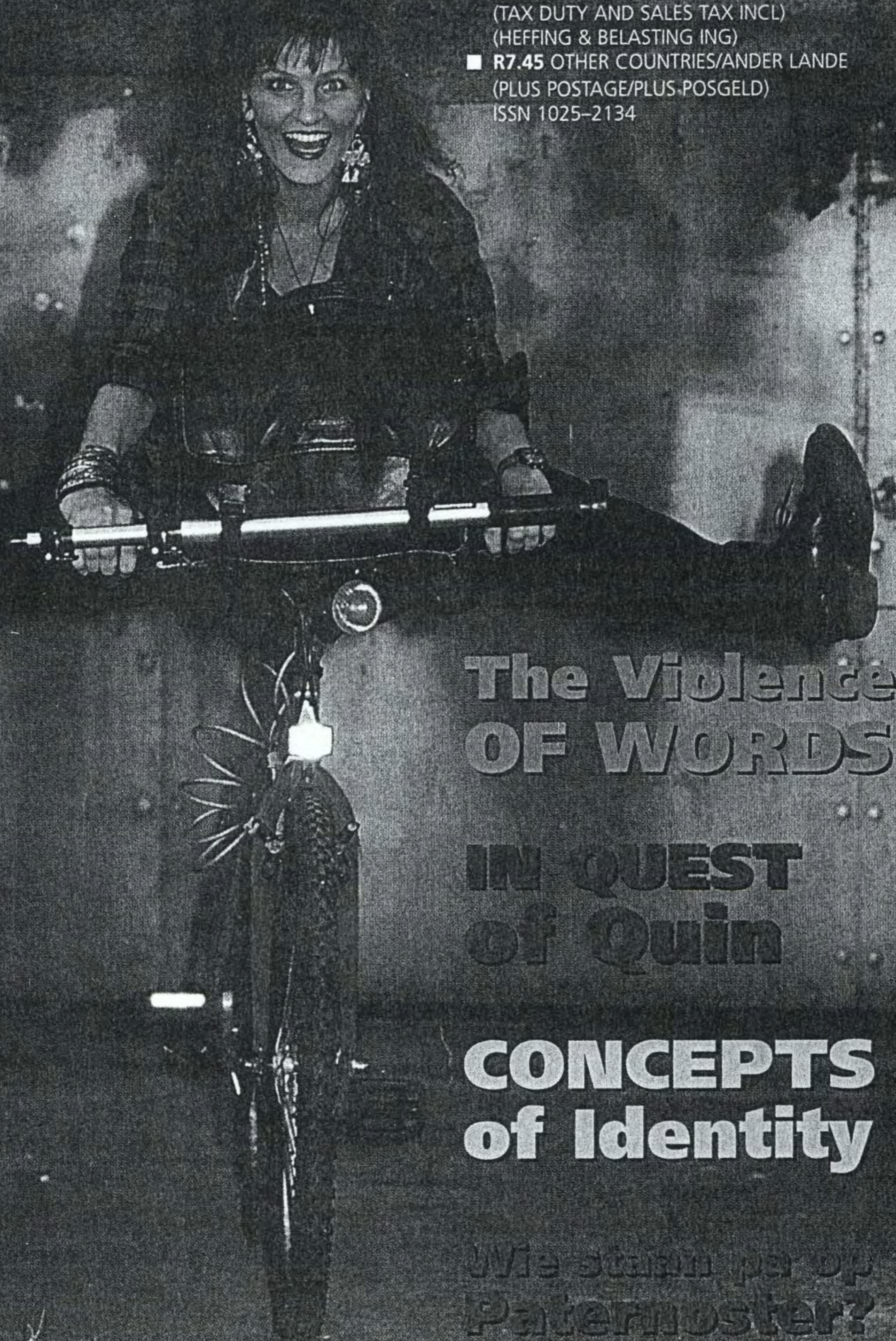
**SOUL OF THE RAINBOW NATION
SIEL VAN DIE REËNBOOGNASIE**

VOL 1 NO 2 1995

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(PLUS POSTAGE/PLUS-POSGELD)
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**An earful -
ISIQHAZA**

**Wier ons
werklik
KERSFE**



**The Violence
OF WORDS**

**IN QUEST
of Quin**

**CONCEPTS
of Identity**

**Wie staan op
Paternoster?**



9 771025 213003

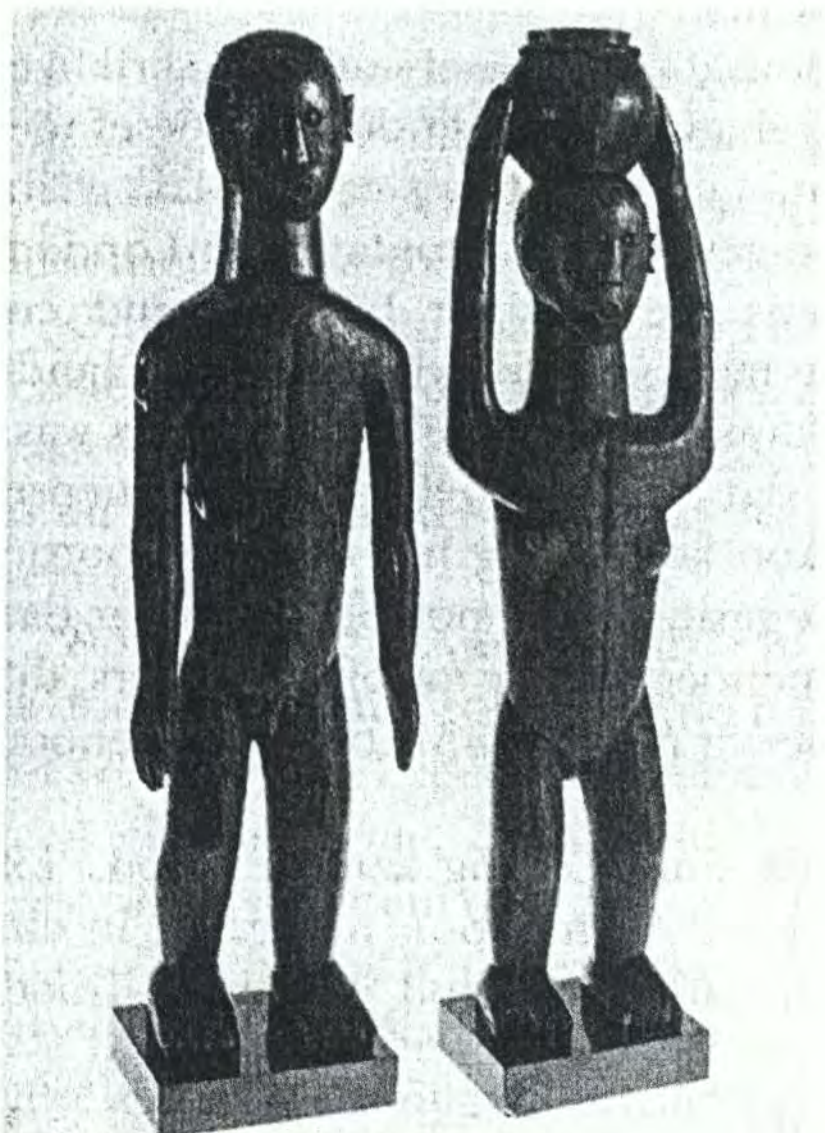
COLLECTIONS

IN TOUCH WITH THE ANCESTORS

Nessa Leibhammer

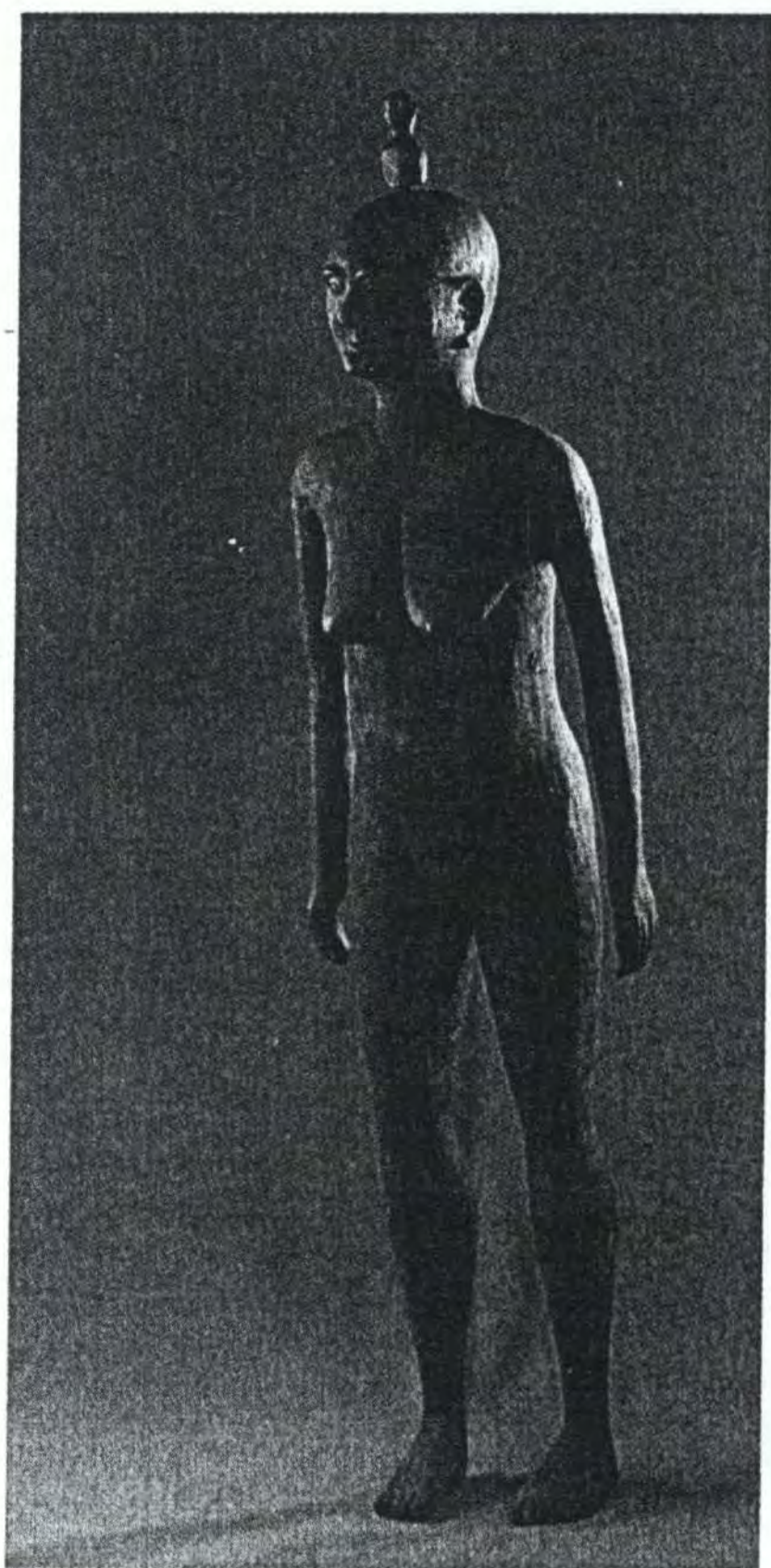
The exhibition of traditional Southern African art presents beautiful objects which are steeped in historic, symbolic, social and spiritual significance.

Xifaniso xo vatliwa/male and female figures, Tsonga, Northern Province. Wood. 70 × 20,1 × 10,1 and 71,5 × 19,6 × 11,8



The Johannesburg Art Gallery has dedicated two exhibition rooms to the display of 'traditional' Southern African art. Challenging the notion that Southern Africa has no traditional artistic heritage of note, the Gallery has mounted a number of objects of the finest quality from this area. Similar to other great art productions of the world, these objects are beautiful to look at and at the same time are steeped in historic, symbolic, social and spiritual significance.

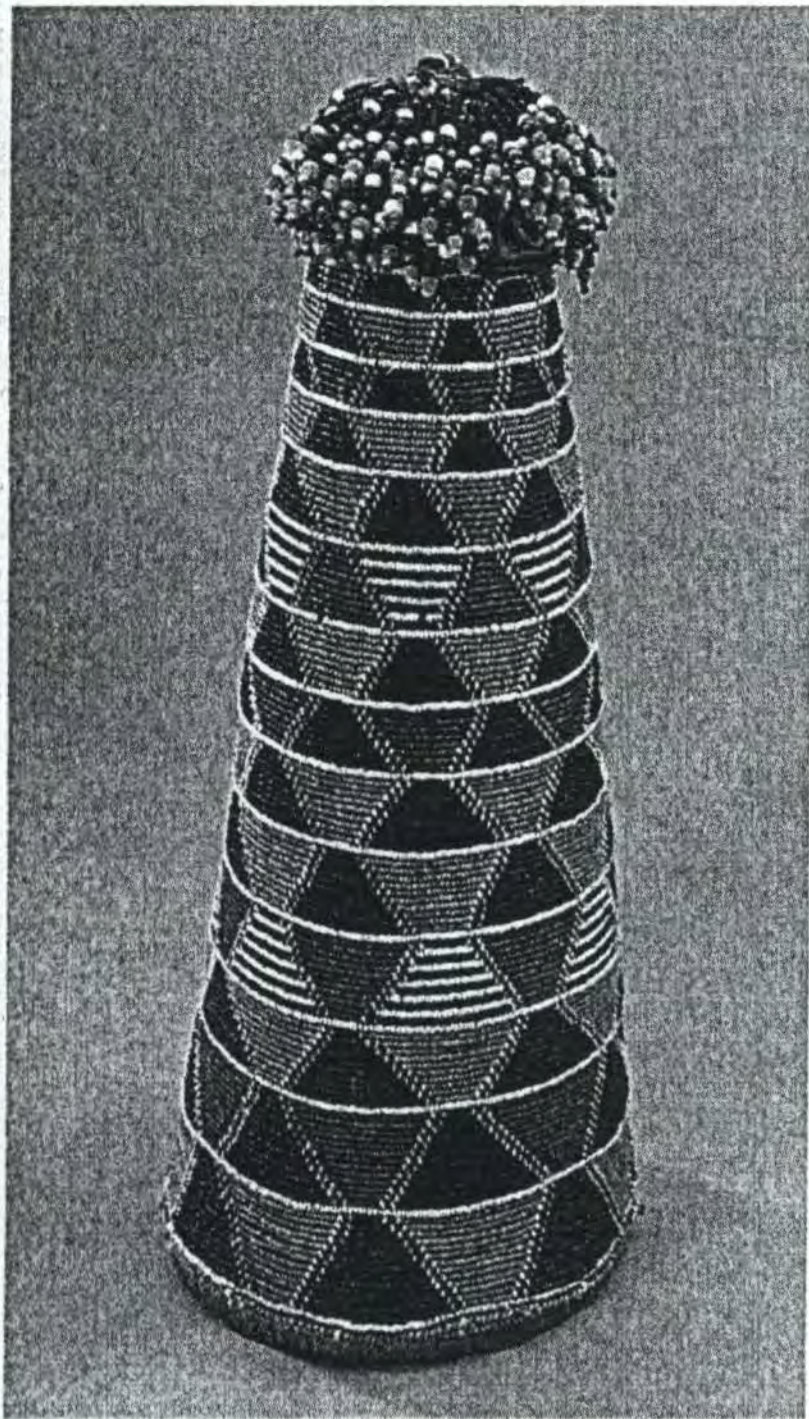
Women as creators constitute an important component of the display. Featuring many of the exquisite objects which women make, the first room of the exhibition includes *mincheke* (decorated shoulder wraps)



Ingwabani/gona/female spirit figure, Ndau, Mozambique. Wood. 135 × 34 × 19,5

made by the Tsonga-speaking women of the Northern Province, a beaded Ndebele *linaga* (ceremonial cape) and *irari* (blanket), a Southern Nguni *ingubo* (ceremonial wrap), other body ornamentations and carved and beaded sticks.

Beaded and embroidered images ranging from flowers, animals and fish to portraits of political leaders and contemporary events are used to decorate the *mincheke*. These are worn in a number of ways and are subject to frequent fashion changes.



They are also useful for carrying babies and other small loads. The highly decorated *mincheka* are worn only on special occasions and boldly declare the name of the maker and her date of birth.

Previously worn everyday and now only for ceremonies and special occasions, beaded Ndebele garments represent some of the most visually spectacular art forms in South Africa. For the Ndebele who were fragmented as a group in the late 19th century, these striking costumes were a way to declare their identity and assert their presence. Changes in colour and style are evident in the work. The earliest Ndebele beadwork used mostly white beads and the designs were small, restrained and geometric. Later work shows more colour usage and bolder designs with figurative elements.

Spiritual significance and colour are sometimes linked: the ochre-coloured earth with which the Southern Nguni (Xhosa) colour their blankets, is believed to be loved by the ancestors. Someone wearing this colour is understood to be in a normal, everyday state. The wearing of white, either as beadwork, clothing or applied to the body, indicates that the wearer is in a 'special' state and may denote a closeness to the ancestors.



Above left: *Ngoana*/beaded figure, South Sotho, Lesotho. Wood, seed-beads, mixed media. 36,4 x 14,2

Umdwana/beaded figure, Ndebele, Mpumalanga/Northern Province. Grass, textile, seed-beads, mixed media. 20,8 x 11,7

Many objects carved and used by men are also included in the exhibition. Carved sticks or staffs can indicate the status of a chief, identify the owner as a *nyanga*, or 'traditional' healer or may be an accessory for finery worn on a festive occasion.

Personal stools carved by specialist Tonga carvers of northern Zimbabwe are often taken with on social visits. These stools are used by men, women and children. They show a multitude of styles, some geometric, some anthropomorphic and some zoomorphic. Boats, trains and car caryatids are also popular, each carver having

his own recognisable style and favoured range of motifs. Stools from Zambia show a marked similarity of style and format and point to a relatedness in the people living on opposite sides of the Zambezi.

The second exhibition room contains objects which function on a more private level. It contains headrests, spirit vessels, and beaded and carved figures.

Headrests are small carved wooden pillows used by both men and women. They are significant objects which serve many symbolic functions. One of these is to delineate the

relations between a husband and his wife (or wives). For example the Shona headrests which men use evoke the female form and therefore indicate a connection to fertility. One of these headrests may be given as a marriage gift from a wife to her husband. When a husband sleeps on this headrest, his head (the seat of his ancestral line) brings together the fertility of his wife with his patrilineal ancestral line.

The headrest also maintains connections between individuals and their ancestors. For example, as the first sacrifice to his deceased father (now an ancestor) a Tsonga man will rub tobacco onto his headrest as an offering. Furthermore, dreaming while using a headrest is analogous with visiting your ancestors. Many of these small carved objects are masterpieces of three-dimensional form.

Spirit vessels, *nhunguvani* or *gona* figures are containers used in healing practises and to protect their owners against misfortune. Used by people living along the eastern side of the Africa continent, they are found in Tanzania, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and north eastern South Africa. These are sometimes carved as figures but most often are vessels made from calabashes with carved stoppers assuming anthropomorphic or zoomorphic form. The spirit of deceased ancestors is thought to be contained in a special substance placed inside the vessel. Using the vessel as a sort of 'cell phone' to the



Mutsago/headrest, Shona, Zimbabwe. Wood, 13,2 x 17,8 x 6,5

ancestors, appeals are made for protection, health and fertility.

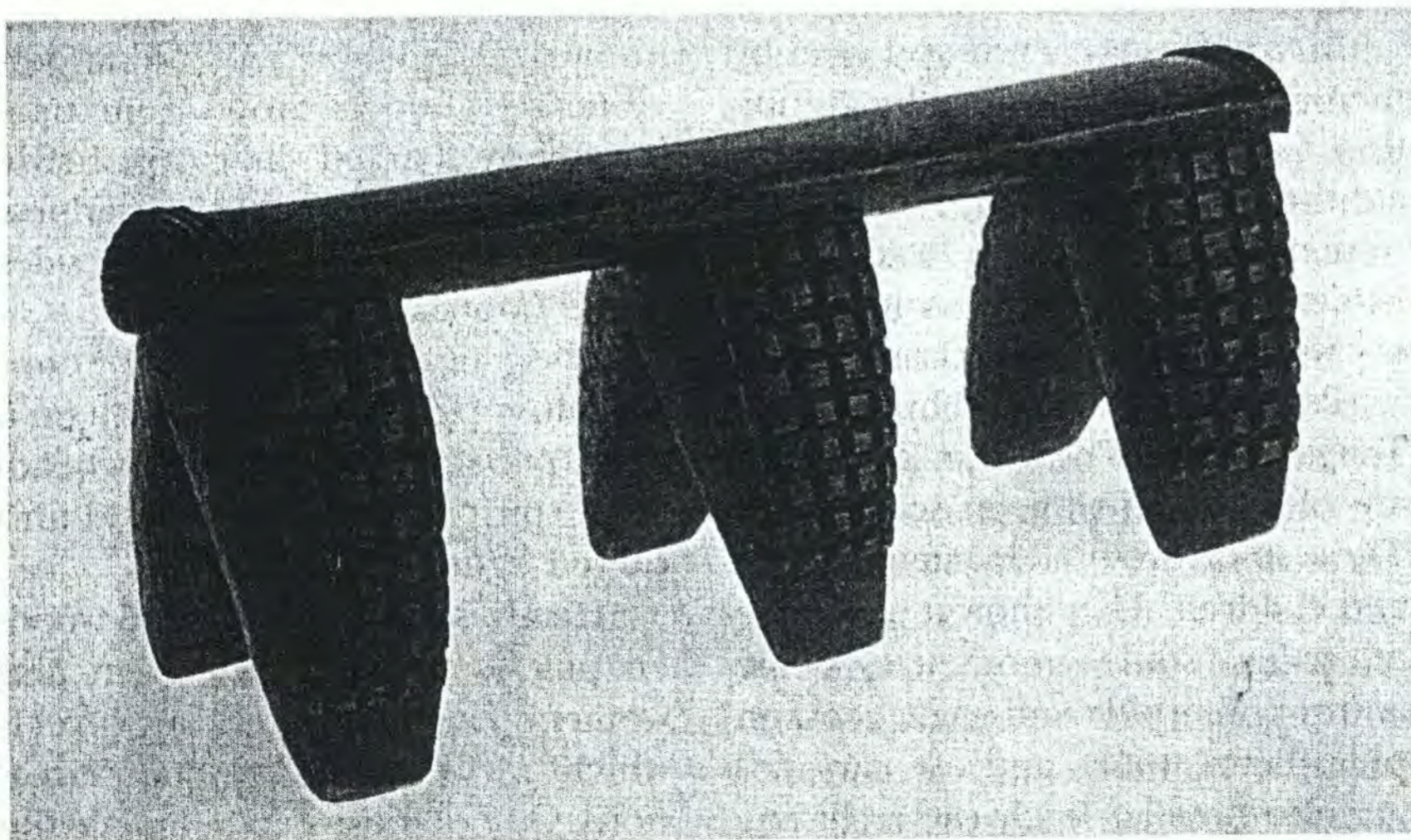
The collection of *gona* which the Johannesburg Art Gallery holds, is extraordinary in that four of these are two-thirds life sized and are carved as human figures. These figures are unusual as they are carved in a 'naturalistic' style and are much larger than any other figures from Southern Africa.

Beaded figures, or 'dolls' from all over Southern Africa are on display. These have many roles and

there is little clarity on many aspects of their use. Early texts tend to refer to them as 'fertility dolls' but their uses and functions are much more diverse than this. Many are toys, others represent 'children' and are used by boys and girls when they enact adult roles as part of a learning process. Some are made by barren women who wish to have children. These figures are created with great care and skill and are infinitely varied.

Objects created in a non-western aesthetic paradigm have often been housed in ethnographic or natural history museums. The technique of displaying multiples of objects in glass cases is reminiscent of specimen exhibits. The exhibition at the Johannesburg Art Gallery breaks with these display techniques which have created inequalities in the way cultural objects from Africa are viewed. Exhibiting each object as an example of individual creative talent and having as many objects as possible free of cabinets, counteracts the ethnographic effect of many previous displays. In addition, locating the exhibition in two adjacent but different spaces, enhances the conceptual depth of the exhibition. ▽

Isiquiki/headrest, Northern Nguni (Zulu), KwaZulu/Natal. Wood, 14,7 x 39,4 x 11,9



Lugs: Closed arches facing front.

Column: Two rectangular pillars curving inward slightly and decorated with a row of horizontal pleats running the length of the centre front and back. The pillars are joined at the centre by a horizontal, multi-faceted bar.

Base: Two flat circles joined by a rectangular bar.

✓ 115 50/979

Size:

Height	145 mm
Length	205 mm
Width	70 mm
Length of base	150 mm

Description: Crossbar: Rectangular, curved, and decorated near the narrow ends with a short row of zig-zags carved in relief.

Lugs: Closed, shallow arches, facing front.

Column: Two rectangular pillars carved front and back into a series of rounded horizontal corrugations.

Base: Three flat linked circles in a row.

✓ 116 50/980

Size:

Height	140 mm
Length	205 mm
Width	80 mm
Length of base	140 mm

Description: Crossbar: Rectangular, curved, and decorated near the narrow ends with a row of small zig-zags carved in relief.

Lugs: Filled half cylinders running from front to back.

Column: Two roughly rectangular pillars with broader parts facing sides, carved front and back into a series of horizontal, rounded corrugations, alternately blackened. Two open, front-facing arches extend out from almost the top to near the bottom of the outer sides. Inside, the pillars are connected by five horizontal, roughly cylindrical bars.

Base: Flat ovoid with a square piece cut out of centre front and back. Blackened.

✓ 117 50/981

Size:

Height	110 mm
Length	155 mm

210

Width 60 mm

Length of base 115 mm

Description: Crossbar: Rectangular, very slightly curved, and undecorated. It has flattened narrow ends, and there is a piece missing from one corner, though the scar is worn and well patinated.

Lugs: None.

Column: Two open, front-facing rectangles, the upper is wider and has a short vertical cylinder joining it to the crossbar at the centre. The overall appearance is that of a stylised human form with legs apart and arms raised to support the crossbar.

Base: Two flat ovoids linked by a small triangle at centre front and back.

Comments: This piece is smaller than average.

✓ 118 50/982

Size:

Height	140 mm
Length	200 mm
Width	80 mm
Length of base	145 mm

Description: Crossbar: Roughly rectangular but flaring at narrow ends, curved, and undecorated. It has a pronounced slope from the back down to the front.

Lugs: Roughly rectangular, facing front.

Column: Two rectangular pillars blackened on sides, and joined at top and bottom by small closed half cylinders.

Base: Two flat linked circles of unequal size.

Comments: The whole head-rest is roughly and unevenly carved.

119 50/983

Size:

Height	135 mm
Length	215 mm
Width	70 mm
Length of base	165 mm

Description: Crossbar: Rectangular, curved, and decorated at narrow ends with a row of zig-zags carved in relief. One corner is broken off but the scar is well worn and patinated.

Lugs: Open arches facing front.

Column: Two rectangular, grooved pillars curving inward until they almost meet in the centre, where they are joined by a short, horizontal cylinder. On the outside of each pillar is an open, front-facing arch similar to, but larger than, the lugs.

Base: Two flat thin circles joined by a rectangular bar.

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