



THE  
MELROSE  
GALLERY

---

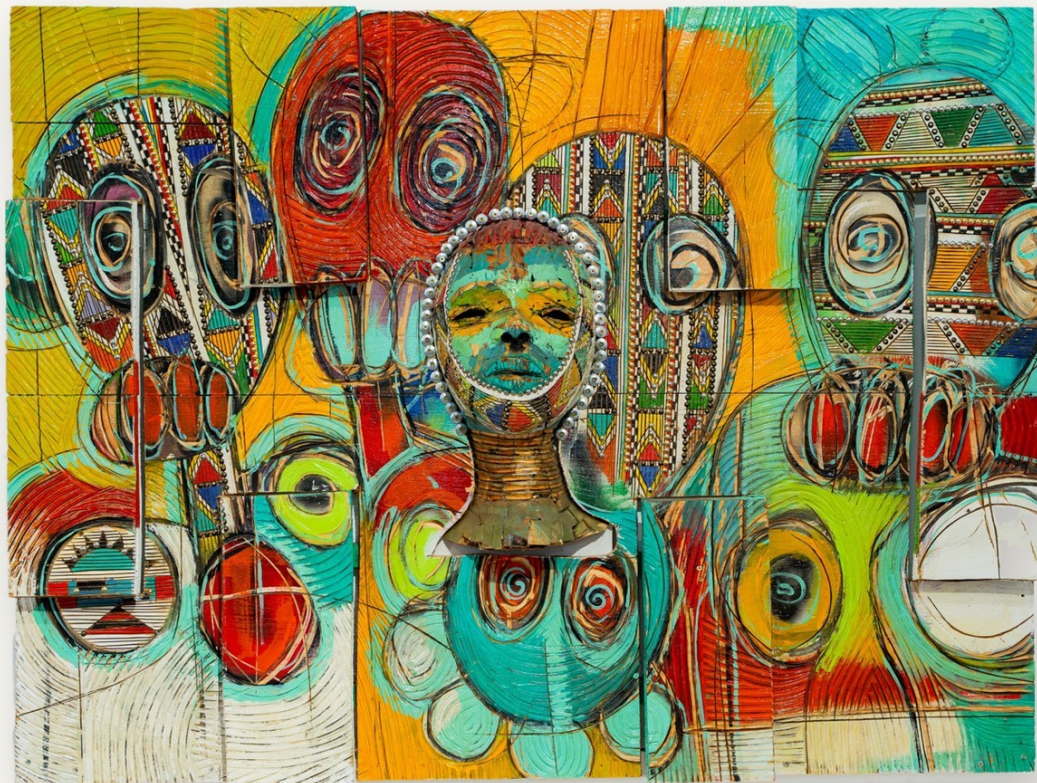
NDABUKO NTULI

# Isambulo

*(Revelations)*

THE MELROSE GALLERY · MELROSE ARCH

23 OCTOBER – 15 NOVEMBER 2026





THE  
**MELROSE**  
GALLERY

P R E S E N T S



*Isambulo is an awakening, a revelation of what has  
always existed within us but may have been  
forgotten, hidden or misunderstood.*

---

NDABUKO NTULI



THE EXHIBITION

# Isambulo (Revelations)

## THE EXHIBITION

---

For Ndabuko Ntuli, *Isambulo*, meaning “revelations”, is both an awakening and an act of remembering. Working across sculpture, assemblage and traditional storytelling, the artist, musician and sangoma brings ancestral inheritance into conversation with contemporary African life, exploring identity, spiritual calling, cultural memory and the knowledge carried between generations.

Central to the exhibition is the idea that time, reflection and experience have the power to transform what we understand. An experience that appears certain in the moment may reveal an entirely different meaning when revisited with distance and new knowledge. What was once ordinary can become significant, while what was once unclear can begin to reveal itself.

Against a world shaped by economic uncertainty, technological advancement, artificial intelligence and rapidly changing ideas about the future, *Isambulo* asks us to pause and consider not only where society is going, but what knowledge risks being left behind.

Through discarded material, reclaimed wood and found objects, Ntuli approaches each work as a conversation between the visible and the invisible, the personal and the collective, the ancestral and the present. In transforming humble and discarded materials, he considers how

objects, memories and traditions can carry meaning beyond their immediate moment.

The works move between the intimate and the historical: tributes to his mother and grandfather in Mangcongo and Mkhulu Masobeshe; the twin faces of Ubuwele I and II; the armour-like presence of Mkabayi kaJama; the ancestors of the home in Amathongo Asekhaya; and the childhood held behind bars of colour in Ebuntwaneni.

Ntuli’s practice is shaped by the dualities of contemporary South Africa: beauty within hardship, power within simplicity and meaning within what might otherwise be overlooked. Through his transformation of reclaimed and everyday materials into works of fine art, he gives physical form to histories, beliefs and experiences that might otherwise remain unseen.

*Isambulo (Revelations)* is not simply concerned with looking back. It asks what it means to carry cultural and spiritual knowledge forward, and how inherited knowledge might help us understand who we are becoming.



THIRTY-FOUR WORKS

# The works

01

## *Amathongo Asekhaya I*

A reflection on the enduring presence of ancestors, and the protection, guidance and sense of belonging they offer.

YEAR

2026

MEDIUM

Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

106 × 88 × 12 cm · 42 × 35 × 5 in

PRICE

R 75 000





02

## *Amathongo Asekhaya II*

---

The second of the pair: the ancestors of the home, assembled from reclaimed wood, metal and paint.

YEAR

2026

MEDIUM

Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

106 × 89 × 12 cm · 42 × 35 × 5 in

PRICE

R 75 000

03

## *Onamathongo*

*(One Who Carries the Ancestors)*

---

Onamathongo honours the quiet strength of carrying an ancestral calling, bridging past and present, the seen and the unseen.

YEAR

2026

MEDIUM

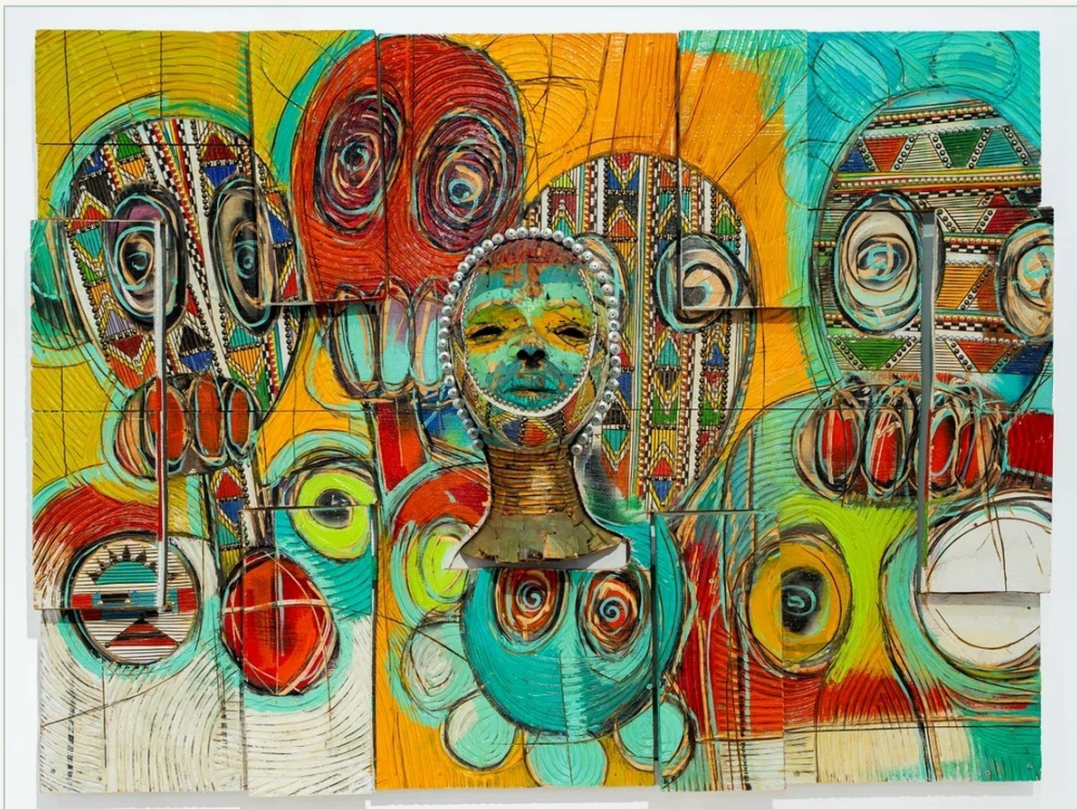
Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

125 × 162 × 30 cm · 49 × 64 × 12 in

PRICE

R 150 000



04

## *Umafungase*

YEAR

2024

MEDIUM

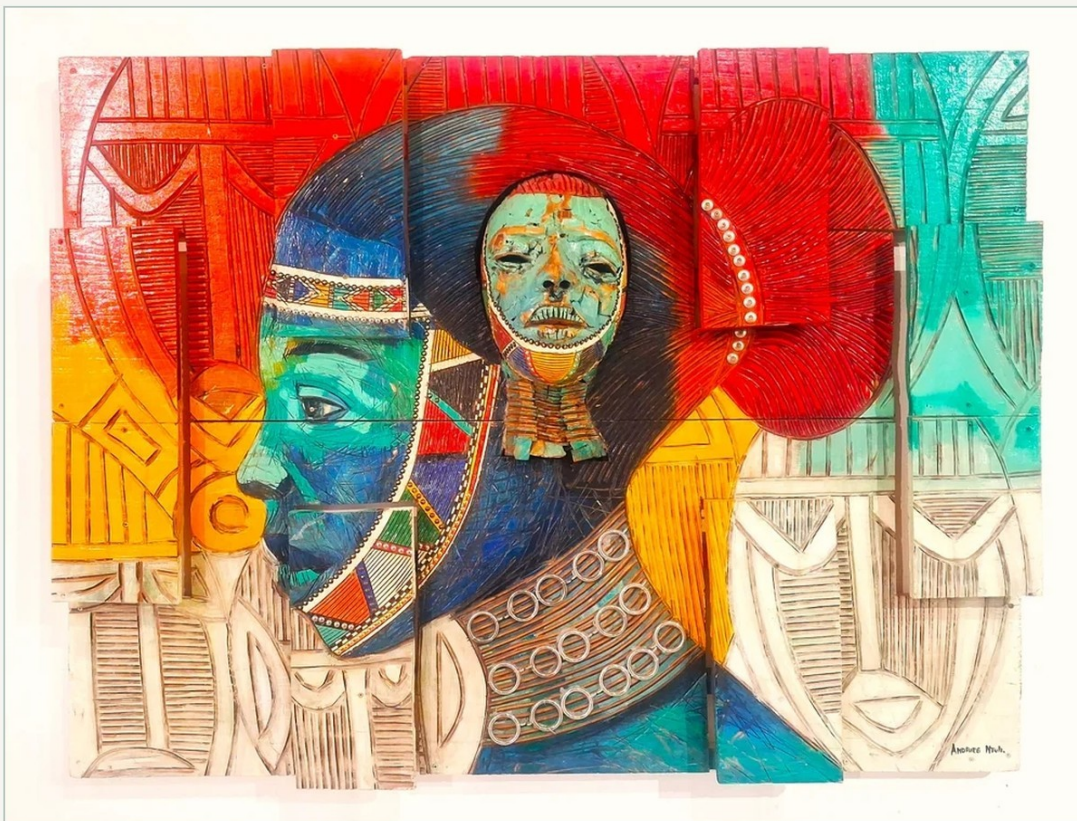
Mixed media

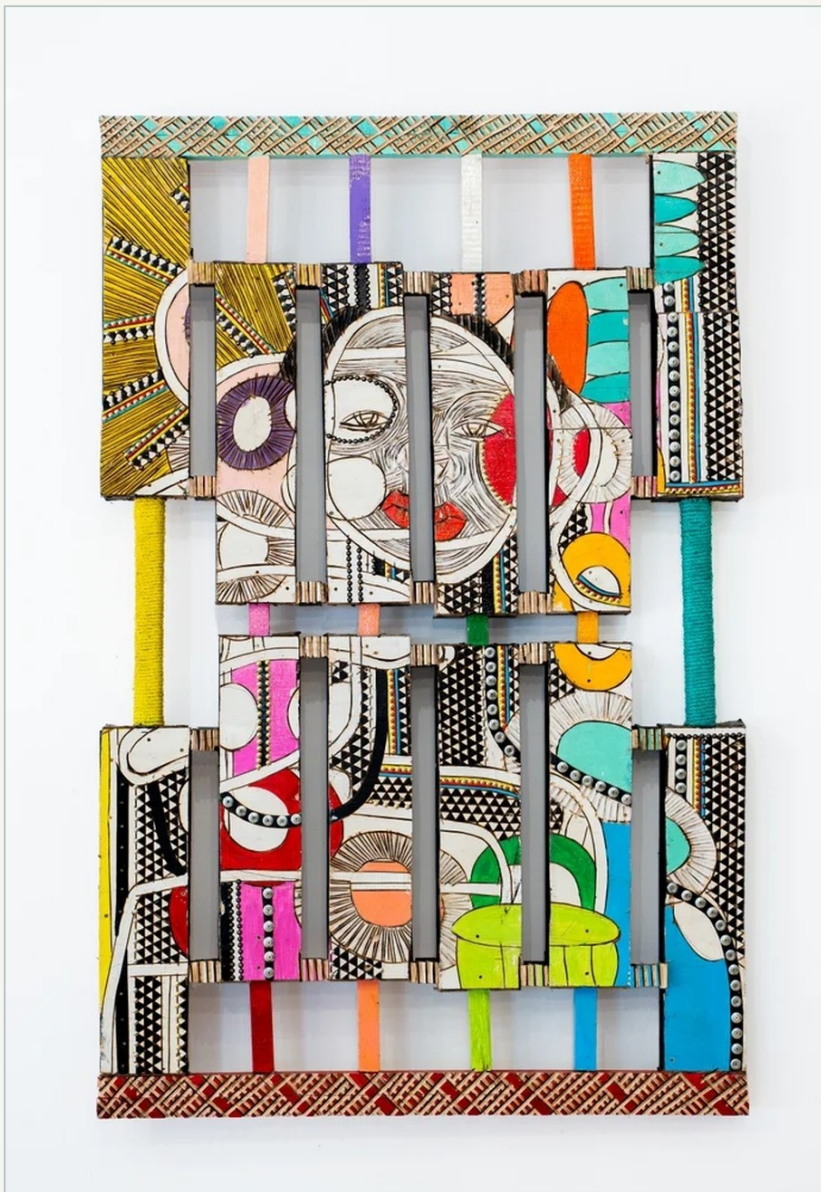
DIMENSIONS

160 × 120 cm · 63 × 47 in

PRICE

R172 500





05

## *Ebuntwaneni I*

Ebuntwaneni, meaning “childhood,” is a deeply personal reflection on growing up in the rural landscape: a child whose world was shaped by hardship, poverty and silence, yet whose imagination was full of colour.

YEAR

2026

MEDIUM

Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

178 × 114 × 6 cm · 70 × 45 × 2 in

PRICE

R 150 000



06

## *Ebuntwaneni II*

The repeated vertical structures resemble bars or a cage, a childhood confined by systems the child did not choose. Behind them the colours refuse to disappear. They push through the darkness, fragmented but persistent.

YEAR

2026

MEDIUM

Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

178 × 111 × 10 cm · 70 × 44 × 4 in

PRICE

● Sold

07

## *Kuyoshiyana ukwenza*

YEAR

2026

MEDIUM

Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

182 × 123 cm · 72 × 48 in

PRICE

● Sold





08

## *Mkhulu Masobeshe*

Not just a portrait but a conversation across time, between grandson and grandfather, between clay and wood. Masobeshe shaped faces out of earth; where he used clay, Ndabuko uses reclaimed wood, rust, metal studs and pigment.

YEAR

2026

MEDIUM

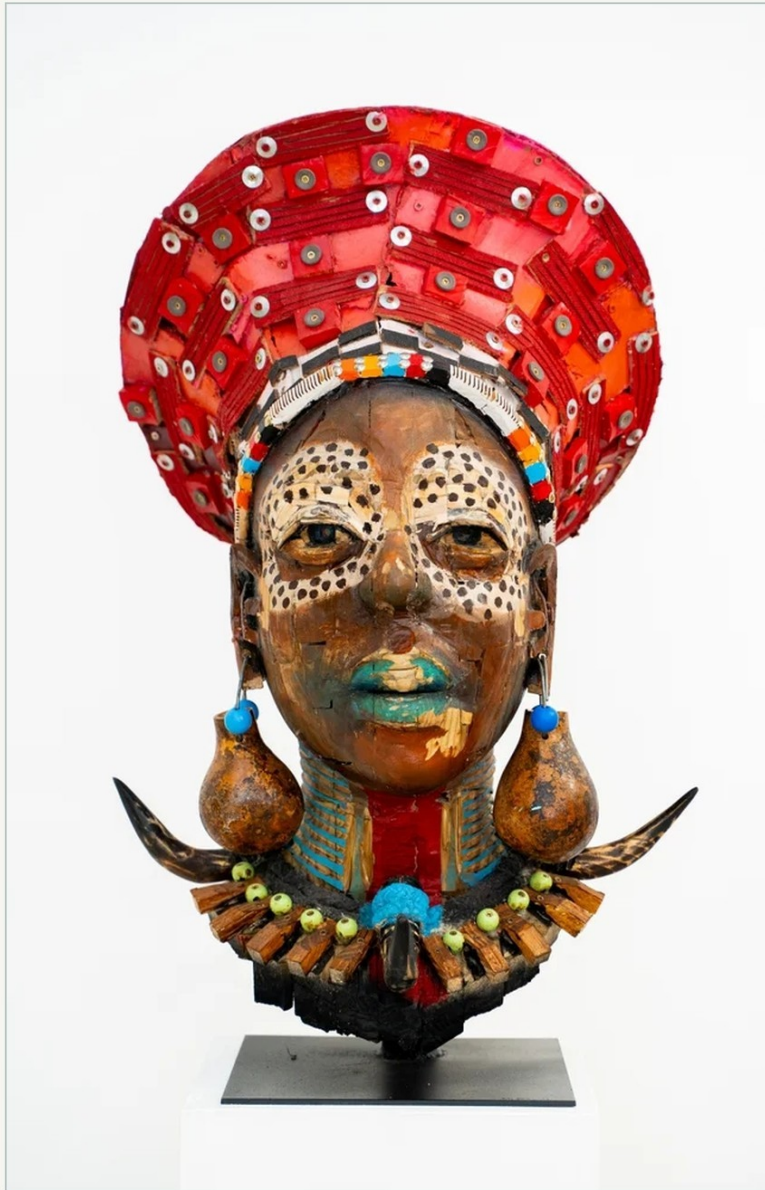
Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

60 × 30 × 30 cm · 24 × 12 × 12 in

PRICE

R 78 000



09

## *Mangcongo*

A deeply intimate tribute to the artist's late mother, who passed away in February 2025: resilient, strong, loving and deeply protective of her children. Her motherhood became an act of resistance.

YEAR

2026

MEDIUM

Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

90 × 55 × 60 cm · 35 × 22 × 24 in

PRICE

R 95 000



10

## *Mkabayi kaJama*

A commanding portrait of a woman who refused to exist at the margins of power. A Zulu princess, daughter of Jama kaNdaba, remembered as a strategist and kingmaker within the Zulu royal house.

YEAR

2026

MEDIUM

Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

90 × 55 × 60 cm · 35 × 22 × 24 in

PRICE

R 95 000



11

## *uNdlunkulu II*

This Undlunkulu does not announce herself loudly; she endures. Her power lies in restraint, in the quiet persistence of being central yet often unseen: the keeper of tradition, and its silent negotiator.

YEAR

2026

MEDIUM

Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

86 × 58 × 66 cm · 34 × 23 × 26 in

PRICE

USD 8 500



12

## *Birthmark*

A meditation on birthright, inherited wisdom and the responsibility of being born carrying something greater than oneself. Ndabuko's birthright is wisdom; his mark is compassion.

YEAR

2026

MEDIUM

Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

78 × 45 × 45 cm · 31 × 18 × 18 in

PRICE

R 78 000



13

## *Okhethiweyo – The Chosen*

---

On being chosen, and the responsibility that accompanies a spiritual calling.

YEAR

2026

MEDIUM

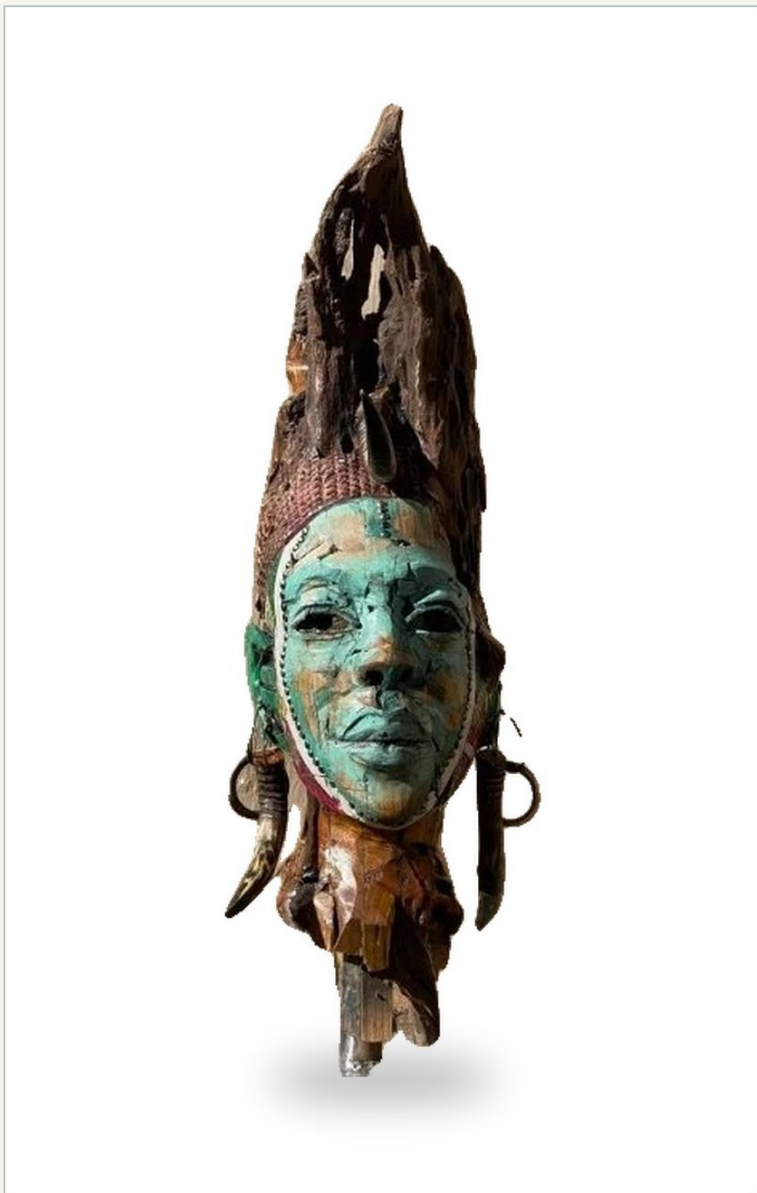
Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

80 × 48 × 48 cm · 31 × 19 × 19 in

PRICE

● Sold



14

## *Ubizo – The Calling*

YEAR

2026

MEDIUM

Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

103 × 42 × 34 cm · 41 × 17 × 13 in

PRICE

● Sold



15

## *Conscience*

Unembeza (conscience) reflects on the inner voice that guides us towards deeper spiritual awareness. Through questioning, reflection and discernment, the work invites us to move beyond inherited beliefs and seek a more personal understanding of truth.

YEAR

2026

MEDIUM

Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

70 × 40 × 40 cm · 28 × 16 × 16 in

PRICE

R 78 000



16

## *Ubuwele I*

From the Twin Life series: mirrored faces reflecting spiritual continuity and the relationship between the living and their ancestors.

YEAR

2026

MEDIUM

Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

82 × 43 × 43 cm · 32 × 17 × 17 in

PRICE

R 95 000



17

## *Ubuwele II*

The second face of the Twin Life series, shown together with its pair.

YEAR

2026

MEDIUM

Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

79 × 45 × 45 cm · 31 × 18 × 18 in

PRICE

R 95 000



18

## *Ukuhloba*

Adornment: a celebration of cultural pride, told through the story of a young man named Julukani.

YEAR

2026

MEDIUM

Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

70 × 39 × 39 cm · 28 × 15 × 15 in

PRICE

R 95 000



19

## *Imbadada*

Homage to the Zulu sandal traditionally made from recycled tyres, a metaphor for ingenuity and endurance.

YEAR

2026

MEDIUM

Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

76 × 40 × 36 cm · 30 × 16 × 14 in

PRICE

R 95 000



20

## *Bantu Blue*

Bantu Blue explores the connection between water, ancestry and spiritual calling, reflecting on how memory, tradition and inherited wisdom guide and sustain us.

YEAR

2026

MEDIUM

Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

73 × 39 × 38 cm · 29 × 15 × 15 in

PRICE

R 95 000



21

## *Bantu Red*

YEAR

2026

MEDIUM

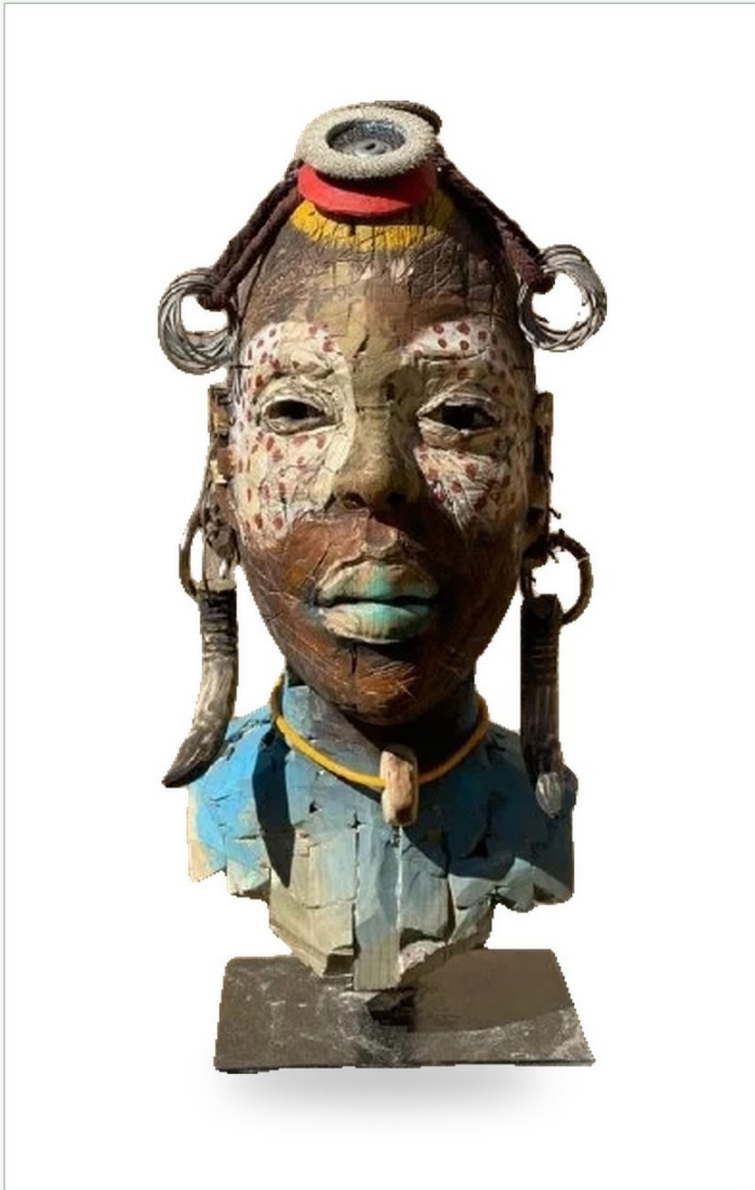
Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

75 × 45 × 36 cm · 30 × 18 × 14 in

PRICE

R 95 000



22

## *Isibindi Gidi*

Isibindi Gidi celebrates the courage to embrace one's identity, overcome rejection and forge a path forward with resilience and determination.

YEAR

2026

MEDIUM

Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

70 × 47 × 48 cm · 28 × 19 × 19 in

PRICE

● Sold



23

## *Onje ngezihlabathi zolwandle*

*(Like the Sands of the Ocean)*

Onje Ngezihlabathi Zolwandle explores Black beauty, identity and belonging through a richly assembled portrait that challenges inherited colonial standards and celebrates the many forms beauty can take.

YEAR

2026

MEDIUM

Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

70 × 47 × 42 cm · 28 × 19 × 17 in

PRICE

R 95 000

24

## *The Healing of the Calabash*

Ancestral wisdom, healing and the preservation of indigenous knowledge.

YEAR

2026

MEDIUM

Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

80 × 41 × 40 cm · 31 × 16 × 16 in

PRICE

R 95 000





25

## *War Between Dark and Light*

War Between Dark and Light explores the emotional and spiritual struggle of losing oneself within a manipulative relationship. Ultimately, the work speaks to healing, awakening and the courage to reclaim one's inner light and sense of self.

YEAR

2026

MEDIUM

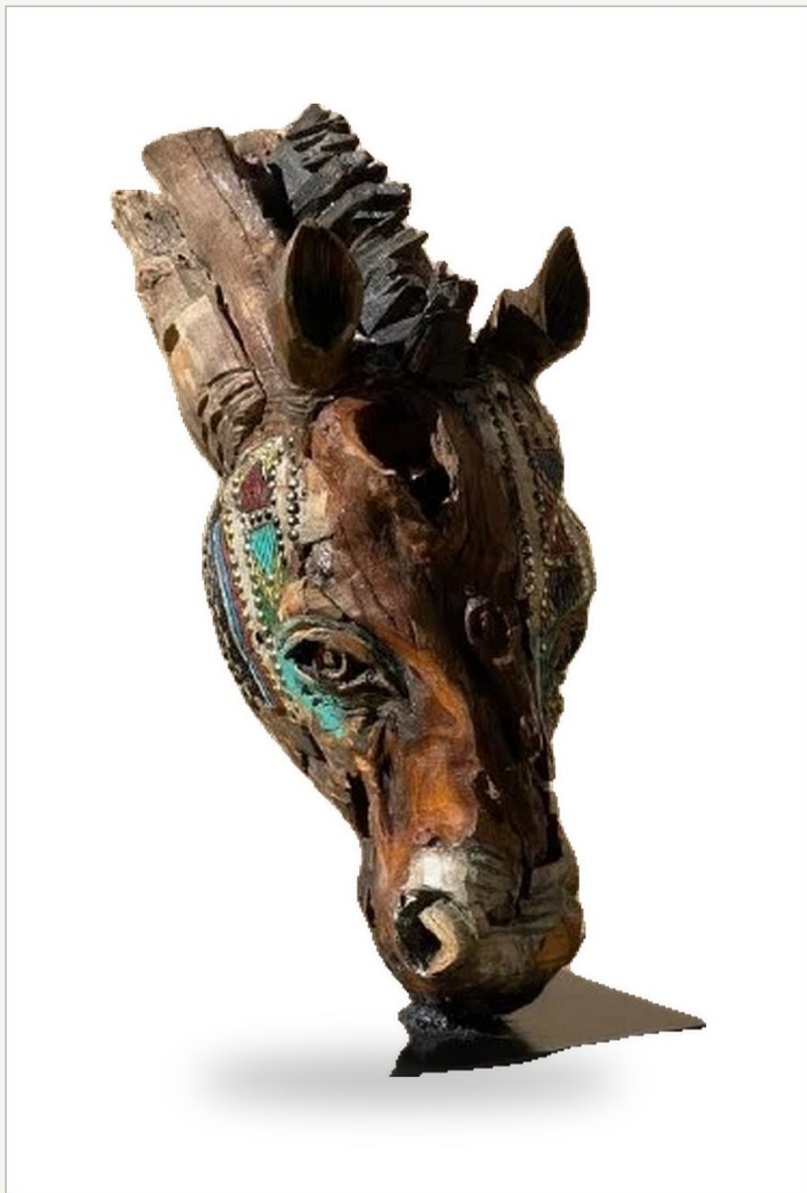
Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

72 × 48 × 40 cm · 28 × 19 × 16 in

PRICE

R 95 000



26

## *Stallion Ontsundu*

Stallion Ontsundu honours the memory of Ndabuko's father through his beloved horse, symbolising strength, peace, authority and a lasting connection to family and heritage.

YEAR

2026

MEDIUM

Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

80 × 50 × 30 cm · 31 × 20 × 12 in

PRICE

● Sold

27

## *uMafungwase*

YEAR

2025

MEDIUM

Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

63 × 90 × 62 cm · 25 × 35 × 24 in

PRICE

● Sold





28

## *Intsikazi*

YEAR

2026

MEDIUM

Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

98 × 28 × 35 cm · 39 × 11 × 14 in

PRICE

R 23 000



29

## *Makweyama*

YEAR

2026

MEDIUM

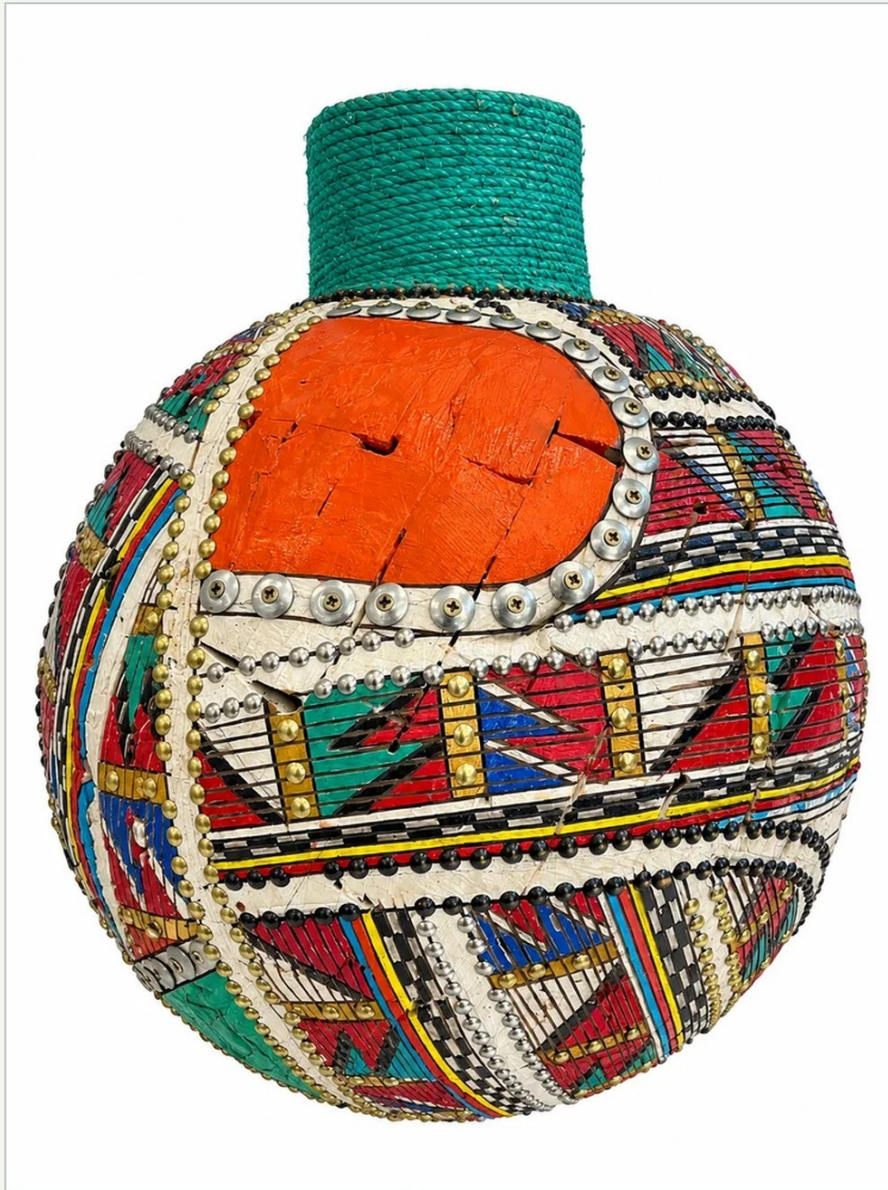
Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

100 × 22 × 28 cm · 39 × 9 × 11 in

PRICE

R 23 000



30

## *Incaza*

YEAR

2024

MEDIUM

Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

70 × 58 cm · 28 × 23 in

PRICE

● Sold



31

## *Incasa I*

---

YEAR

2024

MEDIUM

Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

50 × 36 × 36 cm · 20 × 14 × 14 in

PRICE

R 57 500



32

## *Igula Lasemsamo*

YEAR

2024

MEDIUM

Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

40 × 35 × 35 cm · 16 × 14 × 14 in

PRICE

R 57 500

33

## *Mamsamo*

---

YEAR

2026

MEDIUM

Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

32 × 35 × 35 cm · 13 × 14 × 14 in

PRICE

● Sold



34

## *Mancishana*

---

YEAR

2024

MEDIUM

Mixed media

DIMENSIONS

42 × 35 × 35 cm · 17 × 14 × 14 in

PRICE

R 57 500





*Our heritage is not something that exists only  
behind us. It is alive. It lives within us, moves with us  
and continues to shape who we are becoming.*

---

NDABUKO NTULI



THE ARTIST

# Ndabuko Ntuli

PHOTOGRAPH: CLINT STRYDOM



IN HIS WORDS

---

“To me, Isambulo is an awakening, a revelation of what has always existed within us but may have been forgotten, hidden or misunderstood. It is an invitation to reconnect with our spiritual roots, our ancestors and the knowledge they continue to carry.”

“Being a multidisciplinary artist allows me to express my calling through different mediums, materials, textures and forms. I do not see my spiritual calling and my artistic practice as separate. They are deeply intertwined. My calling provides the spiritual foundation of my work, while art gives me a language through which I can explore, question and translate these experiences into something tangible.”

“I hope visitors leave the exhibition having experienced more than

the artworks themselves. I hope they begin to see themselves differently and recognise that our ancestors are not simply part of the past, but an enduring presence within our identities, guiding the present and shaping the future.”

“Our heritage is not something that exists only behind us. It is alive. It lives within us, moves with us and continues to shape who we are becoming.”

Ndabuko Ntuli

BIOGRAPHY

---

Ndabuko Ntuli (b. 1975, KwaZulu-Natal) is a multidisciplinary artist: painter, sculptor, recording musician, actor and sangoma. Born and raised in the Zulu heartland of KwaZulu-Natal, he moved to Johannesburg at a young age and lives and works in Alexandra Township. All of these strands meet in the artworks, which carry, whatever the medium, the through-line of Zulu storytelling.

Affectionately known as “the master of trash”, Ntuli builds his sculptures from found and discarded materials: wood offcuts, rope, rubber, cans, bottle tops, tacks and beads, cut, bound, nailed and layered into form, then painted in the bold colour and geometry of Zulu beadwork. Seen close, the surfaces read as abstract accumulation; from a distance, a face resolves. He says plainly that the energy of life in Alexandra and its community are a fertile breeding ground for his creativity.

His grandfather, the sculptor Masobeshe Ntuli, is his central influence, honoured in the solo exhibition *Umlayezo Kamkhulu Wami / My Grandfather’s Message* (2018). A consistent theme runs across his work: traditionalism mixed with the everyday. Haunting portraits of elders and, more recently, heads of Zulu women (queens, heroines, the grandmother) are created from what the city throws away and given the colour language of ceremony.

He has exhibited with The Melrose Gallery since *SculptX* 2017, and his work is held in private collections in the United States, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Germany and Lebanon.

## CURRICULUM VITAE

## BORN

**1975** KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

## LIVES AND WORKS

Alexandra Township, Johannesburg

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

**2026** Isambulo (Revelations), The Melrose Gallery, Johannesburg

**2018** Umlayezo Kamkhulu Wami / My Grandfather's Message,  
The Melrose Gallery, Johannesburg

## ART FAIRS

**2018** Harlem Fine Art Show, New York

**2014** 20 Years of Democratic Rule in South Africa, Chicago Art Fair

## PUBLICATIONS

**2017** Izibongo: Celebrating Art from Africa and the Diaspora, Issue 1

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

**2020** Introspection – Art of Contemporary Africa, Sandton City

**2020** SculptX 2017–2019, International Sculpture Day (online)

**2019** Material Identities, The Melrose Gallery, Johannesburg

**2019** Winter Group Show, The Melrose Gallery, Johannesburg

**2017–19** SculptX, The Melrose Gallery, Johannesburg

**2017** Art at the Clocktower, V&A Waterfront, Cape Town

**2016** Stephan Welz Gallery, Sandton, Johannesburg

**2015** Imba Ya Sarai Gallery, Johannesburg

**2014** Speak Who Is Listening, Art Smart Gallery, Durban

**2013** Soweto Art Gallery, Hyde Park, Johannesburg

## COLLECTIONS

Private collections in the United States, Belgium,  
the United Kingdom, Germany and Lebanon

## REPRESENTATION

The Melrose Gallery, Johannesburg



IN THE STUDIO

# Ndabuko Ntuli

PHOTOGRAPH: CLINT STRYDOM

## CHECKLIST OF WORKS

|    | TITLE                    | YEAR | DIMENSIONS        | PRICE     |
|----|--------------------------|------|-------------------|-----------|
| 01 | Amathongo Asekhaya I     | 2026 | 106 × 88 × 12 cm  | R 75 000  |
| 02 | Amathongo Asekhaya II    | 2026 | 106 × 89 × 12 cm  | R 75 000  |
| 03 | Onamathongo              | 2026 | 125 × 162 × 30 cm | R 150 000 |
| 04 | Umafungase               | 2024 | 160 × 120 cm      | R 172 500 |
| 05 | Ebuntwaneni I            | 2026 | 178 × 114 × 6 cm  | R 150 000 |
| 06 | Ebuntwaneni II           | 2026 | 178 × 111 × 10 cm | ● Sold    |
| 07 | Kuyoshiyana ukwenza      | 2026 | 182 × 123 cm      | ● Sold    |
| 08 | Mkhulu Masobeshe         | 2026 | 60 × 30 × 30 cm   | R 78 000  |
| 09 | Mangcongo                | 2026 | 90 × 55 × 60 cm   | R 95 000  |
| 10 | Mkabayi kaJama           | 2026 | 90 × 55 × 60 cm   | R 95 000  |
| 11 | uNdlunkulu II            | 2026 | 86 × 58 × 66 cm   | USD 8 500 |
| 12 | Birthmark                | 2026 | 78 × 45 × 45 cm   | R 78 000  |
| 13 | Okhethiweyo – The Chosen | 2026 | 80 × 48 × 48 cm   | ● Sold    |
| 14 | Ubizo – The Calling      | 2026 | 103 × 42 × 34 cm  | ● Sold    |
| 15 | Conscience               | 2026 | 70 × 40 × 40 cm   | R 78 000  |
| 16 | Ubuwele I                | 2026 | 82 × 43 × 43 cm   | R 95 000  |
| 17 | Ubuwele II               | 2026 | 79 × 45 × 45 cm   | R 95 000  |

CHECKLIST OF WORKS (CONTINUED)

|    | TITLE                        | YEAR | DIMENSIONS       | PRICE    |
|----|------------------------------|------|------------------|----------|
| 18 | Ukuhloba                     | 2026 | 70 × 39 × 39 cm  | R 95 000 |
| 19 | Imbadada                     | 2026 | 76 × 40 × 36 cm  | R 95 000 |
| 20 | Bantu Blue                   | 2026 | 73 × 39 × 38 cm  | R 95 000 |
| 21 | Bantu Red                    | 2026 | 75 × 45 × 36 cm  | R 95 000 |
| 22 | Isibindi Gidi                | 2026 | 70 × 47 × 48 cm  | ● Sold   |
| 23 | Onje ngezihlabathi zolwandle | 2026 | 70 × 47 × 42 cm  | R 95 000 |
| 24 | The Healing of the Calabash  | 2026 | 80 × 41 × 40 cm  | R 95 000 |
| 25 | War Between Dark and Light   | 2026 | 72 × 48 × 40 cm  | R 95 000 |
| 26 | Stallion Ontsundu            | 2026 | 80 × 50 × 30 cm  | ● Sold   |
| 27 | uMafungwase                  | 2025 | 63 × 90 × 62 cm  | ● Sold   |
| 28 | Intsikazi                    | 2026 | 98 × 28 × 35 cm  | R 23 000 |
| 29 | Makweyama                    | 2026 | 100 × 22 × 28 cm | R 23 000 |
| 30 | Incaza                       | 2024 | 70 × 58 cm       | ● Sold   |
| 31 | Incasa I                     | 2024 | 50 × 36 × 36 cm  | R 57 500 |
| 32 | Igula Lasemsamo              | 2024 | 40 × 35 × 35 cm  | R 57 500 |
| 33 | Mamsamo                      | 2026 | 32 × 35 × 35 cm  | ● Sold   |
| 34 | Mancishana                   | 2024 | 42 × 35 × 35 cm  | R 57 500 |

48 ● Sold. All works mixed media. Dimensions in centimetres. Prices in South African rand unless stated.

COLOPHON

---

EXHIBITION

Isambulo (Revelations)  
Ndabuko Ntuli  
23 October – 15 November 2026

VENUE

The Melrose Gallery  
10 The High Street  
Melrose Arch, Johannesburg

EXHIBITION TEXT

The Melrose Gallery

ARTIST STATEMENTS

Ndabuko Ntuli

BIOGRAPHY

The Melrose Gallery

PHOTOGRAPHY

Artist portraits: Clint Strydom  
Artworks and installation views courtesy of  
the artist and The Melrose Gallery

ENQUIRIES

curator@themelrosegallery.com  
themelrosegallery.com



THE MELROSE GALLERY

10 THE HIGH STREET · MELROSE ARCH · JOHANNESBURG

[THEMELROSEGALLERY.COM](http://THEMELROSEGALLERY.COM)

WHAT HAS ALWAYS EXISTED WITHIN US