



MUSEUM OF NAMIBIAN FASHION

POCKET GUIDE

GERDA HENKEL STIFTUNG



Museums Association of Namibia
Making Museums Matter - Since 1990



Ministry of Education,
Youth and Sport



Stiftung
Preußischer Kulturbesitz



NATIONAL
MUSEUM
OF
NAMIBIA



FASHION COUNCIL
of NAMIBIA



unesco

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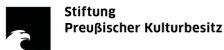
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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,
ARTS, AND CULTURE



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Preußischer Kulturbesitz



FASHION COUNCIL
of NAMIBIA



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INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

The Museums Association of Namibia (MAN) worked in partnership with the NMN and the University of Namibia (UNAM) on a project funded by the Gerda Henkel Foundation and one component of the project is the development of the Museum of Namibian Fashion.

This collaborative project sought to unlock the healing and creative potential of the colonial collections from Namibia held at the EM in Berlin, Germany and the Ethnographic Collection at the National Museum of Namibia in Windhoek. It reconnects the collections with each other and with their heritage communities, researchers and artists in Namibia.

Based on collaborative provenance research between Namibian and German scholars, objects from the EM in Berlin, Germany will be brought back to Namibia and put into dialogue with the historical collections of the National Museum of Namibia, forming the basis for training sessions in provenance research, conservation, documentation, digitization, and curation. As part of the project, staff of the National Museum of Namibia, scholars and students from UNAM, and staff of MAN have been facilitating workshops with heritage experts and researchers, community representatives, and artists to engage with the collections at the NMN and conducting fieldwork with digitised collections in heritage communities throughout the country.

The project's aim is to reactivate knowledge about the objects, to document immaterial cultural heritage and to provide a vital source of inspiration for artists and designers. The knowledge thus created, including oral histories and artworks, will be shared with the wider public in an online database, a publication, and in this museum, as well as in an exhibition at the NMN in Windhoek to be conceptualised in the second phase of the project. By reconnecting stakeholders in Namibia with colonial collections from Berlin and Windhoek, the project seeks to engage with colonial trauma, to spur new cultural production, and to envision decolonial, creative futures.



CONFRONTING COLONIAL PASTS, ENVISIONING CREATIVE FUTURES

PRESERVATION OF ENDANGERED CULTURAL HERITAGE THROUGH COLLABORATIVE CONSERVATION, PROVENANCE RESEARCH, AND CREATIVE KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION USING THE HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS FROM NAMIBIA HELD AT THE ETHNOLOGISCHES MUSEUM IN BERLIN (EM) AND THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NAMIBIA, WINDHOEK (NMN)

CREATING THE MUSEUM OF NAMIBIAN FASHION



Museums are the custodians of our cultural heritage. For the Museum of Namibian Fashion, MAN believes that it is important to preserve the artefacts in this museum because their meaning and design can and will inspire young Namibians working in the creative industries.

It is for this reason that MAN held a stakeholder's workshop to discuss the concept of establishing a Museum of Namibian Fashion. The idea is that the museum will provide an opportunity for visitors to view historical items of clothing and accessories, as well as contemporary designs inspired by Namibia's rich history and cultural diversity. The workshop produced some lively discussions about the definition of Namibian Fashion, which was important in determining the scope of the museum. Participants also urged collaboration with archaeologists and rock art specialists so that the pre-photography history of Namibian clothing can be included in the museum.

A competition was also launched to design a logo for the Museum of Namibian Fashion. The successful designer won a stay at a Lodge sponsored by the Gondwana Collection and a Safari Sweater and Card Holder sponsored by Couture by Kim.

Another workshop held by MAN in the process of the development of the Museum of Namibian Fashion was the Mudwaro workshop which invited Namibian fashion designers, seamstresses and tailors making clothes and accessories to participate. The workshop gave individuals working in the industry the opportunity to interact with historical artefacts. The aim of the workshop was to inspire young Namibian creatives to draw on our cultural roots to develop products that can be worn and will have a uniquely Namibian identity. After the workshop, participants were

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invited to submit ideas for making an item or accessory. A number of participants were commissioned to produce products for show and sale in the Museum of Namibian Fashion.

The Museum of Namibian Fashion showcases past, present and future fashion artefacts from Namibia. The Museum also intends to create further workshops, residencies and other activities that will benefit Fashion designers and seamstresses in terms of training and income-generating opportunities.

THE VIRTUAL MUSEUM OF NAMIBIAN FASHION



The Museums Association of Namibia (MAN) believes that museums should be living organisms that should be updated regularly and able to easily adapt to change. MAN has realised that the COVID-19 pandemic requires museums to adapt and to do things differently. As a result, the idea of a Virtual Museum of Fashion was born and with funding from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the development, launch and establishment of the virtual museum was successful.

The website enables visitors to view items, but also to interact with them by adding comments as well as submitting photographs for possible display in the virtual museum. Ndapewoshali Ndahafa Ashipala from MAN said "We believe that in these times of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have to do things differently. A virtual museum of fashion could create an interactive educational space where we can also showcase Namibian culture to both local and international audiences".



To access the virtual Museum of Namibian Fashion, simply scan this QR code.

iv.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Museums Association of Namibia would like to thank, amongst many others, the following individuals and organisations, for their valuable contributions, research and time spent on the development of the Museum of Namibian Fashion;

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Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture
National Museum of Namibia
University of Namibia
The Fashion Council of Namibia
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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 Elizabeth Tjizuu



The participants of the Museum of Namibian Fashion Stakeholders meeting held on the 25th June, 2020 at Arebbusch Travel Lodge, Windhoek.



Project Advisory Board Members/Stakeholders during the object selection process.



Ndapewoshali Ashipala, Jonathan Fine, Hertha Bukassa, Julia Binter and Golda Ha-Eiros discussing the significance of a tortoise shell (!Uros). Film still from "Tracing Namibian-German Collaborations," a film by Moritz Fehr; Presentation of the Ethnologisches Museum at the Humboldt Forum, 2020. © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, 2020



Nehoa Kautodonkwa, Cynthia Schimming and Julia Binter with Kandina in the depot of the Ethnological Museum Berlin. Film still from "Tracing Namibian-German Collaborations," a film by Moritz Fehr; Presentation of the Ethnologisches Museum at the Humboldt Forum, 2020. © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, 2020

THE MUSEUM GALLERIES

The descriptions presented in this museum are based on the information provided by the working committee, community members and stakeholders. Due to our strong reliance on oral history, slight variations in descriptions or spelling may occur, due to differences in dialects, geographical locations, and other aspects influencing culture and language. The Museum of Namibian Fashion has six galleries. The galleries are organised according to the different materials that are used to make clothing items and accessories.

The focus of these galleries is on historical items but also include contemporary items and items commissioned particularly for the Museum. Two of the galleries demonstrate the manner in which 'traditional' fashion continues to shape the identity of Namibians today. One of these galleries is the "People's Gallery" which consists of photographs that were contributed by the Namibian public during Namibian Heritage Week in 2020 and 2021 whilst the other, "Deep Roots, New Fashion" showcases the work of Namibian fashion designers who draw on our cultural roots to create outfits for the present and the future.



RECEPTION

Omuyakure (Otjiherero)
Olupale (Oshikwanyama)
Kantoro ya Kamogelo (Setswana)
/Uisi //um sa si (!Xung)
!Khõ ðkhumî !khaib (Hai //Om)
Kamuhelo (Silozi)
Ontvangs (Afrikaans)
Evangotambwiro (Rukwangali)
#nû!nâ!nâ-oms (Khoekhoegowab)
Rezeption (German)
Oshinyanga (Oshindonga)

CRAFT SHOP

Ondjuwo yo virandwa/ Ondjuwo yo marandisiro (Otjiherero)
Ofitola (Oshikwanyama)
Lebenkele (Setswana)
Sitora (!Xung)
//Amaxu//gâus (Hai //Om)
Sintolo sa zabuikesezo (Silozi)
Handwerk winkel (Afrikaans)
Sitora (Rukwangali)
//ama//gâus (Khoekhoegowab)



BEADS AND SHELLS

Ovikongo no Undjendje (Otjiherero)
Eengholokofya noilanda (Oshikwanyama)
Kakgetlana le Digaga (Setswana)
!Ui oke !Ui /osng (!Xung)
Garadi & #khorōs (Hai //Om)
Sifaha ni Likapani za minyopi (Silozi)
Nongodi no yikaki (Rukwangali)
Perlen und MuschelIn(German)
Krale en skulpe (Afrikaans)
Omagwe nomihanga (Oshindonga)
Karan tsi #khoron (Khoekhoegowab)

HAIR AND HEADDRESS

Ondjise no tjikaiva/onduru/ohore (Otjiherero)
Eexwiki noidjalomwa yokomutwe (Oshikwanyama)
Moriri le ba diri ba Meriri (Setswana)
!Ûb & !Khaǐgu (Hai //Om)
Milili ni Milili ya kutina (Silozi)
Nohuki no Mugwawo Worukura (Rukwangali)
Haare und Kopfschmuck (German)
Hare en Hooftooisels (Afrikaans)
Omafufu (Oshindonga)
lûn tsi /gapan (Khoekhoegowab)

BEADS AND SHELLS

Ostrich eggshell beads and shells from near and far were highly valued accessories due to the work involved in obtaining them. When traders introduced glass and ceramic beads, these were incorporated into existing accessories and clothing items. Shells and beads can enhance the understanding of trade between different communities.

Walvis Bay, amongst other coastal settlements, was involved in the early trades between communities near the coastal regions, this created new commerce between pre-existing networks, #Khisa-//gubus amongst other communities traded copper beads and cowrie shells (Wallace, 2014: 57).

Do you own any items that are made from any of the materials on this panel?

FEATURED PHOTO

Members of the Ju'/Hoansi Living Museum still pass on the skills of creating ostrich shell beadwork (Photo by Manon Steiner, 22 May 2017).





HAIR AND HEADDRESS

Historical hairstyles and items worn on the head often carried important meanings. This gallery allows visitors to engage with these objects, but also explores and encourages contemporary conversations around hair and headdresses.

Did any of the headdresses in this gallery look familiar to you? Have you ever worn one/do you own one?

Do you know a different name for headdresses? Do you know which other communities wore similar headdresses to those you saw in the museum?

FEATURED PHOTO

A picture of the Siiho which is part of the Helvi Mpingana Kondombolo Cultural Village collection.



MUSEUM OF
NAMIBIAN
FASHION

GALLERY 3

LEATHER AND SKIN

Omikova (Otjiherero)
Oshikafa noshipa (Oshikwanyama)
Letlalo (Setswana)
#Ime /ho (!Xung)
Khob (Hai //Om)
Litalo ni Mukata (Silozi)
Yikova no Yipapa (Rukwangali)
Leer en Vel (Afrikaans)
Leder und Haut (German)
Oombanza niipa (Oshindonga)
!hâun tsi khôn (Khoekhoegowab)

METAL WORK

Oviungura Vyovitenda(Otjiherero)
Oikwaivela/oikwalute (Oshikwanyama)
Tshipi (Setswana)
//Xha (!Xung)
!Uri sîsen-î (Hai //Om)
Museveni wa lisipi(Silozi)
Yirugana youkenentu woyivera (Rukwangali)
Metallarbeiten (German)

LEATHER AND SKIN

LEATHER AND SKIN AS A MARKER OF SOCIAL STATUS

In societies across the world, clothing has been one of the ways in which people show their wealth and status. Rules (sumptuary) sometimes existed, dictating that only a few people were allowed to wear certain items. For example, among the Vakwangali, the skin of a rare animal, such as a giraffe, could only be worn by the hunter's wife (Caley, 2020: 21). In Aawambo communities, an individual's clothing could reveal the kingdom and clan that they belonged to. Only members of the royal family were permitted to wear the skins of the larger game, such as giraffe, leopard and buffalo. Relative poverty was also reflected in the fact that poorer people were not able to obtain cow fat to keep their skins in good condition (Shigwedha, 2004: 28). A man wearing a skin with the ears of the animal and tail hanging at the back was considered to be of high value by the Vakwangali community. There was no symbolic meaning to it other than fascination (Caley, 2020).

LEATHER AND SKIN PROCESSING

The Vakwangali tanned skin through a labour intensive process that involved scraping the skin and rubbing in (in to the skin) a vegetable lotion that cured the skin and kept it soft (Caley, 2020: 21). In Aawambo communities, leather is processed using natural materials such as Omutulu as a drying agent to achieve a light brown colour, in a process known as Okusindika. The process starts with the omutulu leaves being rolled inside a fresh membrane of the animal for five or more days. Different shades can be achieved by adding other leaves, but omutulu was the main ingredient used to give a light brown colour. The colour was believed to compliment the red colour obtained when olukula was used as a red body lotion. To maintain a soft and smooth tanned skin, women applied a mixture of olukula and oombeke oil. The oil would be kept inside a gourd (Shigwedha, 2004, p.27).

FEATURED PHOTO

Worn by OvaHimba women (omukazendu). This sample was made in 2020 by Ms Kajoo Muharukua. (Collection of the Museum of Namibian Fashion).





METAL WORK

Works of metal have been used for various reasons by the different communities in Namibia. One of the common metals used was copper, which was mostly extracted from the Tsumeb area, by the San communities. The copper was then traded with other communities such as the AaNdonga, who had blacksmiths who smelted the copper. The smelted copper was incorporated into their daily lives and made items such as bangles, necklaces, rings and knives.

The different communities then manufactured items they deemed necessary from the smelted copper and attached cultural values to them. This is an indication that culture and beliefs have always been evolving. Some objects were made purely for aesthetic value.



To access the video of Ms. Elizabeth Betty Hango, discussing the Ongodo, simply scan this QR code.

FEATURED PHOTO

Photograph of metal ornaments from the OvaHimba Communities which are part of the Owela Museum collection.



PLANTS, BONES AND ROCKS

Ovikunua, Omatupa no ruuwa/Otuuwa (Otjiherero)
Oimeno, Omakipa Nomamanya (Oshikwanyama)
Dimela, Marapo le matlapa (Setswana)
!Hngsng oke //Urisng, !Usng oke !Umsng (!Xung)
Hain, #Khon & !Gareluigu (Hai //Om)
Limela, Masapo ni Macwe (Silozi)
Yimeno, Yisupa no Mamanya (Rukwangali)
Plante, Bene en Rotse (Afrikaans)
Pflanzen, Knochen und Felsen (German)
limeno, omasipa nomamanya (Oshindonga)
Hain, #khön tsi luin (Khoekhoegowab)

TATTOOS AND BODY SCARIFICATION

Otjirimbo/Otjivavize no rutu nduna ovivavize (Otjiherero)
Omavala Apya/ Oilimbo yokomalutu (Oshikwanyama)
Mekgabiso ya letlalo (Setswana)
/Ho!ng /xau Tsi Oa (!Xung)
Sorosil Dillkhaasib (Hai //Om)
Maswaniso a fa mubili (Silozi)
Mafano va faneka korutu romuntu ntani no nzambo (Rukwangali)
Tatoeëmerke en liggaamsverkorting (Afrikaans)
Tätowierungen und Körpervernarbungen (German)
Oosha, uupolo noothulukupya (Oshindonga)
Sorosil!gao#gasens (Khoekhoegowab)



PLANTS, BONES AND ROCKS

Organic materials have been and continue to be used to adorn the body for various purposes. Certain plants, bones and rocks have been viewed to have medicinal, spiritual and ornamental purposes. There has always been a similarity, not only in the design, but also in the function of these items between different communities. These similarities are common whether the items are used as good luck charms for hunting or to perfume the body.

Have you ever used any of the items in this gallery? Do you know any interesting pictures, videos and/or stories about items made from plants bones and rocks that you would like to share?

FEATURED PHOTO

A picture of a Rudeve which is a skirt made from reeds. This skirt is worn in the Vakwangali communities, especially during traditional dances (Epera). This particular Rudeve is part of the Helvi Mpingana Kondombolo Cultural Village collection.

TATTOOS AND BODY SCARIFICATION

Ornamental scars consist of patterns, which differ between different communities in Namibia. These patterns are achieved through scarification with an addition of pigment to the wound. Tattoos may be worn for different reasons in the different communities around Namibia. Recently, getting tattoos or piercings has become increasingly more popular, especially amongst the youth. There are different reasons for people taking them. For example, getting a tattoo can be a way to express oneself, or to visualise something that holds an important meaning. It is also a way to create a sense of identity and show autonomy of one's body. In this gallery we can see some examples of modern tattoos and piercings, with the meanings behind them.



To access the video of Ms. Selma Nelago Kambwela discussing the markings on her face and the reason why this was done in Uukwaludhi, simply scan this QR code.



Do you know which person holds the Guinness World Record for the most tattoos? Scan this QR code to find out more.



To access the video of tattoo artist, Mr. Lucas "Souljaboy" Nekongo discussing how he became a tattoo artist and how tattooing has become increasingly popular in the years he has been in the industry, simply scan this QR code.

FEATURED PHOTO

Copper rings hanging from a woman's hair, red ornament from store beads, copper bead earrings and scarification (Photo:Peabody Museum, PM2001.29.482).





TEXTILE

Oviyatja (Otjiherero)
Oikwamalapi/Oiyata (Oshikwanyama)
Khai (Setswana)
Tsisng oke Dha (!Xung)
Labi-i (Hai //Om)
Lisila (Silozi)
Siyata (Rukwangali)
Tekstiel (Afrikaans)
Textil (German)
Iiyata (Oshindonga)
lān (Khoekhoegowab)

DEEPROOTS, NEW FASHION

Okuzikamisa oukoto, Omuzaro ouye wakandino (Otjiherero)
Omidi Dopamifyuululwakalo, Omidjalo Dipe (Oshikwanyama)
Mekgabo e mesha (Setswana)
/Ua!ng Tsi Oa, //Arisng (!Xung)
!Gam Inomagu, lAsa #nubi (Hai //Om)
Mibisi ye Tungile, Mutinelo o Muncha (Silozi)
Mudwaro goposiruwo sAntantani (Rukwangali)
Diepwortels, Nuwe Mode (Afrikaans)
Deeproofs, Neue Mode (German)
Omizalo dhopashinanena (Oshindonga)
lasa#nubis, !hao!nâsi!urus (Khoekhoegowab)

TEXTILE

Woven fabrics were introduced into Namibia through trade from the early nineteenth century. The replacement of clothing based on animal skins was, initially, closely linked to people's conversion to Christianity. Missionaries supplied women with dresses to cover their perceived nakedness. New forms of traditional dress emerged that used the new materials.

FEATURED PHOTO

An Odelela Skirt worn by the Ovawambo communities which is part of the Helvi Mpingana Kondombolo Cultural Village Collection.



DEEPROOTS, NEW FASHION

The Deep Roots, New Fashion Gallery showcases the work of Namibian fashion designers who incorporate features from our cultural roots to create new styles with a uniquely Namibian flavour.

COUTURE BY KIM SAFARI LINE

"I am a Namibian fashion designer with a background in tourism management, geography and visual arts. My collections are a result of passion and experience. My 'Safari Line' is inspired by the culture and history of the Aawambo kingdoms of northern Namibia. The garments are created with the Odelela material that Aawambo people use as traditional wear. The material was introduced by the Finnish missionaries during the colonial period. The motive behind this is to promote Aawambo culture and history by creating beautiful garments and making them available to both local and international markets. I believe these garments make an excellent souvenir for any visitor to Namibia." - **Kaino Ipuleni Matheus**



THE VAKWANGALI FASHION COLLECTION

"My Vakwangali Fashion Collection was created through a practice led approach. Information was obtained from interviews and by looking at photographs and objects in local archives and museums. This process of sifting through information from different sources was vital for a better understanding of Vakwangali traditional clothing. I uncovered stories that helped me understand the value and meaning embedded in Vakwangali traditional clothing. Each garment in the Vakwangali Fashion Collection was made up of a character derived from the narratives gathered through interviews, which she consolidated with photographs and artefacts I observed regarding Vakwangali traditional clothing." - **Maria Caley.**





MUSEUM OF
NAMIBIAN
FASHION

GALLERY 6

THE PEOPLE'S GALLERY

Ovandu (Otjiherero)

Ovanhu (Oshikwanyama)

Batho (Setswana)

Dju (!Xung)

Khoen (Hai //Om)

Batu (Silozi)

Vantu (Rukwangali)

Khoen (Khoekhoegowab)

Die Mense (Afrikaans)

Die Volksgalerie (German)

Aantu (Oshindonga)

THE PEOPLE'S GALLERY

This gallery demonstrates the manner in which 'traditional' fashion continues to shape the identity of Namibians today. "The People's Gallery" consists of photographs that were contributed by the Namibian public during Namibian Heritage Week in 2020.

Namibian fashion is incredibly vast. The museum aims to showcase all forms of Namibian fashion, based on the submissions made by the Namibian public. The museum aims to be a great space to celebrate Namibia's great fashion, past, present and future. The museum also showcases Namibian fashion to the world as Namibia receives over a million foreign visitors every year.

The museum complements the transient regional cultural festivals (organised by Directorate of Culture within the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture) that have provided an important focal point for safeguarding traditions in Namibia. The museum showcases both traditional Namibian fashion and the diverse contemporary forms of Namibian fashion at present, across all cultures.

The museum not only showcases artefacts and information, it aims to be an interactive one where visitors can enjoy the experience of Namibian fashion and culture.

With further development, we also aim for the museum to be a venue for fashion shows, performances, conferences and workshops and perhaps with time, fashion design classes.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

There are many stories to be told. The Museum of Namibian Fashion should be an organic museum where displays are regularly updated and changed.

There is no limit on the growth and development of the museum and all the components of the museum. We plan to have the museum get bigger and better with time.

If you would like to contribute to The PEOPLE'S Gallery or to any of the other galleries, please talk to the Curator of the Museum of Namibian Fashion or leave your contact details at the reception.

OPENING HOURS

MONDAY - FRIDAY

08h00 - 13h00 and 14h00 - 17h00

WEEKENDS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Closed

CONTACT DETAILS

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A Patchwork Dress worn by various communities in Namibia and neighbouring countries such as Botswana. This dress was made by Lena Afrikaner of the co-operative in Kamanjab in 2020. (Collection of the Museum of Namibian Fashion).