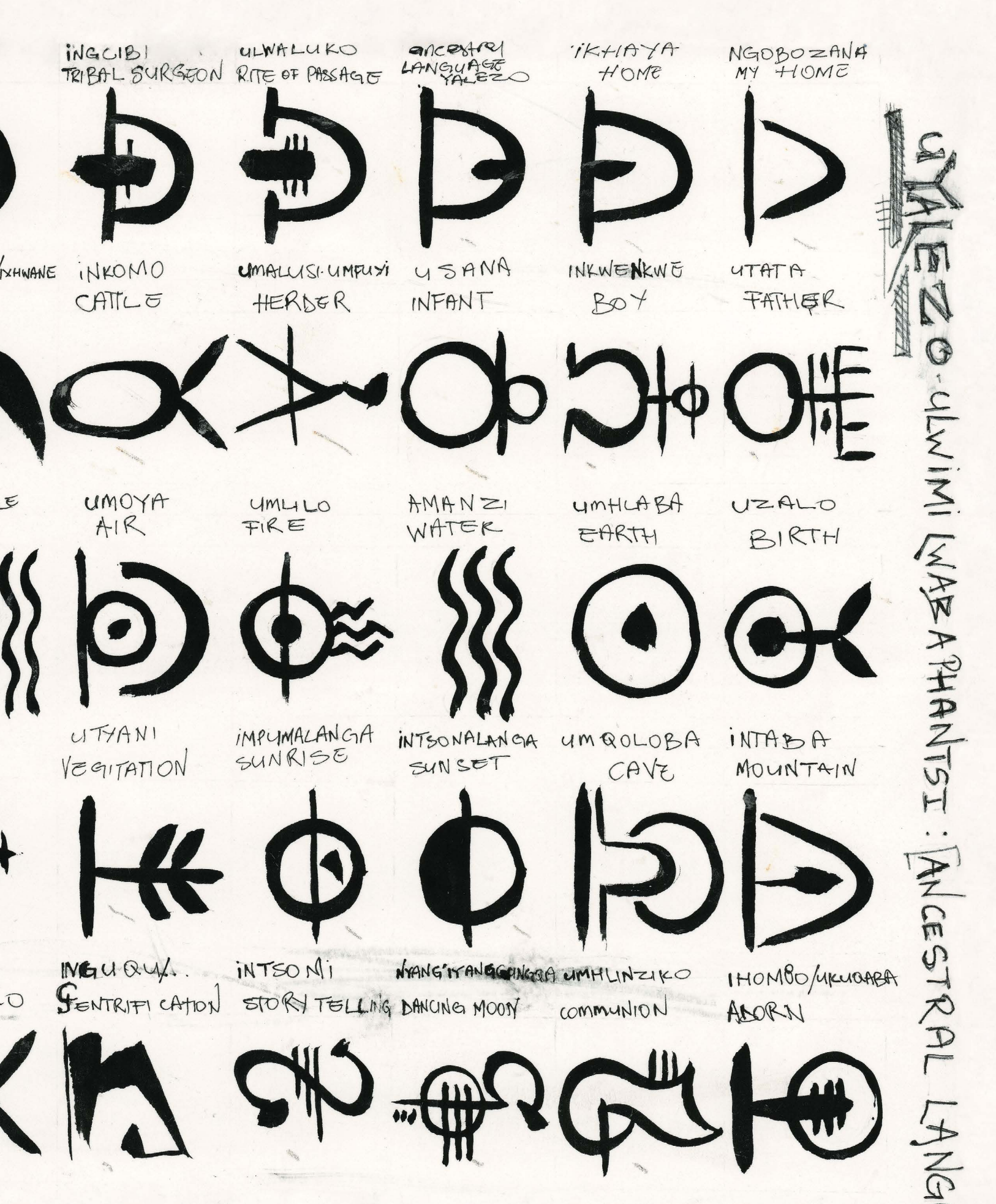
ANDILE DYALVANE

ANCESTRAL WISDOM
UBUNZULULWAZI LWABAPHANTSI


iMBEWU
SEED
UMAMA
MOTHER
USAPHO
FAMILY
iNYANGE
THE ELDER(WISE I)
iXHWELE
MEDICINE MAN
iSANUSI
SHAMAN
UMLIMI
FARMER
UKUFA
DEATH
ABAPHANTSI
ANCESTERS
IZILO
TOTEM ANIMALS
iMFUYO
DOMESTIC ANIMALS
iMBUZI
GOAT
UMALUME
UNCLE
UMLAMBO
RIVER
INDONGA
DONGAS
ITHAFA/IDLELO
PASTURE
iMVULA
RAIN
ULWANDI
OCEON
UMAFUNGWASHWE
1st BORN GIRL
ISICAWU
CLEANSING HERB
iMPEPHO
CLERY SAGE
iNGQAYI
BEER POT
UMGA
ACACIA
iKHALA
ALOE
INDLALIFA
1st BORN SON
UMTSHAYELO
BROOM/BRUSHES
UBUHLANTI
CATTLE FOLD
UNANISO NGOLWAZI
IMPART IN KNOWLADGE
IGUBU
DRUM
IDLADLA
GRAIN SIL


iNGCIBI
TRIBAL SURGEON
uLWALUKO
RITE OF PASSAGE
ancestral
LANGUAGE
YALEZO
iKHAYA
HOME
NGOBOZANA
MY HOME
uYALEZO-uLWIMI LWABAPHANTSI : ANCESTRAL LANGU
/XHWANE
iNKOMO
CATTLE
uMALUSI.UMPUYI
HERDER
u SANA
INFANT
INKWENKWE
BOY
UTATA
FATHER
UMOYA
AIR
UMLILO
FIRE
AMANZI
WATER
UMHLABA
EARTH
UZALO
BIRTH
uTYANI
VEGITATION
iMPUMALANGA
SUNRISE
iNTSONALANGA
SUNSET
UMQOLOBA
CAVE
iNTABA
MOUNTAIN
INGUQU/..
GENTRIFICATION
iNTSOMI
STORY TELLING
NYANG'IYANGGINGA
DANCING MOON
UMHLINZIKO
COMMUNION
IHOMBO/UKUQABA
ADORN

ANDILE DYALVANE

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ALMAS ART
FOUNDATION

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CAMAGU

FOREWORD

Maker, clay-healer, vessel, portal, conduit. These are all words that emanate from Andile Dyalvane's practice. Perhaps his life's work has no beginning and no end, as he happens to be channelling thousands of years of making, of spirituality, of language, of being in alignment with nature. His story carries particular weight in this continuum as it overlaps with the displacement and trauma inflicted on the Xhosa people of Eastern Cape. He feels a responsibility, has a gift and the intention to bring healing, reconciliation, reconnection to the ancestral wisdom through his work. Clay, that is made of earth and that will return to earth, is the medium that carries this continuum in each particle. Dyalvane activates the clay to deliver this intention. The pieces carry and reverberate with this energy, this intention.

I have admired Dyalvane's practice for some time and have been captivated by the maker's story, his articulation of his process, studio practice and his daily ritual ceremonies. I am very proud we were able to capture the whole story behind the mesmerising ceramic pieces and bring all these fascinating components to light through this publication and the documentary film. I heartfully thank Andile Dyalvane for accepting our invitation and taking part in this project, bringing with him the openness and generosity of spirit he embeds in his work. We are grateful to our wonderful writers Alexis Dyalvane and Olivia Barrell for their resonant texts, exploring the different facets and layers of Dyalvane's work in such depth. I would also like to thank the whole team at Southern Guild, who have provided us with archives and documentation of Andile's works and supported us in the production of the publication and film. As usual, this publication exists in tandem with a documentary film produced with the wonderful team at Head in the Clouds in Cape Town and I invite the readers to watch this film as well.

As part of the Almas Art Foundation team, I found Andile's emphasis on community and his desire to imbue every piece with intention both very familiar and inspiring. And I would like to echo his words in showing gratitude to our growing family of artists, creatives, writers and collaborators: Camagu!

Farah Jirdeh Fonkenell
Founder and CEO, Almas Art Foundation

CONVERSATION WITH ANDILE DYALVANE

Can you please introduce yourself?

Camagu! Chosi! My name is Majolandile, Jola, Mphankomo, Qengeba, Mzukulwana wenkwakhwa, Vukuz'mbethe, born the Bhele, Langa, Gudu, Khuboni. *Camagu*.[1]

The surname is Dyalvane from my great-great-grandfather. I come from the Eastern Cape, from a small village called Ngobozana in a small district called Qobo-Qobo, eMadamini. This is inland, in South Africa's countryside, a beautiful landscape with beautiful mountains, grassland, rivers and valleys. This is where I was born and grew up, where most of what I know now comes from, where, as a child, I was introduced to my ancestors and groomed by my villagers, by the women of the village, my mother, my aunt, and the elders. And most of my rites of passage and milestones in growing, I've experienced and received there, Ngobozana.

I was born to uMthobeli Dyalvane, my father, who married Nofezile Dyalvane, my mother. Both my parents are late right now, so they are deemed ancestors. I had seven siblings. We lost two of my siblings, so five are left now. I was told I come from a lineage of many men. So, when I introduced myself, I mentioned all those names because that's a way of acknowledging them; that's how we were taught. You learn to acknowledge and remember where you came from. I also mentioned my mother's side of Nofezile. *Camagu*.

Can you describe your childhood? What were your parents like?

My childhood was a very eventful one. We had a lot of livestock, sheep, goats, cows, horses, chickens, ducks...It's a vast landscape, and as children, we learnt at a very early age how to work the land, and how to observe the land and the seasons. That means that as a child, you have specific chores that also help you learn how to survive, participate, and contribute to the family. We also had Western education, and there was a Christianity part of it as well. My family had that strong and charismatic influence of traditional spirituality and practice. But parallel to that, there was Christianity that came to be. That's my upbringing. I grew up with my siblings and the other young boys in the village, looking after the livestock, milking cows, guiding, and shepherding the sheep and the goats. When the stock was grazing, we'd start hunting because we can't go home, so we'd find berries and some roots to eat and sustain ourselves. While we were doing that, we sought all sorts of games. Because this is such a beautiful landscape where you can slide down the hill and find yourself in this stream, where you find yourself this beautiful clay. Eventually, if it's hot, you will swim. If it's not, then you will make fire and start cooking whatever you find in the wild, forage. This was the best time ever because we had opportunities.

[1] *Camagu* is an expression of gratitude in the Xhosa language.
Andile Dyalvane in Imiso Ceramics, Cape Town, September 2023

We would travel five, or six hours to the mountain to collect the cows and the cattle to use them to plough the land, to collect firewood, and perhaps also treat them for certain diseases. Also, to count and mark them. This was the beautiful time that we spent with the elders of the village, for instance, my aunt and MoMkhuku (grandmother) and TaMkhulu who was the elder brother to my father. They would teach us how to read the weather to tell when to plant and harvest. What sort of roots to pick when you're traveling far for you to be energized, or what sort of things to look for to be able to sense certain dangers or get directions. This is part of the education I grew up with other than the Western education. I think that's why the teachers in the village would allow us to do that because we needed to understand and learn other ways of being to the Western way.

How would you introduce yourself an artist?

My name is Majolandile Dyalvane, Jola, Mphankomo, Qengeba, Mzukulwana wenkwakhwa, Vukuz'mbethe, born the Bhele, Langa, Gudu, Khuboni. So, what I've just mentioned now is my lineage. This is traditionally how you have to introduce yourself and that is very important because then we know that if we are related in this way. We need to know who we're walking with and what sort of lineage, ancestors, and gifts you have. I am a person that was gifted to work with clay, which is something very important because as I have grown to be in a Western way, one would say I'm a clay artist. Different people say that I'm a clay healer because I've been gifted to connect with clay and channel certain messages and energies into the object that I make. Then, the person who comes across them can receive such message that is dedicated specifically to them, that moves them and evokes a certain emotion. That's where I find myself accepting that responsibility as well. So that's the kind of practice I would sort of put myself down as, as a clay artist or a clay healer. *Camagu*.

Do you remember who or what inspired you to become an artist? Why are you an artist today?

First, the word *art*, being Xhosa, is not in our vocabulary. The word *design* is also not, as well as craft. But then, we as people are always making objects to be used in a practical way and objects that will carry certain energies. I grew up in a community that makes objects that will be used every day. I've observed my father, who was very skillful. I've observed his elder brother. I've observed Bawo uDlamini next door, and I've observed my mother and many other women in the village who either would be weaving or whatnot. That would have inspired me.

When I was at school, where we did not have art as a subject at the time, I used to find myself doodling and drawing, and I'd be in trouble because of this. Even my brother is very gifted, and I think we take after my father and my mother, who also was a dressmaker, uMamBhele. We've seen her making these things, so we've

always been very handy at home. When my father was fixing or doing something, he would give you a sense of how it is done. Or you just watched and learnt. And that's basically how I've learnt to be very handy with my hands. It happened that clay was then the one medium that drew me into really expressing myself, was part of the calling. By the time I finished high school in the Eastern Cape, I was really getting good at illustrating and copying certain drawings that other kids asked of me. Even if the teachers would punish me, I would still find myself doing it because I couldn't help it. If someone tried stopping me, it felt like they were stopping my breathing. I remember moving to Cape Town to join my other brother (Jongikhaya) in Gugulethu. I was sitting at a communal table, and then this friend of my elder brother saw me doodling – his name was a Bhuti (Mr.) Joka – and asked if I studied art. I mentioned not, and from there, they sent me to someone who was studying art. I had no idea what art was because I hadn't had any exposure to art in the villages. When I saw him – his name was Wele – he was busy doing an illustration on a box of milk, recreating it as part of his project. I mentioned that I'm interested in studying art and he sent me to the college to register. And the funny part is I could only speak English better once I was 19. So, when I moved to Cape Town, this teacher asked me to show a portfolio, which was a very big word for me to understand. I didn't understand. Eventually they said, 'Have you done anything?' When I enrolled, everything started. This was 1996.

You have been referring more to drawing, but how did you learn to work on clay? How did you move to clay?

The first week after enrolment at the Sivuyule Technical College, we were taken to different institutions like museums, craft markets, studios and galleries. Fresh from the Eastern Cape, this was a mind-blowing world for me. What was very profound for me was that I realised that almost everything around us has been designed, in this case is drawn. Drawing is something that came naturally to me for starters. But also, I realised that everything starts with an idea and a vision. And that's what I had; I was full of imagination. That was my initial understanding.

They said, "You're going to spend three years doing that." I couldn't believe it because I come from a school or a background where, if you start drawing and doing all those things, you're playing. I realised something and this is something I live by. If I can draw it, I can make it, given the right environment, the right support and the right tools. They gave us a sketchbook that was supposed to last us for maybe six months. I finished it in a week because I couldn't believe that I was given permission to just draw anytime and every time. What was important was the subject range that they gave us. There was drawing, which was compulsory because we had to design and draw everything. Then, clay, which was pottery or ceramics at that time. Graphic design, which was the first time I touched or even saw a computer. I chose ceramics because it reminded me of my childhood, where I came from. When I started touching clay, I started remembering and smelling, you know,

home, fresh rains, the river, the mountain, the forest, the wet, damp forest. That's for one. Secondly, I realised that those bone china cups in my grandmother's cabinet were made from clay, which I had no idea about.

My grandmother was gifted, when she retired after working for this family in the city, a set of bone china teacups which would only be used when the priest comes or when it's Christmas. Before Cape Town, when I started to read a little bit of English, I saw 'Bone China' written at the bottom. They were clearly made out of bone, and they must be from China. In the village river, sometimes you find leftovers or carcasses. It makes sense. They must have carved this bone! I tried to carve the bone, but I didn't really have much time or tools. I remember this attempt to carve a bone, thinking I could make this beautiful cup. Fast forward to college, where I chose ceramics. All this clay I'd been playing around, I didn't even know that we could fire it. We would make these clay objects, animals and things and then leave them there. I think the closest I got to firing mine was when I brought clay bull or oxen and put it next to the fire while I was waiting for the food to be prepared. I think it turned red. I'm remembering this as I'm talking to you now. *Camagu*.

Have your family and friends always supported your choice of becoming an artist? And what is their perception of your career?

I have been fortunate enough to have a family and community that have supported my career or my gift, in fact, because that's what they saw it as - this young boy running around half naked, clay on the face, playing in the river. In the community where I come from, the elders have an eye on every child because they guide and nurse the gifts that we are perhaps born to explore or share with the community and the world. I think the elders had noticed and seen that in the beginning because when they started speaking to me, they reminded me, 'We've seen you growing up playing with clay and immersing yourself in this material without even knowing that you were making objects that will bring a sense of belonging to us.' So, they supported, and they noticed that. That's one aspect. Secondly, when I started drawing, they could see there was talent. Yes, my father did mention I should be a lawyer because I was talking a lot at that time and asking a lot of questions. But he was not saying that because he was against being an artist; none of us knew if I was going to be an artist to begin with. But when I enrolled in art college, I explained that I would be doing art because, of course, they'd seen me draw, and they understood art was about drawing as I understood it at that time.

Right now, my community and family are embracing, celebrating and supporting even more. There's a sense of uplifting the community. We've got this notion of Ubuntu, which is the notion that when you are raised by a community, your parents are not the only parents. The greater community in the village is what guides, moulds and shapes you to be a contributing member of that community. They

celebrate because they benefit from that as well. They respect my contribution to the community, which is very fortunate, and I feel like this is something very important for anyone, to be able to watch the young ones, to see what gifts they have, guide them, expose and steer them, as much as possible, in the direction of blossoming into the purpose of what they are.

Is there anything or anyone you remember as being really inspiring or important at the start of your practice?

After I graduated from Sivuyile Technical College in 1999, I was offered a job at a ceramic studio decorating ceramics that were already made. The owner of the Potters Shop, Chris Silverston, was looking for a student to train, and that happened to be me. I learned so much about composition layout and one of the very important things I learnt was how to use certain colours next to each other, how to use certain brush marks, and how to use certain markings. Chris would say every mark that you make in this object, on this surface, needs to be intentional. This is still in my head. I found in every mark that I make in my vessels, in my objects, an intention.

While developing my skills, I also expressed my own way of reflecting on flora and fauna, and certain motifs that reflect where I come from, but within the umbrella of the style of her studio. I think about two years later, there was an opportunity for artists to go to Denmark for a residency. She then sent my portfolio in, and I was one of the nine who was selected to travel to Denmark. This was now 2001. My first time on an airplane, my first time out of the country; I was probably the first in my village, definitely in my family, to have gone overseas. The point of this experience was for all these nine ceramic artists, young and then the very masterful ones as well, to come together in this artists' residency and work for five weeks to explore, to influence each other, but also to exchange culturally with the Scandinavian or Danish potters at that time. That was an eye-opener because I realised how similar we are. I encountered a thatched house, similar to those in the villages. I realised there were certain foods that were very similar. In Cape Town, when you come from the villages, people in the township and the city, they act like we are backward. I became more confident of who I am after coming back from the residency.

Secondly, I met two peers from Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape, where there's a university, the Nelson Mandela University of Technology. They offered me a scholarship to study further ceramics. But I had just had my firstborn, Khanya, and if I were to study, I wouldn't have the income. I had to sit my family down and state that this was a great opportunity, and everything would be paid for. I was there to major in ceramics in-depth, because when I was at college it was an introduction to ceramics, introduction to drawing, introduction to graphic design. That's where I learnt the history of ceramics, the design aspect of it, and the entrepreneurship aspect. I realised it was so vast. I started to find my own voice in this way because now I understood how to make clay to start with, how to make glazes and colours,

how to fire, and to use different techniques of building. At the Potter's Shop, I was only working on ceramics that were already made, slip cast. When I was at university, I really learnt all the different techniques and I also found one technique that speaks to me, and it is one that I use even today to make my work. When I got there, I had access to the studio, to the lectures, to the library, to the laboratory itself, and to everyone. Meshack Masuku was my mentor, Charmaine Haines was another one. Bianca and David Jones. And Momberg was my drawing instructor. I was taking advantage of the time I was given there to a point that I even wanted to stop in my first year thinking that I've got it. It was a good thing I finished because I learned so many other things during that time. In my early schooling, I was not doing what I was passionate or gifted in, so I would just pass as an average kid. I went to the university, and I graduated Cum Laude, which was amazing because it felt natural like I was doing what I was supposed to do.

And how did you start your practice after university? Because may artists struggle when they first come out of school.

Between my studies, during holidays, I'd keep traveling between Port Elizabeth and Cape Town and working at the studio to support myself and my family. Before I graduated, I spoke to Chris at the Potters Shop to assist me in reintroducing myself to work towards a solo exhibition. I had my first solo exhibition at the UCT Irma Stern Museum here in Cape Town, reintroducing myself and expressing exactly what it was that I was doing. I worked with porcelain and terracotta clay, making these different vessels inspired by different objects and African artefacts, which was from my last year's project, what we call a personal project. One vessel was the traditional clay pot; we call it *ingqayi*. We use it for storage and drinking umqombothi, which is a traditional beer, and for cooking as well. Another one was the milk pail. Usually, they are made from wood, done by either the Zulu, the Swati, the Ndebele or the Ngoni people. And the other one was the meat platters. I was drawn to these objects, these beautiful hand-greased surfaces that had been used many times and had the energy of the people that made them. Growing up, I did not personally experience all of those objects. I came across some of them in the museums, or in the people's houses that have collected them, and maybe in some books. So, I find myself very much drawn to these objects, and I guess I was connecting with them because my ancestors and many of our ancestors have connected with them. There was an energy resonating. In that exhibition, I was exploring a reinterpretation of these objects, through clay. After the exhibition, I met my peer Zizipho Poswa, my current business partner, and we started talking started talking about establishing a studio that we can all share. Zizi, coming from a textile background, was also introduced to ceramics, and then other colleagues appeared at that time: Abongile, Lulama and Charles. We started IMISO ceramics, derived from a Xhosa word *ngomso*, meaning tomorrow. The idea was to work today for a better tomorrow and for whatever we do to reflect where we're coming from, telling our stories.

Work today at this present moment in preparation for the future and for the next generation, like legacy building. Each of us would contribute through what we are passionate about and share the fruits of our work.

While we were doing that, I would keep going home. Business is not easy, obviously, and you ask your siblings to assist you. My father kept asking, 'What are you doing in Cape Town?' Because I was not contributing financially while the business was starting up. Then I decided to take one of the clay pots to the Eastern Cape, an *ingqayi*, as a gift to him. At that time, it was just a gesture of a gift. A week before that, I asked my mother to brew a traditional beer. So, I drove for 12 hours from Cape Town to the Eastern Cape. As I parked the car, I was not in my body. I took my shoes off. Didn't take anything else but the pot. Got out and went straight to the *kraal*, which is the place where the cattle or the livestock sleep. It's also a sacred place in our culture where we believe the spirits of the ancestors reside when we invite them. With the gesture of taking this pot, I was expressing my gratitude for being guided, supported, and protected from the journey from Cape Town and for the rest of the year to my homestead. After the *kraal*, I went to the main house where the brew was kept. This is around 6:00 in the morning. I scoop the brew and pour it into this clay vessel. Then I walked up and knocked at my father's house. I placed the pot in front of him. He got up, and he was so emotional. There was the joy and the surprise. But there was also a much deeper emotion, which I only realised when he said, 'My son, this is beautiful, this is huge, and I cannot enjoy this and experience this myself only. You need to go to your uncle and the other elders in the village and across the river to the other elders of your family. They need to be here. Because you are here.' And when he calls, people come. They started sharing what the gesture meant. The elders said, 'We've observed and watched you growing up, and we've seen that you have the gift, and we've nurtured and provided everything that you needed, and we see that you are ready. We are blossoming. This gesture that you did right now shows us that you're the one who's going to bring dignity to this family, to this community, to this nation, to these people.' Now, you can imagine from just a gesture of a gift to all these huge words and responsibility, I started shaking. By then, I was realising how powerful this was and what charged and carried me from the car to the *kraal*. The spirit of my ancestors who guided me was a part of me then. The elders named that vessel *Zihlwele*. It meant that it's the spirit of the ancestors; it's themselves that are embodied in this vessel. By virtue of them sipping and drinking and passing it on, it's evoking who they are, who we are, and everything else that perhaps has been forgotten, suppressed. One elder started crying and said, 'As I'm lifting this, I'm remembering certain songs that we no longer sing, I'm remembering certain smells and certain practices that we no longer practice. Looking at the markings in this vessel itself and the colours you've used, we are reminded of certain regalia. So, they went into those suppressed, forgotten memories and ways of being. I was so emotional and rejoicing. One other elder said, 'My son. *Nguwe Ozasibuyisela eMbo* (you are the one who will take us back,

reminding us, will return us to our roots).” I had no idea how I was going to do that, and that was my next question. They said, ‘Just continue to do what you do because you have been doing it anyway.’ And that’s when I realised how important and powerful the gift I had accepted was. One would say *ukuthwasa*, to accept. You’re blossoming. You’re becoming. And that’s how I received my affirmation of my gift, in this case, the clay itself. *Camagu*.

Could you tell us a little more about the ideas that inform your work? How do you work?

In Xhosa, we say *Ithongo*, which is when one is either sleeping, walking, listening to a certain sound, or in an environment that assists the visions to come. It starts when that vision is so strong that I cannot shake it out of myself. I have a sketchbook which I always carry with me. If not, then I may find the floor or something to start illustrating that object or that vision that I had, and I would try to do it as realistically as I possibly can, just so that it’s out of my system. To make way for the next one. From there that vision may continue to be a recurring vision or with a certain kind of theme. Then I realise that perhaps there’s a strong subject or a message that needs to come through. The person who is very close to me is my wife, Nkuthazo Alexis, and I tend to discuss these things with her. She will contribute and open it up as well. And then we may start saying that we’ve got something to work with here. When that happens, because it is gifted with words and writing in a language that is not my mother tongue, by painting it, I try to unearth it. We also do a bit of research either from places that we’ve been, or experienced, photos, illustrations, and things that we may have captured. We start bringing them together as part of building this vision and sort of developing it. And then maybe we realise there’s a common thread in all of these; there may be textures, form, maybe sounds or something, and then a name or a title of this vision then appear.

The titles are in Xhosa, my mother tongue, because part of the gift, as the elders have confirmed, was to hone and bring dignity to who we are. Language is part of that. Practice is part of that. When we start unpacking the language itself, it spreads from the sound, and then we unpack what that title is about. Now we have a title. What, then, do we do? We have the studio. I already think of what sort of tools I may need. Either I have them existing, or I have to make them. I will start taking walks, perhaps to the forest, perhaps to the river, perhaps just to the field and the ocean. I start finding some of the things that will better translate this object or this vision and start bringing all of these things in order to energize the space. We bring them here now to *umsamo*[2], which is also a very important part of the practice. Because when these visions come true, as *AmAThongo*[3] , we then have to accept and bless them in the sense that we give thanks to *Qamata* (God), and to the ancestors who gifted us these visions. So we tend to do certain offerings and certain blessings as a way of energizing them. *Camagu*.

[2] Umsamo refers to a sacred place where the spirits of the ancestors reside and are energised, where you would have your offerings prayed.

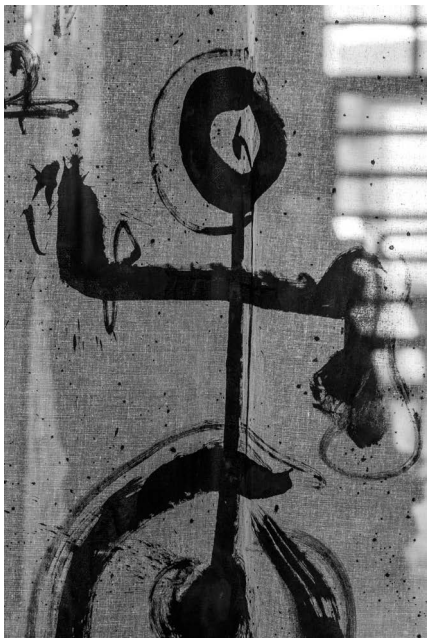
[3] AmAThongo is the ancestral dreamscape, visions channelled through by the ancestral spirit.

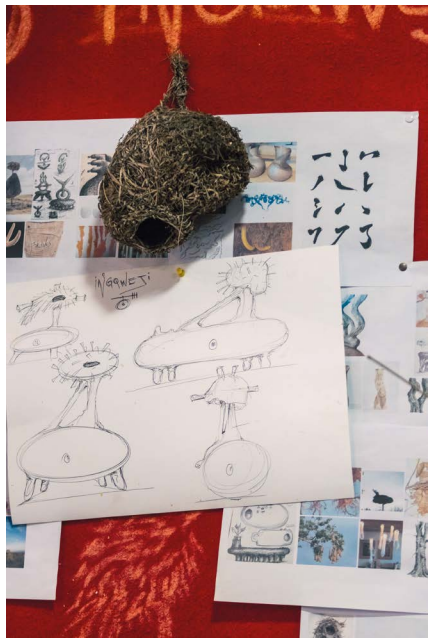
In practical terms, can you take us through your steps of making a ceramic piece?

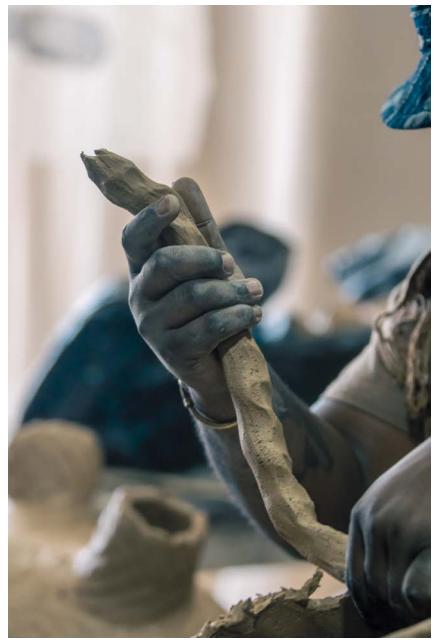
We can begin making the object. The making will have a lot of sketching and then the mood board on the wall. Alexis is amazing in putting this together. I'll start making miniatures of these objects as a study. The next thing is to make space. When I say make space, this studio itself transforms to accommodate what this collection is about scale-wise, types of glazes, clay, maybe elements, sound, smell and movement that we need to energize to fulfil the work. The practice itself is quite more elaborate because while I am making, I need to immerse myself in realising. When I come out of it, it feels like a rite of passage. In the way that I work as well, it's like coiling and my whole body moves with the clay; me working with the clay, clay working with me, collaborating, following what it wants to be, and just as well, trying to control it. It becomes this beautiful dance with the material where we are trying to find what it wants to be but guided by the vision.

I mentioned that I sketch a lot and my sketchbook is a bank of all the ideas that have come through. That sketchbook then stays next to me when making. And because drawing is part of what I do, you will find the different markings of the pieces on the wall surfaces, most surfaces in the studio. The technique that speaks to me is the coiling technique. The reason I'm more drawn to it is because it's so involved. It feels like I'm able to express myself and move with it as I'm forming this object. And then it is important to be part of the rhythm, of the sound, as well.

To create an atmosphere when I come to the studio, I burn *impepho* (sage). If you travel from home, you carry certain energies, which can be unsettling. I need to put on a sound of a certain frequency that will perhaps evoke these ideas to come back. Then *impepho*, the sage, brings all that and balance. I meditate on the intention of the day, of what it is that I have to do. I start announcing and just calling on the spirits of my ancestors who gifted me these visions. I will do that with the people in the studio or by myself if it is preferable. I like starting much earlier in the day so that when everyone comes in, I've already grounded myself and then have the energy to receive everyone. I cannot be distracted by anything because I'm already in the process, so once I've done that, I go into the space to prepare my clay by wedging it. The coiling, as I mentioned, is the technique that I prefer most. I've been shown once by a lady, Lynnley Watson, who came to give a workshop at our university, how to make a round vessel. But more so, how to make a vessel without having to worry about it collapsing. So, I start my pieces upside down. The widest part into the base, closing it, shaping it. If there are any legs or additional feet, I will shape them, and carve until it's nice and firm. Flip it, clean it up. I will have a wet cloth on the edge so that the next clay will be of the same consistency as the edge that I have to continue from. It doesn't matter what shape I make or what I aim to make; they all start in a circular form. The circle is the basis of the strength of the piece. The circle is the basis of the movement itself as I'm turning and creating this circular motion. From there, I would work basically from the sketch or the idea that I have. But depending on the sound of the music I'm playing sometimes, then I'll work with free form. It may guide me with where





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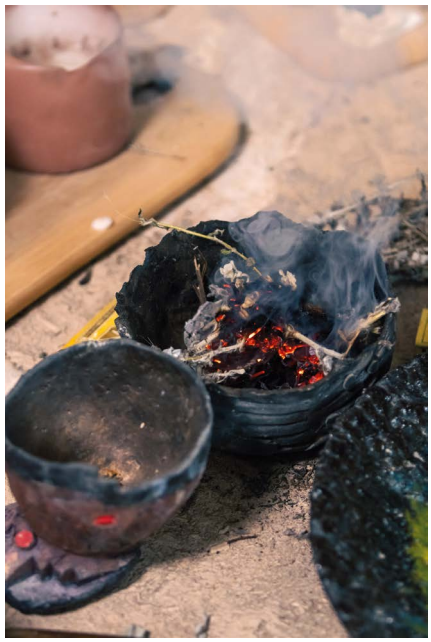

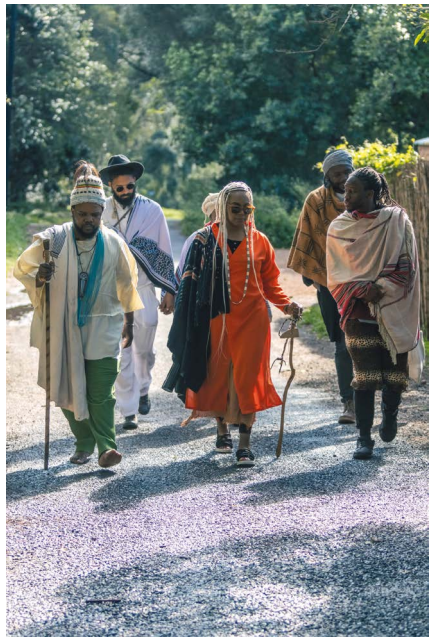

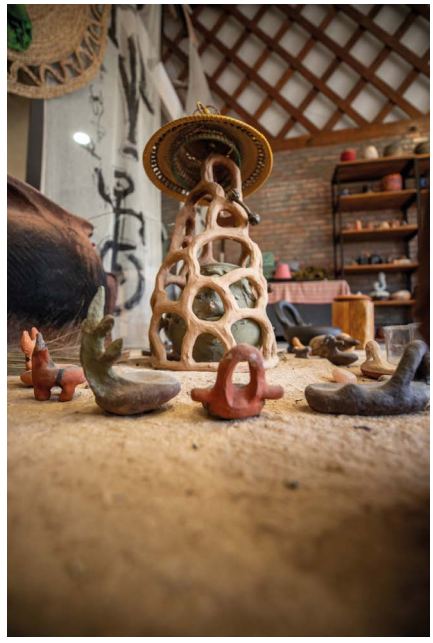

the clay wants to go. The clay itself can do that as well, because I've learnt to let go. I quite like being able to just let the clay do what it wants to do and then I work from that. It guides the process, and, in that way, it gives one a unique object. But then also you can sense the energy of the maker. When I move, that guides this object. When I was making *iThongo*, I was set on exact shapes, very specific symbols. I'm also able to control the outcomes by creating certain symbols and creating certain tools to create different textures.

When I go to the forest or the river, I go as a way of meditation, a way of grounding myself, but also spiritually knowing that this gift I have comes from all these different entities. We have the spirit of the river, the spirit of the forest, of the mountain, of the field, the land, or the caves. When we go there, we go to speak to the energy of that spirit to say thank you for the gift, may you energize what we are gifted in order for us to channel the rightful messages for those who are to experience the work that we do. If I pick up a rock, I need to ask permission to lift it so that I can use it with the intention that it may bring healing to someone. If I have to find a tree bark or a log, I have to ask permission and have an offering of tobacco pipes or a seed. There's a way of respecting and the pieces are there once that happens.

I start thinking of colours, glazes and finishes, and they may be referenced from nature or maybe certain textiles and so on depending on my narrative. When that is done, the pieces have to dry. Because some of them are quite large, to make sure they dry thoroughly before we put them in the kiln, they may wait between two to three weeks. If that doesn't happen, then stuff can explode. You can spend so much time investing in making a piece, sweating, moving and straining yourself. Six months later, you put it in the kiln for two hours, and everything explodes. That shatters your spirit. What clay has taught me was just life as well. You go through so much, lose people, lose yourself. What's important is for you to pick up the pieces, create a mosaic perhaps, or start again. What's important is that the next thing you do will be better. It may have taken me six months to realise that one piece, but if I try to do a similar piece, it may take me just two weeks because I've learnt all the mistakes. I'll make sure that whatever led that piece to crack, I will try and avoid it. As much as I do all these things, clay has that humble grounding, a capability to teach. *Camagu*.

Can you tell us about one of your recurring motifs, the scarification?

A marking that has become a signature element in my work is based on the practice of body scarification, the tribal markings that you find used in a lot of tribes in Africa. In my village, myself and my family; we have experienced that. I use this marking on the surface of the clay when it's leather-hard. I create this incision, pushing it from the inside to create this wound, beautiful, clean incision, inlaid with red or perhaps with manganese oxide. At first, I was trying to find a solution, to have light permeate

through this cutting. But when I looked at it, I realised that it looked like the spot marking, which was my brain's way of recalling an experience that I grew up with. I started realising how powerful and beautiful this gesture was as a decorative motif. It also created a platform, an opening in conversation with people who are curious to learn about why people make these markings. These pieces became conversational pieces. I was able to educate people about why this is a practice and a ritual that is somewhat dying. This is due to Western influences, television, and beauty in today's context and all those things. But this is a ritual that is so enriching in terms of clan identification, body adornment, healing purposes, and marking a rite of passage, for instance. So, there were reasons for these practices. These works I've created across which you will find these signature markings, are a way of educating and preserving this for the next generation.

Has your medium changed over the years? Or have you incorporated new materials into your processes?

When I was exposed to art practice in school, I realised that if I could envision it, then I could draw it, and then I could make it. My father was a toolmaker, welding, making all the different implements we used every day, but he wanted things that don't break. I've seen him manipulate metal, wood and so on. I've always been interested in fusing ceramics with other materials. I came across, through Southern Guild interactions in Cape Town, Conrad Hicks, who is a master blacksmith. He reminded me so much of my father and his toolbox. My father was left-handed. He had a thing about left-handed people because back then, they used to punish them to make them use their right hand. Everything at home was upside down because he had created them. If you open the door, you're going to open it the other way. It was quite an interesting place to be. He was one person that I knew working with metal and wood. And then, I was introduced to Conrad Hicks. In the recent work that I was doing called *iNgqweji*, which is the bird's nest, I was inspired by the sociable weaver birds, which you find mostly in the Karoo, in Northern Cape towards Namibia. They build these huge nests. In my way of reinterpreting that experience of this form or this natural wonder, I made sculptures that have these pointy objects mimicking the sticks that the birds use to weave. I used forged copper because I had access to it, and I had access to Conrad, who welcomed me to create these pieces.

A couple of years ago, I was introduced to glass at Ngwenya Glass in Swaziland, where I was in a hot shop as an artist who had access to the master glassblowers to direct them as a team to come up with objects. Fascinating material as well. Direct in the sense that I would like them to realise my vision. I don't know how to blow glass but then you can use your vision and use your way of uttering guidance in order to have trust in these masters to realise your piece. And I thought that was a beautiful orchestra because now I was like a conductor. With clay, you use your hands to manipulate it. It's cold and it's a slow process. Glass is fast and hot. You rely

on tools that you have to make in order to be able to manipulate that. When I came back from a residency in Austria at Gmunden, I was exposed to a glass hot shop in Murano in Venice, and I'm going to incorporate some glass into my vessels or my objects, the sculptures. With some, the entire piece is going to be in glass. This is interesting for me because glass is a mineral. Glass has very high percentages of quartz and silica. When glazing, you're using powdered glass, which you apply as a coat onto your ceramics. So, that's glass in a different form. For me, clay and glass are cousins. This is trying to weave and reunite them in my own way. As to what it is that they're going to evoke and bring as a message, we're yet to figure that one out. *Camagu*.

It seems that your work evolved from smaller decorative ceramics to more large-scale sculptural works, each channelling complex narrative. Can you elaborate on that shift?

As time passed, I started exploring more than the cultural aspects of my origins. It was about observing my surroundings. Someone said to me, 'You are a chameleon artist.' What they meant was that wherever I am, I take in the environment, blend in, and adapt. From the information that I receive, a form takes shape. The landscape, beats and sounds of that place, I get to translate into this object, be it through a form or a certain line work that is on the surface that will reflect the area I am in. So, the work sort of evolved to that. This is when I moved to Woodstock and established Imiso studio. I have a collection called *View from The Studio*. It's very literal because back then, maybe seven years ago, we had a studio that had 360 views of Cape Town. I could see the harbour, the mountain, the business district; I could see the far side of Simon's Town. But the studio was facing the harbour. I would be sitting on the window illustrating the view that I was seeing from the studio, which was the dockyard, the harbour, the shipping containers moving in and out. I then came to use all that information, stylising and making these geometric forms and line work on this collection. I was already trying to do away with the vessels. Now, I saw this interesting negative space between the horizon and the gap and the stairs and everything. And then, if you're driving around the dockyard, you see the cranes which just keep moving. I started dissecting those and simplifying them into these surfaces, but then they looked so sculptural eventually. I then had an idea of making small-scale sculptures, three-dimensional forms of those illustrations. While I was exploring that, I was invited to spend three months in Taipei in a residency, by Wendy Gers, who was curating the 2014 Ceramics Biennale in Taipei. And there were no limits. They said we need to go huge because there are facilities. You don't have to worry about shipping the work from here to Taipei. I was exhibiting under *Local Identities*, which implied that your work is inspired by and reflects your locality, but it can be anywhere in the world and still fit in like in the landscape where it was created. I started looking around the area where I was staying in Taipei, and Ying, looking at the different landscape, the Ying Museum and the Ying district. I then

started exploring this “chameleonness” about me. There were beautiful bridges, beautiful rock formations, or the wave breaker that were so interesting, but also just the different architectural structures that were there. I was fusing the information of the industrial area that is Woodstock, where I come from, with the landscape that I was exposed to at that time and creating small sculptures. Then I started making these vessels that are enclosed but with very faceted angles. And that was an exploration and adaptation of this information of the industrial landscape, a way of elaborating. The pieces were no longer vessels that are open but sculptural.
The next thing that led to a larger scale was that I was introduced to Master Chan, who is a master and an elder in Taipei who can throw about a six-meter-tall pot. Me again, coming from a place where wherever you go, it is important to announce yourself, to introduce yourself to this community and say that I am here to share. I’m here to exchange. So Mr. Chan acted as an elder, receiving me as a guest in this place. So, welcome he did and said, “Let’s play,” and that’s what we did. He couldn’t speak a word of English other than Bond, meaning James Bond. First, the environment governs how we make things, especially if you’re in a residency. Because it was very humid, it was going to take a long time to make these large-scale pieces because of my process which is slightly slower than his because he uses a potter’s wheel. So, I said, “Can you allow us to collaborate? You make this form that I desire, and then I will manipulate them. At least they will have the scale.” So that’s how it started. When I got back from there, I was aware our studio was not big enough, and that we needed a bigger kiln. While still exploring these large-scale pieces, Southern Guild started showing my work at Design Miami, Basel, Dubai and a few other places, which also started challenging the scale. Then, I was invited to take part in the residency for three weeks in Palo Alto, in the States. Again, I met another amazing elder, Gary Clarien, who is a master thrower and master clay manipulator, very free and energetic. We connected in that level as well. He taught me some ways to be free with clay and just trust that you know what to do. You have frozen the movement of the material, showing how malleable and how plastic it is, but when it’s heated, it becomes this rock. That’s what we do as ceramic artists. We are fast-tracking thousands of years of process within a short time by firing it. When you move clay in this way, and then you leave it to freeze, then you are freezing the brushstrokes, you’re freezing this movement, and that’s what we do. I learnt that from him. At that time, I was invited by Friedman Benda Gallery in the United States through Southern Guild to make ceramic furniture. So, that was quite a big deal; some may call it one of the breakthroughs in my career. Now, the stress started when I had to realise these large-scale pieces. The studio is small, so I had to put everything on hold and focus only on that exhibition for six months. We had to find a studio. We had to find a big kiln. I started making clay stools, which I called *ooSoze*, and lights made from ceramics. This was an interesting one in terms of resolve, because I wasn’t sure how to make ceramic furniture. How do I even begin? I remember talking to Julian from Southern Guild and what he said, which was quite profound. He said, “Andile, what is it that you’re exploring right now? So, think about

that. Don't think stool. Don't think light. Don't think bench. Think about what you're exploring now. What forms speak to you then?" That made sense. I started drawing these forms. Okay, it could be a seat.

This brings me to gallery representation and the involvement of a gallery with an artist. How best you can work with one in terms of the investment of time, guidance, and freedom for sure. While working on this exhibition, they asked me to come up with a name in my language, which would have been the case anyhow. I titled it *Camagu*. *Camagu* is an expression of gratitude in the Xhosa language. It's an expression of acknowledgement. It's an expression of "I see you." I am grateful. Why did I mention that? By this time, it had been a couple of years of practice in my career and I was blossoming in what I was doing and really realising my purpose. My being there, recognized by and celebrated by different people from different nations and places – I didn't get there on my own. My ancestors paved the way. My teachers, siblings, my community, people I went to school with, and people that I work with contributed to that. I had to honour that and express gratitude. As a result, before starting working towards this exhibition, I had to travel home to do a ceremony. Call the whole village and share this good news. Remember when the villagers raise you, your family raise you, they want you to be this contributing member of this community. If you fail, they feel they failed themselves as well. But if you succeed just as well, everyone celebrates. And that's why the title of the show was *The Offering*. It had nothing to do with the forms or anything. The gesture was an expression of gratitude. *Camagu*.

22 Andile Dyalvane preparing for his exhibition *Camagu*, 2016

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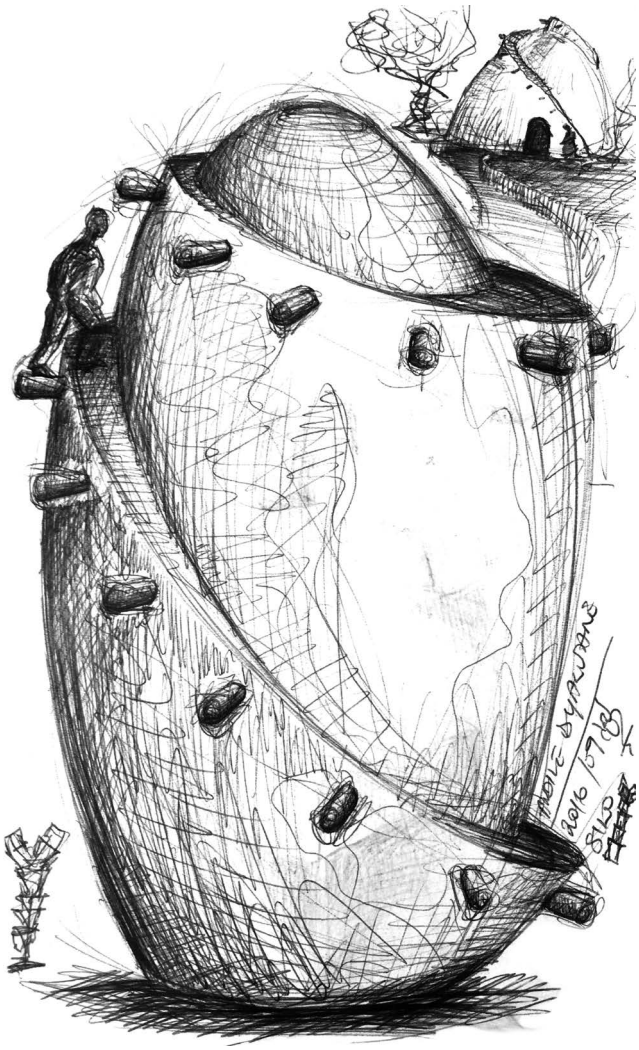
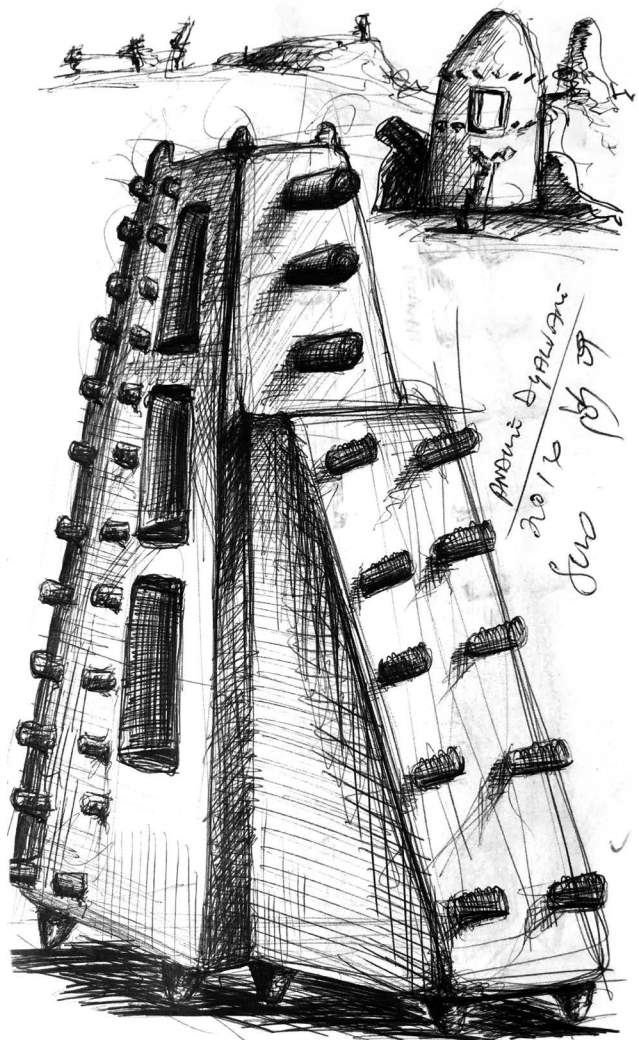
Can you elaborate on other bodies of works as well? *Idladla*, *iThongo* and so on?

I had three major collections that expressed my culture and my spirituality, and certain practices. Places that we, as people have lost due to certain influences of the West: colonisation, Christianity, and displacement. *Idladla* is a collection that speaks of working with the land, speaks of the language Xhosa and its vocabulary. *Idladla* in Xhosa is a grain silo. In the Eastern Cape, you have certain seasonal practices, rituals and songs and dishes and rites of passage that can be done only after or before the harvest or before the first fruits. When the system or the powers introduced genetically modified seeds and food, the soil we had been fertilizing using organic matter, such as manure from the sheep, cows and goats, got damaged. We couldn't reproduce any of the seeds that we keep. So slowly people relied on buying produce, moving away from the villages and going to the city. The people from the city in the township, all the young ones, know the word *Idladla* as a crib, like a fancy house. So, it has lost its meaning. I think one of my duties as an artist or as one who is called to remind us of who we are and where we come from is again to bring the rightful meaning to certain words and vocabulary. Now, when people started relying on bought produce, then they lost the practices of making ceremonies, celebrating the

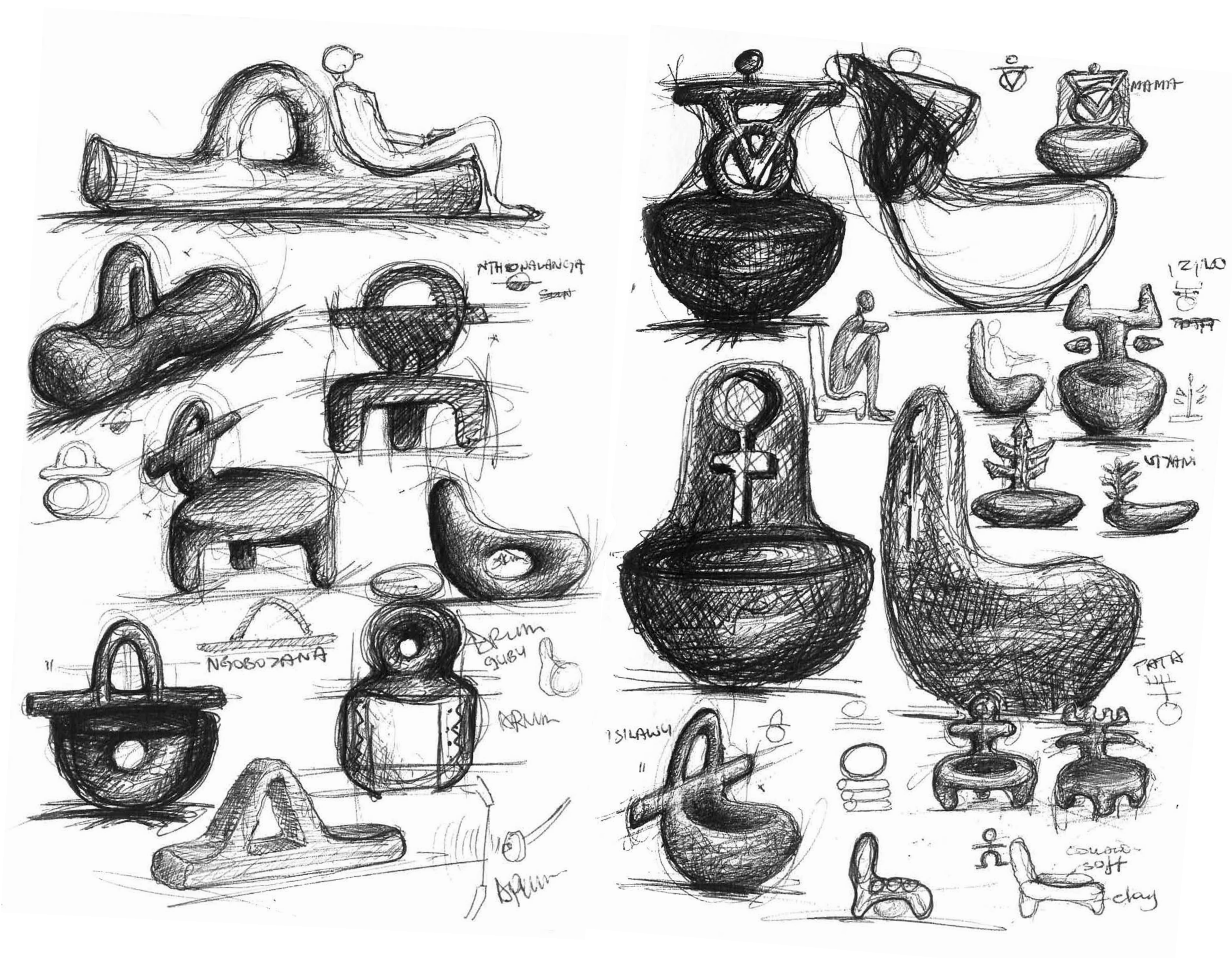
first rains, ceremonies of keeping the produce for the next season in *Idladla*, the silo. In Africa, we say that a home is not a full home without Idladla because *Idladla* is a sign of nourishment, a sign that the livestock and the people will be able to survive until the next harvest. I named each one of the vessels I created after a grain that we no longer have. That was a way of documenting this vocabulary that we've lost, so that the next generation reading this publication can learn about this culture, and perhaps try to find a way back because we feel like we're losing ourselves when we're not able to do so. With *Idladla*, I found that it's a collection that became a silo of our heritage, a silo of our belonging. It contains and stores all that knowledge system that is lost. *Camagu*.



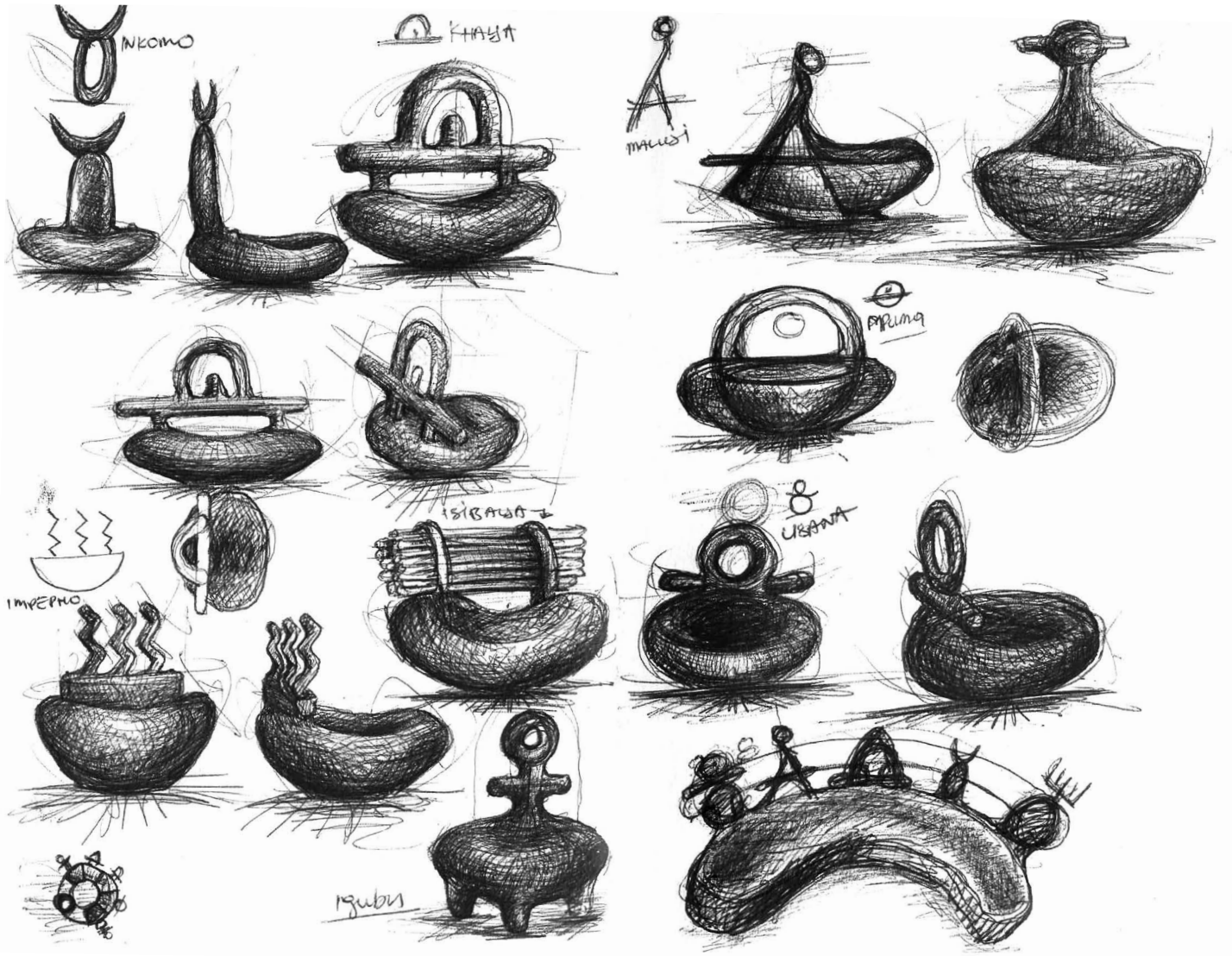


24 Process Sketch for *Idladla*, 2016

That experience unlocked a lot of what I wanted the work to do. The work has to move the viewer, and perhaps educate or remind us. Just before I worked with *iThongo*, I had *Iidonga*. *Iidonga* is the eroded crevices you would find in the valleys and where I also would collect and dig clay. This was paying homage to my childhood. I started recollecting my experiences and memories of my childhood by the riverbanks. That brought me to a grounding, the receiving of all of these messages, these visions of the symbols. When then that started happening, I had an experience of connecting with Sisonke and Nkosinathi, and we were invited to visit Bab'uCredo Mutwa, who is one of the late, great Sanusi shamans who had prophesised and shared so many things about the way that we live, the way that certain things are happening and everything. He did this to a point where he had certain symbolisms that he himself was guided to create as a way of communicating with the greater world. Some of his energy before he was transcending, I think we all captured that. Sisonke and Nkosinathi had met him, and he said, you will be working like many in trying to remember and re-energize who we are. Nkosinathi had a gift of making sound and indigenous sound instruments. Sisonke had an understanding of cosmology, and a gift of *ubugqirha* (traditional healing). We had found that we are all journeying and assisting each other to fulfil what it is that we are sent for through the work that we do. At that time, I was invited to do another solo exhibition with Friedman Benda, where they asked me just to make stools. Usually, the gallery doesn't tell me what to do. But this particular part of the stool was a fitting one because when the ancestors used the wooden headrest or the neck rest, they believed that those stools were a connection to the ancestral world. That they channelled the dreams, the visions, while you're sleeping through that. So, stools. How am I going to do that? I decided to make these stools, each one of which would carry the energy of the symbol that was chosen at that time. *iThongo* is a collection of 18 stools which were channelling and carrying the energy of each and every symbol. I then asked Nkosinathi the elder to create a soundscape selecting different symbols, channelling energy through sound that is guided by the symbol that he has chosen. The idea was to have people experience the energy of these stools and the symbols and also to experience the sound that they evoke. I asked Alexis, Sisonke, Vuyisile and a few others, to write, to unpack what they understood about this symbolism. Because, at that time, everyone was losing so much hope through the pandemic, being locked down, and everything. I was very energized by this work. I even worked with a fashion designer, Onesimo, to create regalia painted with the symbols, in order for us to cloak the elders as gifts to give hope. We then decided that when the people were able to travel, we had to take this offering to the Eastern Cape, all the 18 stools. We had to put them in a truck and drive 12 hours to the village for the community to experience it, to energise it, to bless it. And the soil and the manure of the village needed to bless that. *Camagu*.



 Process Sketch for *iThongo*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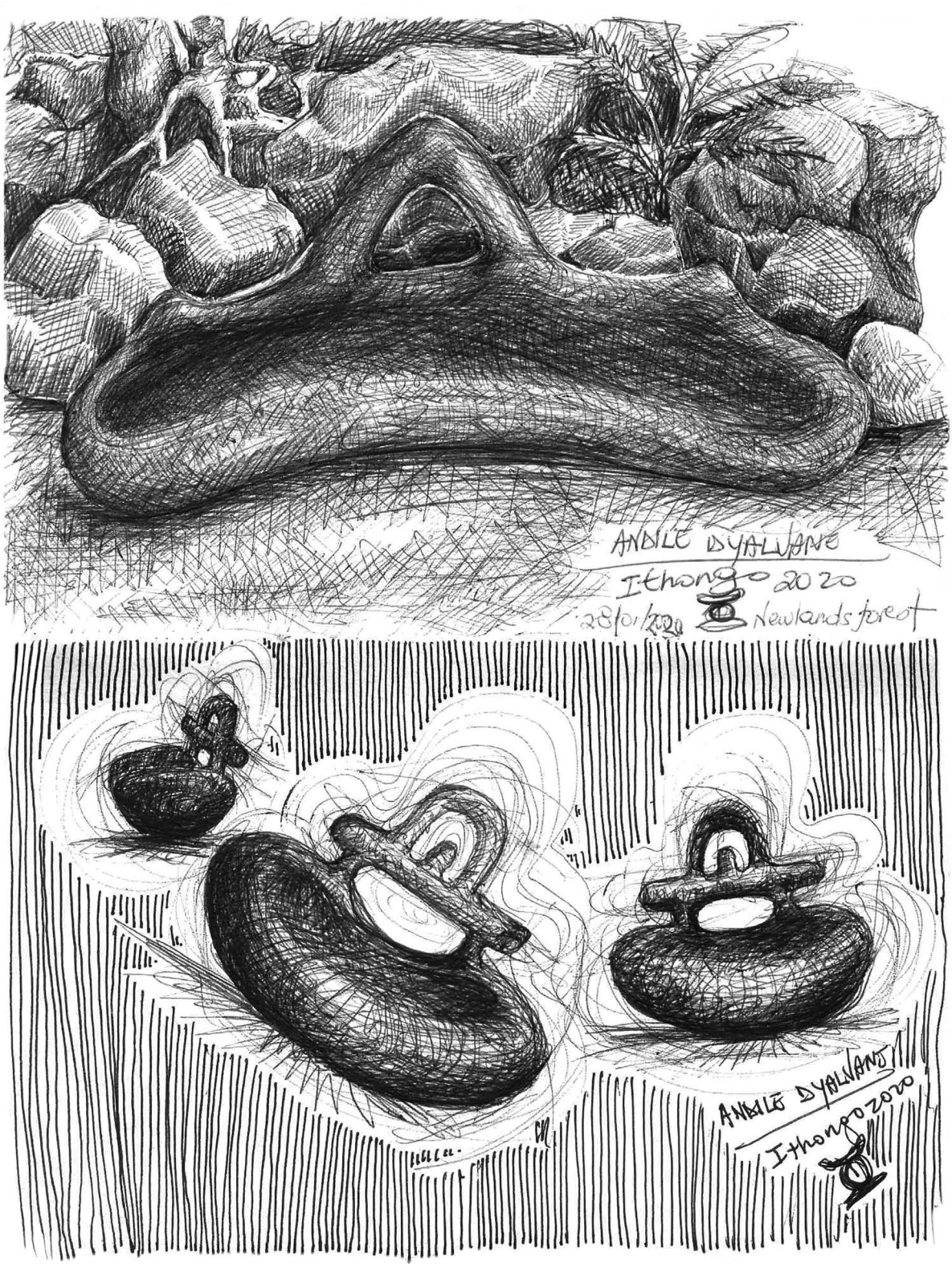

ANDILE DYALVANE
Ithongo 2020
28/01/2020 Newlands forest
ANDILE DYALVANE
Ithongo 2020

During the making of *iThongo*, as the pieces kept on being realised and manifesting, we started creating a circular formation in order for us to create a way of gathering. When in the village people come together, they sit in a circular formation, and in that way, it becomes a ceremony that is passing an energy flow through everyone. And the centre is the part where all the offerings are. That became part of energizing the pieces as they were coming through. This is then where we started talking about bringing these works to the village. And one of the visions that came through at that time while making this work was that we needed to create clay vessels, *ingqayi*, that were inspired by the one that I gifted to my father about 13 years ago, to gift each and every homestead in the village in Ngobazana, as a way of igniting this memory, as a way of bringing hope, because this is, again, during the pandemic when people are losing hope. We had 100 pots going to the village and had the villagers themselves partake in smoking, blackening them. This pot is a way of bringing back a lost memory, ancient to them. Yes, they know what I do, but this is the first time that they get to participate in what I do, a healing practice to their spirit as well. Then the other vision that came through at that time was that one of the stools was to be offered and placed at my ancestral gravesite, which is in the ruins. This is a place where my family and all the villagers were forcibly moved by the apartheid government which demolished their houses, took their artifacts, and placed them in these concentrated spaces, with restriction of movement of grazing of their livestock. The message that came through was to place this stool, *Umalusi*, the shepherd. We created a sort of a platform to place it over that in this ancestral gravesite as a way of saying that all that they could not achieve due to the oppression and the displacement, we were here to continue where they left off. And perhaps, we are free to express ourselves, to remember who we are and continue the practices that see everyone as equal. To practice that we are not apart from nature. We are nature ourselves. The sooner we are listening to the messages, what the symbols are, as a way of connecting with everyone and every entity, perhaps we will have a better understanding of the future and the past and the present moment. So that stool, that offering is still there now. This gesture was paying homage to all the First Nations people all over the world who were displaced. It was not only just for my family or not only for Ngobazana, but for everyone. *Camagu*.

Are there any artists that currently inspire you in your work or in your way of seeing the world?

I have a few artists that sort of inspired my work. I'm going to start with Katherine Glenday. In the beginning of my career, she tried to guide me to go much deeper than the surface of making beautiful objects. Much deeper in the thinking of the concept and what it is that I have to say. Also, the sharing of stories and exchanging and reflecting on why I am doing what I'm doing. That was one. But also, how to understand the material and how to manipulate it to use its best characteristics to

30 *iThongo*, 2020, Courtesy of Southern Guild Gallery

express what it is that you're trying to communicate with this medium, the material itself. What was also very important was, again, the spiritual aspect of my making. This is South Africa and she is of English descent. I am Xhosa and South Africa was colonised by English and Afrikaners. This person managed to find a way for us to speak about that. How does that influence what I do, where I come from, and how I interact with her and the world generally? So that's quite beautiful because that led me to have certain conversations learning about her culture, her practice, my culture, my practice, being a man, being a woman, a white woman. Zizi also collaborated with her. As a black woman, a young woman at that time, how might those dynamics affect the energy of what we create in the same room? That's what I always like. We still connect and interact even today because she tends to find a way for us to speak, communicate, and converse through clay. That's what she said: 'Andile, I would like to have a conversation with you with clay.' I had no idea what that meant. But she said, 'Okay, you can use my space and work with porcelain.' She showed me how to manipulate porcelain, and then I managed to make some work. So that's, that's one person.

Another one was Meshack Masuku, who was my lecturer at the Nelson Mandela University of Technology. He went to university when he was way older. He had a standard Western education, but he had so much experience in his practical making, ceramics, drawing, and specifically, the chemistry of making glazes. He does not write any of those down but remembers every recipe that he's ever come across. And he started out making clay oxen like I did. When he was invited to give a workshop at the university, they offered him to study. Then, he became the head of the department while I was there. He showed me there's no time to begin or stop learning. The other aspect was the work ethic. This guy has amazing energy, skill and precision. And I've learnt a lot of that from him.

While studying the history of ceramics, we came across Bernard Leach, a studio potter who established his studio over one hundred years ago. He had a friend, Shōji Hamada, from Japan. They were very good friends and he learnt so much from him in terms of, you know, when you're making something, you leave the mark or imperfections of a human hand to show that this has been made by a human. Between St Ives, Britain, and Japan, he learnt all these different philosophies. I am now recalling why I'm so drawn to the brush markings, the brush strokes, and the calligraphy. These are some of the elements that have lent an imperfection to the object that shows the gesture and the energy of the maker itself. These are some of the few people I can mention whose principles I still resonate with and whose way of working I translate into most of my practices.

At the top are my father, my uncle and my mother. They played so much of a role in inspiring my work ethic. And there's a phrase that Tamkhulu used to say: "Andile, whenever you are working, make sure you tidy up so you can stand back, pause, look

at what you're doing so you can see if you are on the right path, if you're doing well." And the other one will say, 'Watch and learn.' I still use that when I'm also sharing my knowledge with others. It says you can spend a whole six months to watch and learn what I'm doing. And in so doing - and I come from such a culture -you are taking in all of that. When you're given an opportunity to start applying it, it will come naturally because you've processed and brought it in. And then you're going to start finding your way of bringing it out so that it speaks your own voice, your own tone, and expression. These are the core ones that I would pay homage to. Camagu.

Can you maybe explain a bit more about how you co-founded Imiso Ceramics with, Zizipho? How did you meet her?

We established Imiso Ceramics in 2006 with Zizipho Poswa, Abongile, Lulama, Mlaml. It so happened that all of us were here in Cape Town but coming from the Eastern Cape, and all happened to be amaXhosa (Xhosa tribe). I had met Zizipho at the university. She was doing textile or surface design, Abongile was in the ceramics department, and they had a mutual friend, Lulama, who was good in business operations. Between conversations and meetings in town for tea or drinks- we were all working at that time at different studios- we started saying we should establish our own studio.

The word that came to mind was *Imiso*, derived from *ngomso*, tomorrow in Xhosa. The whole notion was that whatever that we do today is driven by the past for the present, that whatever that we do now is to prepare for the next generation, the tomorrow, the future. Like a practice of *ubuntu*, you have a skill, we have a skill, and we all come together and then we share the products and the results of that.

We had opportunities from the local government, the national government, from the Arts and Culture or Department of Trade and Industry, where they will invite small businesses to trade fairs. Cape Craft and Design Institute, now CDI, was very helpful to small crafters and makers. They would help you develop your product. Also, train you in how to address, how to communicate, how to price, cost and how to present those things. But it's not enough because it's only for a given period of time. When you are exposed to certain markets, you tend to grow fast, but how do you manage the sustainability of that? There was a point where we had 20 people working for us. We were exporting a lot to the United States and then there was a crash. Now what do we do? It was depressing and meant that some had to try and find greener pastures. So, life happened to some of us, pressures at home and elsewhere.

We were left with me and Zizipho at that time. Family members had to come in because we were struggling. I think when you believe in your dream with passion, just the right tools, the gift and the right people come and assist in that way. So, we're grateful for those people and for you guys. *Camagu*.

Zizipho's background is textile. When she started like I did, she was introduced to ceramics, textile, and other things. The same training applies to this because that's surface treatment or surface design. And now, we have grown to have a deeper voice. Zizipho, for instance, having started making the beautiful, very colourful, flowery pinch pots with these textile patterns that reflected her background, started exploring who she is as an artist who is a black woman. And this is mostly what she speaks about. The women that raised her, the resilience of women, the beauty of the women themselves. The different narratives she speaks about, speak of who we are just as well. Her angle at this moment is about embracing and empowering the voice of black women to be specific, and women in general. So that's what she's expressing at this moment.

We've young ones starting up, coming to us, always asking questions about how to do, experience or resolve certain things. Now, we are guiding, and we make time to share. Having understood what being an artist in residence means and what it can bring to an artist, we decided to have a space that offers that to an artist who will come either for a year or for six months to explore their practice, have access to us or the facilities and the culture around Cape Town. This is really a home for anyone who's thirsty, who's willing to learn, to share and to heal. *Camagu*.

I was hoping you could explain a little the rituals you do like the one you did this morning before starting your day. Can you just describe a bit what you did this morning?

Lighting the pipe is my way of finding the grounding energy of the keeper of this pipe. This pipe was left by my late father Magqadaza uMthobi. When I light and smoke from it, it's one way of connecting and trying to re-energize myself. That is why before and after and during the making at any time, or if there's any ceremony or practice or a journey to be taken as well, we have to gather on the ground, bend some sage, give some offerings, sweet seeds and so on as a way of offering to the spirits of those who have passed. We believe objects carry the energies of those that have passed, who have attached themselves these objects. There is the blanket that was carried by generations of ancestors and when I cloak myself with it, I feel the energy that I'm surrounded by them. I'm supported. *Camagu*. Spirituality is part of my practice. Clay is a tool; clay has called me. I didn't choose it. I became part of it because I am clay. You are clay yourself. When I touch clay, it's very sacred because it's a very ancient soul that is way at the bottom. All the matter, the first organisms possible, they are part of that. As someone who manipulates by touch and connects clay with fingertips, you channel so much that it evokes all of these things. I then start speaking in this way as a way of communicating the messages that are coming via that clay from those ancestors. *Camagu*. When we sing, we try to summon also the good spirits of the ancestors. *Camagu*. When we dance, we also try to ground ourselves to heal and rid ourselves of all the negative energies. *Camagu*. When

we then smoke, blowing into four different directions, it's a way of realising the breathing and of visualizing the breath that we're grateful for. *Camagu*. The practice is an announcement. It's an *intentioning* of what our work must be, and that we may be clean vessels for the messages we are channelling. As we wash our hands, we try to purify our intention in the hands that touch this clay. So that the message comes clearly, healing and with good intention and good vibration for the one who receives it. And you receive the message when you show up and become present and allow yourself to listen in the process and be guided. All the practices that you're seeing here are ways of channelling the right energy and the intention of the work. *Camagu*.

You mentioned many residencies and exhibitions and the "chameleonness" as you describe it. Can you also reproduce this spirituality of the studio when you are in residency in Vienna or wherever?

Residencies are very important to me. The first one I was exposed to was one when I was invited to Denmark to spend five weeks. A friend of ours, Aram, said, "To travel is to wash your eyes," and I think that's beautiful. I still keep that. The residency grants you time away from your everyday practice and to be in this foreign place which has different resources, materials, energy, culture and so on, which then will challenge you. The spirituality aspect of it is that even when I'm in England, Germany, Italy or Paris or Taipei, whichever the country may be, I need to introduce myself. We have to say who we are, what is our intention. I ask permission to burn *impepho* and introduce myself and invite people in that way.

Four years ago, I was invited to the Leach Museum in Saint Ives, Cornwall. The first thing I had to do, because these elders are ancestors in ceramics and in general, was to honour their spirit because I was invited. I will be sitting on the same chair the elders have studied, imparted knowledge. So, I had to express gratitude and introduce myself, saying that I am Majolandile, Jola, Mphankomo, Qengeba, Mzukulwana wenkwakhwa, Vukuz'mbethe, born the Bhele, Langa, Gudu, Khuboni. This is where I come from. This is who I am. I carry this energy. I'm here to learn. I'm here to share. I'm here to continue the legacy of ceramics. I invited my hosts at that time, and they participated. So, the openness allows more learning. The highlight for me was my growth in my spirituality, in my realisation of how connected we are. What hit me was the fact that I made friends who taught me foraging certain herbs, which is a notion that I didn't think I would receive there. The friends who made me walk the landscape, touch Stonehenge. Even though erected a long time ago, you can still feel and sense the energy of the people that roamed and respected the land. They still practice. The first season, the solstice and everything. So, a part of spirituality opened because the ancestors saw that I was open to learning. And then they started showing me all of these things. *Camagu*.

Everyone knows the city of Cape Town, but not everyone has visited Cape Town. Can you describe the city, how do you find living and working there?

Cape Town is not the place of my birth. I followed the footsteps of my father and many other young men at the time who would come to the city with the hope of getting job opportunities to support and sustain their families. These were called migrant workers. I moved to Cape Town in 1995 and stayed in a hostel. Cape Town is an interesting place because it's got a beautiful mountain, of course, and beautiful beaches and so on. Also, it has a lot of areas with different economic backgrounds based on the apartheid government's policies categorizing and segregating different races. The hostels were where the migrant workers would be staying. Now, my father was one of those. By the time I arrived in Cape Town, the country already had freedom and democracy.

The city is attractive to many people who like to experience nature, food and different cultures. Just from the food, you'll be able to taste and experience many cultures: the Malay, the Afrikaans, the English, the Zulu, the Swati, the Swahili, the Xhosa, and so on, just in this place. The French, as well. All these different skills from people gets woven into the fabric of this city. As a maker, you are in a place where people come from outside and want to experience the culture. One of the beautiful things that I like about Cape Town myself is even if I am in the studio or at home, I'm only about five or ten minutes away from nature. You won't see any buildings or anything but hear the sounds of birds because of this beautiful gigantic mountain. After that, you can just turn around, and then you are in the most beautiful ocean, and if you continue down, you meet the Indian and the Atlantic Ocean. As narrow and beautiful as it is, it's so layered and textured that you need time to experience it through sound, music, culture and everything. You get a bit of experience of that, and that's where we are a Cap in eKapa, eNtshona Koloni. *Camagu*.

What do you think is sometimes difficult for an artist? How do you overcome that?

As an artist, one of the challenging things in the beginning is to be able to find a unique voice that expresses who you are, and I found myself going through that as well. When you are a student, you are inspired. You may somewhat reflect and mimic your teacher, perhaps. When you overcome that, which I have, the other thing is to be able to let go of your creation. Because sometimes you can spend so much time creating and batting this. By letting go, you're making room for the next one to come through. I had moments where I didn't want to let go of a piece, but now I do freely because I know it's medicine. We are able to say, this is for you; you can have it. The third one is when sometimes you work on a piece or a body of work and pack it in the kiln, and then when you open that kiln, everything has shattered. And that is painful. But there's a lesson there, too. In this life, we forge, dream and plan all

these things. Sometimes, they don't come true, or you fail. But what ceramics or this practice that I'm in teaches me is that when all has shattered, all you have to do is pick up the pieces and start afresh. *Camagu*.

What would you say has been the highlight of your career?

The highlight of my practice so far is when we created *Ithongo*, taking it home to my village and having my people, my community, experience and bless it. And offering one of the stools as a gesture of acknowledging my ancestors and what they've gone through. That has been and will always be the highlight of my gift, of the offering. The gift of being able to channel messages that are able to revive others' spirits. Gifting them an object that carries an energy that can ignite that. That's what *Ithongo* did. *Camagu*.

What are your plans for the future?

There is always a plan. For the future, we are planning and working on reviving the school where I went as a child. It is another way of giving back, imparting the wealth of connections that was fuelled by the gesture of the community itself grooming us. I will establish the Camagu Foundation, which will service or at least will share and revive different charities in our homelands. That's what we are working on.

Is there anything you'd like to add before we conclude?

It's an expression of gratitude. I'd like to thank you for documenting this journey for the world and the next generation to experience and perhaps to learn through the messages that are coming through what we do. So, we exclaim, *Camagu*, as a way of acknowledging this gesture. As a way of blessing all the entities, the hands and everyone who is contributing to making this. *Camagu*.

SOUTH AFRICAN CLAY HEALER ANDILE DYALVANE: A CLAY PRACTICE SEATED IN THE SOUL

OLIVIA BARRELL

South African ceramic artist Andile Dyalvane, after the completion of his studies (initially in Art and Design at Sivuyile Technical College followed by a specialisation in Ceramic Design at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University), journeyed from his hometown in the Eastern Cape, a village called Ngobozana, to the windy city of Cape Town in 2016. He left the gentle slopes of that hilly landscape for the hard lines of the cityscape, but he brought the remembrance of the earth with him; the ever-present memories of moulding clay between his fingers, of sourcing it within the muddy riverbed and of its embrace on his skin. From a young age, clay became one of the cornerstones of the artist's vocabulary. Some of Dyalvane's first large ceramic sculptures date from this period, such as *Camagu* (Gratitude), which bears the striations of the urban environment, pulled into the folds of the earth. Against the forms of the city, pushing up from beneath, are the shapes of childhood memory: there is mud, the ploughed field, the spherical crop circles of his native province and the rugged riverbank. This piece stands as a marker of transition through landscapes, a migration from pastoral homestead to the metropolis. In the same manner, it marks a characteristic that will develop within Dyalvane's work: movement. For here is an artist who moves with the flux of life, and his practice moves with him.

Within the first year of moving to Cape Town, nostalgia had crept into Dyalvane's work. The bittersweet yearning for the things of the past, the familial homestead — a seemingly bygone way of life sunk into his forms. *Idladla* (Grain Silo), *Isicaca* (Fine Corn) and *Isigezenga* (Corn Bread), sculptural works created by Dyalvane in 2017, speak to the power of a community's traditions: the cyclical working of the soil to sow seed, the collective harvesting of crops, and the preparation of simple, signatory dishes from this grain. This body of work represents the past life of a village, one that moved in unison with the seasons; one where the circles of life held the community members together. Each artwork stands as a totem to childhood, encapsulating Dyalvane's upbringing. Some of the works are dedicated to a specific dish around corn, other works might embody the grain silo itself, the once-beating heart of Ngobozana. "During the autumn time, there were particular dishes that we ate. They were basic but they came from the harvest of the time," recalls Dyalvane. "When that time was no longer, you start to lose the dishes, the seeds, the community, the vocabulary, the songs, the language itself. The pieces are named after dishes that no longer exist. In this time, even the word 'idladla' has lost its meaning as a grain silo. I am trying to keep the vocabulary alive."

These tributes have been built by hand from terracotta and painted with undulating geometric motifs. *Idladla* (Grain Silo) was Dyalvane's largest coiled work at the time; a monument to daily rituals. The scraped brown earth and white-washed pigment

Camagu, 2016, black clay, 100 x 50 x 50 cm

of the pieces are reminiscent of indigenous mud homes, not only from the Eastern Cape, but from other cultures that the artist observed on his travels. He visited the adobe mud houses of Santa Fe and was moved to discover other communities, in remote corners of the world, that had been living in communion with the earth — much like his own village. These artworks record something of this architectural heritage, echoing these structures made from the mud, baked in the sun, weather-beaten over time. “I was collecting from all different cultures that were using the same technique of building,” says Dyalvane. “It’s clay, it’s mud, it’s a house that breathes. And if it is cold, it becomes warm. And if it is warm, it becomes cooler – it’s beautiful and I grew up under such structures.” The works protrude and curve outwards in recognition of these dwellings: the support beams peeking out from the surface, raised nodules and wire breaking against the smoothness of the form. These pieces are a nod towards this ageless architecture and an admiration of its details. Dyalvane has long been obsessed with texture and this fascination (for the gnarled bough, the tangle of thatch, the plastered mud wall, the coiled wire, or the compressed earthy ground) travels throughout his oeuvre.

Left, *Idladla* (Grain Silo), 2017, earthenware, 106 x 63 x 60 cm
Right, *Isicaca* (Fine Corn), 2017, earthenware, 51 x 43 x 40 cm

The bases of these works have been left bare except for the undulating dribble of indigo. Dyalvane began incorporating this pigment into his practice after his encounter with Malian artist Aboubakar Fofana in 2017, and it has been present ever since. The indigo is applied to the side of the work with a thick paintbrush, running down into small blue tributaries; its loose spontaneity juxtaposing the neat linearity of the geometric motifs. This is Dyalvane's work; unrestrained but meticulous. Each piece is charged with control and chaos. This creates movement within the work, the feeling that they are, somehow, revolving, pulling us into their gyration — as if they keep something of the movement that made them, for Dyalvane turns the large pieces on a rotating wheel as he works them. The trickling indigo is slanted at an angle like rain conveying this motion, and the geometry of the patterns spiral upwards towards the sky. This spectacular body of work showcases some of Dyalvane's first pieces to be entirely sealed off in clay, as seen with *Umphothulo* (Corn Mesh) and *Isiswenya* (Dried Corn Seeds) — a technical tour de force, defying common cracks and explosions that would usually occur in sealed clay bodies during firing. As one of South Africa's master ceramic artists, Dyalvane pushes the technical bounds of the medium to convey his message — using earth, form, fire, and pigment to speak. These pieces are commemorative structures, talking in quiet voices about disappearing practices, or closed casts for the memory of lost familial traditions. Images next to each other.

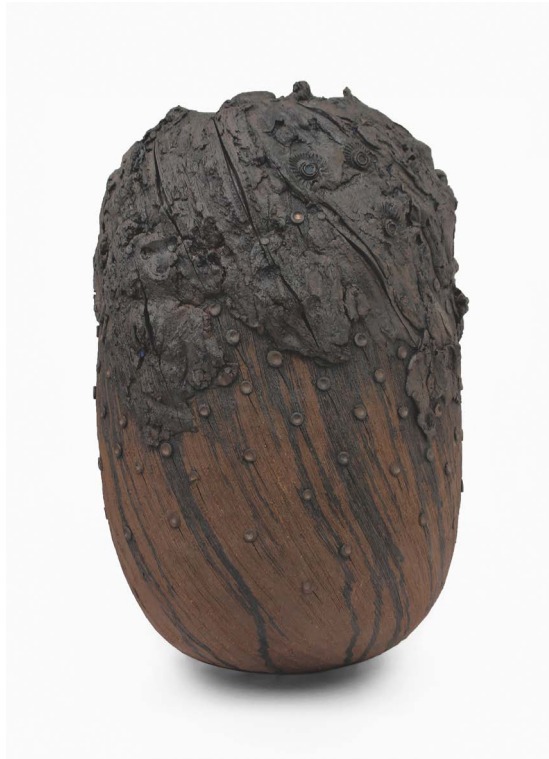
In 2019, Dyalvane spent several weeks at Leach Pottery in St. Ives, on the jagged edge of Cornwall in the United Kingdom — a founding institution of British studio pottery, started in 1920 by Bernard Leach (1887-1979) and Japanese potter Shoji Hamada (1884–1978). Working intensely over this period, Dyalvane created a body of work comprising nearly three dozen pieces that pull impressively from the natural world. "One of the themes that runs through my work is soil erosion and the textures and revelations this creates," reveals Dyalvane. "Hearing stories about how potters threw their rejected pots into the River Stennack, alongside the pottery studio, some of my work has engaged with this idea and the use of shards. In another piece, I have explored bark textures from alongside the Stennack and used gritty inclusions of wood ash from the fireplace in the old pottery building." The

Isigezenga (Corn Bread), 2017, earthenware, 47 x 40 x 40 cm

artist works with clay as layers of places, time, and various natural elements peeling off one on top of the other. Each body of work remembers the previous expression and grows over it like a substratum of earth — earlier themes compounding into the bedrock of his practice. The distinctive bodies of work stand as chapters. Here, the artworks draw from the wet, muddied landscapes of spring. The clay acts as earth, a fine layer that covers the land, hugging the swelling and the sinking of its terrain, folding into its craters, conglomerating into corners, and pressing up against its cliffs. It can be rugged, cumbrous, torn at the cracks, delicate, or washed thin and smooth. These pieces are the meeting of the dried riverbed from the artist's childhood and the damp British earth. Dyalvane's practice speaks with the deep-rooted voice of Xhosa ceramic tradition, now in dialogue with the United Kingdom's long history of studio pottery. There is convergence in this work, and commonality across kingdoms in the desire to fold the earth into form.

Dyalvane goes a step further, not simply by pushing the clay into form, but by pulling it back towards the natural landscape from where it came. His practice

Left, *Umphothulo* (Corn Mesh), 2017, earthenware, 45 x 30 x 25 cm
Right, *Isiswenya* (Dry Corn Seed), 2017, earthenware, copper, 82 x 67 x 50 cm



is an observation of the outside world. It is a searching, a gathering of lifetime experiences, a better getting to know nature, and himself in relation to it. The works hold astonishment for the natural world. St Ives Island is the Cornish rock, crevice and cliff — perhaps caught in the wrath of a storm, the mud washing down the slopes into a deep oceanic blue. There is the sea and the earth crumbling at the edge. *Gentle Slide* is a homage to the soft, muddy ground, its surface either scraped, combed, sliced, pockmarked, or washed featureless. *Cornish Water Fall* is a monument to the glorious interactions between the rain and the soil. Each of these pieces has been raised as tributes to small moments in time, captured through clay. They are monuments to the Cornish storm that will always rage against the cliff, the muddy ground that will stay undisturbed, and the raindrops that will eternally make rivulets off the side of the artwork.

Cornish Wall reveals another fundamental element in Dyalvane's work, its surface has been lacerated and bleeds a red fleshy glaze. Building up the pieces with his hands, almost as flesh on flesh, the clay becomes skin. And in the words of Scottish author Ali Smith, one can "feel the skin of the untold thing pressing through the surface."[4] These are the unsaid things pushing up against the surface of Dyalvane's

[4] Smith, Ali. Spring: A Novel. Anchor, 2019

Left, *Gentle Slide*, 2019, glazed stoneware, 16 x 19 x 19 cm
Right, *Cornish Water Fall*, 2019, glazed stoneware, 60 x 33 x 33 cm

artworks: the traditional Xhosa practice of scarification (ukuqatshulwa), an extension of personal adornment, a collection of lines and patterns that encompass beauty. Even more than this, ukuqatshulwa is a mother tongue, a form of embodied mark-making that serves as communication between clan members. Surface markings are intrinsic to Dyalvane's ceramic practice. His work is frequently embellished with precise incisions, sloping lines, grooves, slashes, or ornate carvings. In addition, the clay skins are painted with delicate intonations of colour.

Dyalvane engages both form and surface together in a narrative, an unravelling story, bringing to light the elements of familial and ancestral homemaking: "The

 Cornish Wall, 2019, glazed stoneware clay, 39 x 46 cm

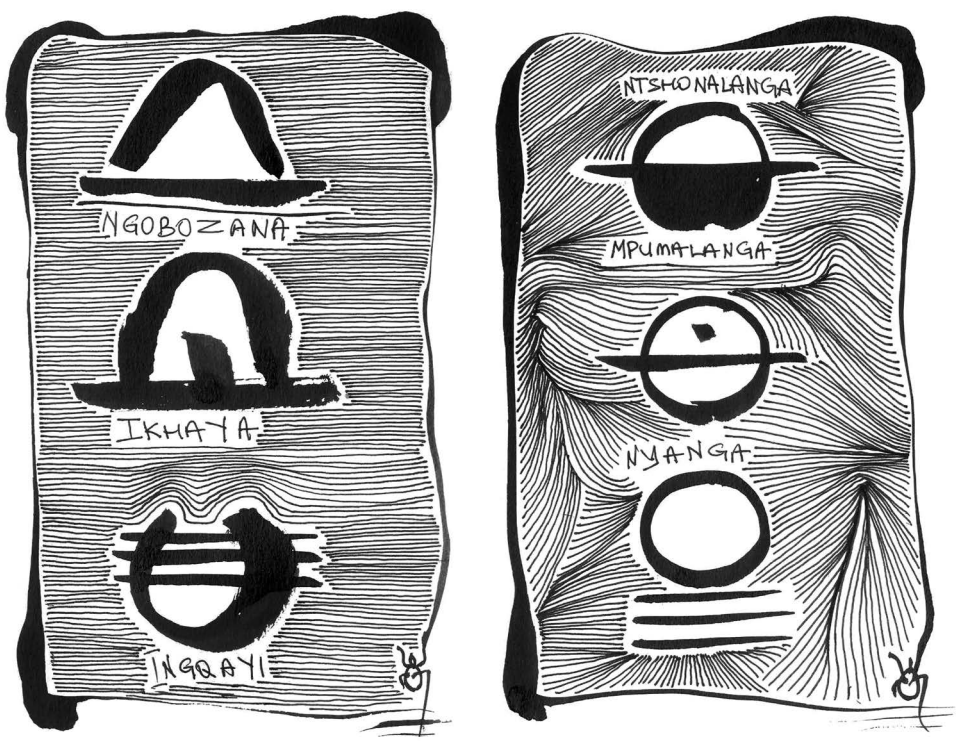
importance of storytelling is that it preserves an ancient knowledge that connects us to the past, to our ancestors, to the land and to the skies — nature itself."
In many ways, Dyalvane's interaction with clay is the movement of it in relation to his own body. It begins with the rhythmic pounding of the medium into long extruded coils that the artist then wraps around his neck and shoulders. Anguine and limp, the clay is propped up by his arms and carried across the room. The artist then feeds the long coil into the work as it turns on its axis, the form rotating, building it up in layers with a speed rarely found even amongst the most adept ceramic masters. His studio, nestled on a quiet road in Cape Town's bustling Woodstock district, throbs with the thick air of burning *impepho* leaves; the space itself has come to house

Umwonyo, 2019, glazed stoneware, 64 x 64 x 54 cm

46 *Embo (Origin)*, 2019, glazed earthenware, 65 x 52 x 52 cm (large size)

some of Dyalvane's nostalgia. The air is filled with the rhythmic thrum of music and with the scented smoke, sound, and ritual for company, Dyalvane coils to the lilting beat — this is his practice; hand-coiling voluminous forms, the sweat pouring from his brow as he lumbers forwards and backwards. As he moves, by extension, so do the pieces. Long after the forms are finished, they hold the movement that made them: thumbprint wedged into the earth like a wave, forearm driving the bellowing side hollow, flat palm beating against the surface, giving it permission to relinquish in on itself. *Embo* (Origin) and *Umwonyo* (Crevice) are examples of a clay body masterfully caving in on itself, exhaling. Breathing life into clay, or letting it breathe itself into form, lies at the core of what Dyalvane does. For the artist, clay has spirit, a word which through its Latin root connotes "breathing, breath, the breath of a god".

Towards the end of 2019, Dyalvane started working on a series called *iThongo*; this is the vision state, the ancestor dreamscape, a place outside of the body. This body of work began in the form of visions, which continued for several months, of gatherings and places, objects, and people. To discover more, Dyalvane went on a journey to the arid province of the Northern Cape to pay homage to a legendary healer and sculptor, Credo Mutwa. The elderly healer passed around that time and Dyalvane was profoundly moved by this trip, which took place during a period of deep, personal proximity to the spiritual realm for him. At the same time, he was marked by the landscape of the region: broad, rolling horizons, parched earth, the barren



Process sketch for *iThongo* 47

tree branches, and telephone poles swollen with enormous bird nests (the endemic social weaver, philetairus socius, builds some of the largest communal nests in the world). They crown the flat landscape with their sun-baked, amorphous forms. “When you have visions, it is important to acknowledge them,” explains Dyalvane. “The way I was doing that was through calligraphy, gestures of the brush, these gestures carry the energy of the vision. I would name these gestures. And they just kept on coming.” Working with a large brush, Dyalvane allows the ink to traverse the page and orbit back on itself, the lines intersecting to create these spontaneous impressions.

In March 2020, on the weekend of South Africa’s pandemic lockdown, Dyalvane started translating these calligraphic renderings into clay. A visual transfer from mind to paper to form; a journey from dreamscape into dimension. Dyalvane purposely allowed the movement of the clay to mimic the motion of the brushstokes.

 Mpumalanga (Sunrise), 2020, terracotta clay, 72 x 61 x 58 cm

Each of the ceramic pieces in this body of work has its own calligraphic counterpart. *Ngobozana*, referring to the place where Dyalvane grew up, translates directly to "little basket" and the village's inhabitants understood this as a reference to the shape of the village; a basket, turned on its head. "Its content of human beings, interestingly enough, was moved from a different hillside to the village's current location fifty or so years ago to make way for colonial pine plantations. I still visit the grave of my grandfather in a place known to a previous generation as home," remarks Dyalvane. Each artwork represents a pillar in the lattice of what can be defined, according to the artist, as home: *Umalusi* (Shepard), *Umama* (Mother), *Mpumalanga* (Sunrise), *Umnga* (Acacia Tree), *Inkomo* (Cattle) or *Igubu* (Drum).

uMalusi (Shepherd), 2020, terracotta clay, 60 x 68 x 81 cm

The works draw their colour palette from the Eastern Cape and in them, one might glimpse the weathered cream tones of the herd's protruding horns, the moist green of winter moss, the pale brown of cattle hide, the deep hue of wood, the yellow of dried grass or the hard blue of endless summer skies. *Utalezo* (Messages) refers to the language of dreams, messages from the ancestors. "My intentions with developing an extended body of work under the title *iThongo* is to highlight a gathering of dreams, seated in the soul, held by the spirits of our ancestors," explains Dyalvane. Each piece has been moulded as a stylised stool; a symbolic object for the artist. Here, they are larger- than-life, metaphorical, and gesturally rendered. They pull from the surface of the paper, and they pull inspiration from a particular object that lingers in Dyalvane's childhood memories: traditional headrests, predominantly carved in wood, to support the head whilst sleeping. It was believed that they connected members of the community with the underworld, linking them to the spiritual world from where dreams would come. The works from *iThongo* are made from earth, connected to the ground, but they are equally at home in the sky like celestial bodies; they are anchored in the earth but born from dreams. Much like their maker, a clay healer, they straddle both worlds. Within traditional Nguni cultures, the world of the living is inseparable from the world of the dead. The ancestors roam underground, but they are able to pass through on the surface, rising from cracks in the earth or pools. Certain areas within the village are particularly heavy with their presence, such as the cattle pen or openings in the local enclosure known as a kraal. "A common sight in the rural Eastern Cape, land of my people, is that of a kraal on every homestead's plot. Traditionally circular, its importance resides in the ancestral transcendent energy of the home. A *kraal* is the first address on arrival, announcing your presence, gratitude, intentions, undertakings and departures," adds Dyalvane. "Important activities are assigned to various areas within the kraal, respect shown by taking one's shoes off to connect with the ground, covered in the dung from livestock, relaying your purist intention to honour this sacred space."

Within traditional Nguni cultures, clay has held powerful symbolic associations, being a material that has historically been used during rituals to communicate with a village's ancestors. Spirits from the underworld are present at all rituals performed by community members, descendants of the deceased. There is a particular type of ceramic vessel, known as *ukhamba* (pl. *izinkamba*), used during rituals for serving and drinking beer. *Izinkhamba* hold *utshwala*, a local sorghum beer, but more importantly, they hold open a stream of communication between the living and the dead. If the feast is linked to a particular member of the homestead, they must always be the first to drink — focusing the ancestors' attention on this specific individual. For in many Nguni cultures, it is not the individual that is emphasised but rather, the collective being of the group. Therefore, the entire community can be seen as a single being — a notion that carries through much of Dyalvane's work. Within this tradition, clay is sacred, ceremonial, it has the power to transcend

Ihobo-hobo (Cape Weaver Bird), 2023, glazed earthenware, forged copper, 111 x 67 x 62 cm

its definition as earth and act as a conduit between two worlds. Moreover, it has the power to harness or disturb the existing harmony between a village and its ancestors. Dyalvane's own contemporary ceramic practice is imbued with this ancient solemnity, it is a way of life. The transformative power of clay is not merely a historical artefact but a living force for Dyalvane, carrying the weight of his deliberate intention and gratitude: "Burning *impepho* helps us unburden from the noise of fluttering thoughts, opening up space for quiet, attentive acknowledgement of our own breath and senses. I use it with great intent to request balance and announce my presence in the ceremonies I take part in at home, the spaces I am present [in] daily and all the places I travel to. This ritual has gifted me with an undeniable awareness and focus in my creative practice of healing through clay. For this, I proclaim '*Camagu*' with deepest gratitude."

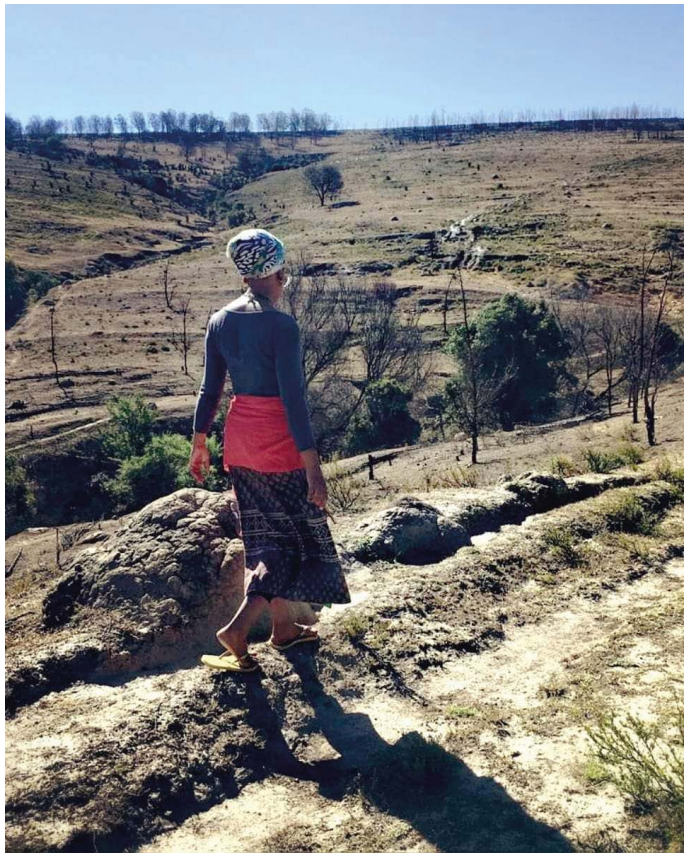
Dyalvane is in communion with the land, truly belonging to it, realising as plant ecologist Robin Wall Kimmerer writes that "to be native to a place we must learn to speak its language. Listening in wild places, we are audience to conversations in a language not our own."[5] Here is an artist who listens in wild places, whose ceramic works grasp at the spirit of a particular place. St. Ives Island and the collective body from Dyalvane's residency at Leach Pottery capture the Cornish landscape. The pieces from *iThongo* hold the Eastern Cape. Dyalvane's most recent body of work, a series named *iNgqweji*, recalls his travels through the Northern Cape province. *Ihobo-hobo* (Cape Weaver Bird) evokes the morphing silhouettes of the region's stark landscape. Emerging from the inhospitable arid plains, these nests defy. They are testaments to homemaking, communal living and survival against the odds. The serpentine forms in this body of work transform from earth into structures, tree branches and nests. "The way I did this, something is trying to break through, part of it does and part of it does not," says Dyalvane. His clay is no longer simply breathing, it is shapeshifting, much like the landscape that inspired it. Dyalvane's earth-toned palettes pull from a tapestry of places.

Here, one sees the deep russet of the Northern Cape soil. The blue of cobalt oxide, white and the terracotta form a sacred bond in these works; a trinity between the brown earth, the clouds and the azure sky. Mingled in between, we find lichen greens and Cape Daisey yellows. This body of work is yet another tribute to the astonishment of nature. *iBubu* (Flock) supports the weaver's expansive home, adorned here with elements in forged copper — the latest in Dyalvane's material experimentations. "I have always been interested in forging, that is why it is one of the first materials I have integrated into my clay works," adds Dyalvane. "Copper is a soft, living metal and as it ages, or is exposed to different elements, it starts to change its colour and movement, it evolves." The *iNgqweji* series finds its roots in an enduring theme within the artist's work, that of migration, transition, transformation and evolution. The notion that no moment is eternal. Dyalvane's work reminds us that there is no clear boundary between one thing and another;

[5] Kimmerer, Robin Wall. The Democracy of Species. Penguin, 2021

that the rock, the tree, the bird and the shepherd are all one with the earth. His clay encapsulates memory, it is the remembrance of what binds us together, a common ancestral past. Yet, as much as the works are bearers of the past, they are hopeful in the wake of an ever-changing future, morphing eternally into something new.

Olivia Barrell is a South African art historian who completed her undergraduate degree in Art History at the Sorbonne University before graduating cum laude from Paris' prestigious National Institute of Art History (INHA) for her postgraduate degrees, specialising in Chinese Ceramics. After working at the Guimet Museum of Asian Arts in Paris, Barrell has been writing about South African ceramics since she moved to Cape Town in 2016. Barrell recently published a comprehensive book, CLAY FORMES, dedicated to contemporary clay from South Africa, showcasing thirty important South African artists pushing the sculptural bounds of clay — the first publication of its kind for the African continent, published by Art Formes, which showcases neglected mediums within contemporary African art through literature and exhibitions.



A RE-TURN JOURNEY WITH ANDILE DYALVANE

NKUTHAZO ALEXIS DYALVANE

On the northwesterly side of a hilltop, Ngobozana Village faces another rolling hill where the old village Cenyu rests bare, hugged snuggly in a cove of repair with low bush, aloes, tobacco plants and trees both foreign and indigenous to this land.

Westerly, beyond the ruins, is Ndlovini Village, facing predominantly a southerly direction with a cliff drop at its most southern face, under which a thick acacia bush forest of thorns spreads with a graded gravel road stretching a boundary, the transport main route. Cenyu, Ngobozana and Ndlovini are intersected by a stream called iBizana, flowing west from the Amathole mountain cliffs along with several tributaries. The waterway along the Amathole hiking trail follows amaXhosa warrior chiefs' steps to put a halt to the siege of the land and continues to service a number of dams feeding an alien pine plantation, a logging plant, blueberry farming and that of nearby British and German settler colonies.

Anglican and Methodist-affiliated mission stations like Saint Matthews are ever-present reminders of settler presence on one's way to places like Hogsback, fed by waterfalls forty-five minutes away. From Huntington's Estate, where Lovedale Printing Press archives chronicles of scripted life, water continues to Pleasant View Dam and feeds into Tyumerivier Dam. Sandile (uKumkani Mgolobane) Dam is fed by Keiskammahoek river known as Qoboqobo locally, and Stutterheim is fed by Wriggleswade Dam. Mnyameni and Cata Dams are perhaps for the blueberries (Gxulu Berries) farmed near Ulana High School in Gxulu village, which was attended by the young Dyalvane. Gubu Dam, en route to Stutterheim where the fly-fishing campers kayak in season, feeds only the alien forest of pines in which cattle risk getting lost, some known to wander as far as land occupied by settler farmers near Wriggleswade Dam.

Most village households meet with empty communal faucets. Water promised from sealed reservoirs doesn't come, leaving them reliant on rains to fill catchment tanks or river water collected in buckets carried in wheelbarrows to fill them up again.

This very place of natural abundance, aggravated by tensions known to all who live here in the Amatole district, is also where the pinnacle of a monument is raised to warrior iNkosi Jongumsombomvu Maqoma. A phallic tongue-to-the-heavens tower guards a remembrance tombstone peeking out above the old forest to one's right coming from Qone (King Williams Town) before descending with sway into the valley where Qoboqobo (Keiskammahoek) lies breathing a finely crushed dust.

The sun slices through with gentle pressure at dusks' peach-hued arrivals and departures from this central flux. This is a place where Majolandile Dyalvane's

paternal and maternal ancestors have been. Where those whom he acknowledges on introduction of himself have lived, his familiar ancestral transitory routes and Xhosa clan roots course deeper into earth, equally raised and steadily compacted underfoot. Here, into her layers, into this light and into clay in his hands, they go.

Ngobozana Village in the foreground (Ngobozana meaning 'small basket' or 'ngobosi' in isiXhosa), precedes a hill free of abode, rising just behind this fifty-nine-year-old village; it's the hill this village is named after. Tucked into the inner arm of rolling hills, south-facing villages in the valley are guarded by cliff drops, dense with old forest where mountains peak from behind them. In the Amathole district, each village has its part in a land reclamation case that gave back to some. The case was called the 'Nine Villages' and is perhaps a more expansive land restorative tale than any elderly villager can clearly remember, but the record affirms this to be the story of nine villages, in the Eastern Cape region of South Africa.

April 2016, a hot, dry resting day, Dyalvane and I venture along a path leading to a crossing. It's a miniature-like canyon of eroded hillside. Small/giant creatures attract our contemplative gaze, a neat anthill filled with army ants; he begins to tell a story of the ways of his young childhood. A huge red-winged, black-spotted, yellow grasshopper crawling over boulders worn by eons of seasonal cycles. As evidenced in the Paleozoic nautilus, spiral-shelled creatures, or perhaps invertebrates that have imprinted their existence on them.

The path we're on is grey gypsum in color now, although where we started on this thread of journey, it was 'ubomvu' (grades of reds) that already stained our soles. I am wearing yellow beach sandals and a white hemmed, brown amaDakie skirt and apron with traditional Dutch-inspired block print patterns, a longer-sleeved grey top, a red scarf around my waist and a printed head scarf on my head, in line with Xhosa wifely traditional uniform etiquette. At some point, my sandals will be taken off to feel the earth directly beneath my feet and to cross the stream in the nearing distance below before a steady ascent to Cenyu, the old village.

Majolandile (meaning to 'expand or grow the family' - aka 'Andile') Dyalvane's eldest brother, Madoda Dyalvane, is the Ngobozana village's age mate and head of family affairs. Cenyu ruins are fresh, a young cove of earth's remembrance are landmarks to the graves of all of Dyalvane's great and grand-fathers and forebears who resisted the apartheid regime's land capture called the 'Trust.' A colonial mission to steal and regulate cattle wealth in the colony's favour and to make the movement of villagers oppressively taxable.

Shifting families into waterless areas where grazing their cattle was limited by colony-erected fencing. Where grazing community cattle on fenced land meant your cattle could be "legally" stolen by those who own the fence, as penalty for crossing

it. This also meant village family retribution was hefty for herd boys as it equated to loss and potential poverty.

To push back on this “legalised” thieving, those very men from the surrounds, employed in the hard labour of erecting fence posts, were also engaged during low visibility hours with taking them out of the ground and making good use of them on their “Trust” allocated, expense inducing land. Andile and his brothers, guided by his Ta’Mkhulu (paternal elder uncle), undertook one such venture to create a milestone moment for the young boys.

They learnt how to put up sturdy fence posts and take them down, repair them, and, of course, where to find them again for the purpose of protecting their livestock within the safe perimeters of the family homestead’s secure kraals. They learnt to make tools that would suffice in securing the perimeters of homes that were previously free from needing such levels of security, all things gates, doors, and utility – all things strong and useful. Displacement traumas within the regime’s sociopolitical psychology are now nuances of adaptation. In the sanctum of community, trust between people and the artisan’s innovation begins to forge a new path.

Dyalvane’s late paternal elder uncle, Nxamleko Dyalvane, respectfully referred to by family members as Ta’Mkhulu had a ‘live by’ mantra that can be witnessed in Dyalvane’s own work ethic today: “Watch and learn, reflect!” Ta’Mkhulu would come walking with his walking stick in hand towards their home, slowly, to deliver this message to whomever he found making something useful in his retirement years from the assembly line of a Wilsons Sweets factory in East London or eMonti as it is known locally in the Eastern Cape. “Watch and learn, stand back and look at what you’ve been doing,” Dyalvane can be heard saying whenever a teaching opportunity arises in his studio or when sharing elsewhere in the world.

Growing up, Dyalvane was given a name by his now late elder brother, Bhut’Mzuvukile Dyalvane, for running about naked for most of his toddlerhood. His brother had a wonderful habit of renaming people, names that stuck and became part of them affectionately. He saw curiosity rather than idle wonderment, a nakedness against the earth and in the breeze. He saw his kid brother as a child in his true essence of play, and everyone in the village called out with affection, “Brotsi!” even before fully gaining sight of him.

Andile Dyalvane with his father and his brothers

Every Wednesday, teachers within the Bantu education system knew that herd boys were not present in the classroom because family cattle wealth needed care. The sustenance of Nguni bovine resources made village life flow with imperative routine. A crucial task for young, agile and watchful eyes trained by the elderly. A vigilance that required a seventh sense as listening for dire threats while searching for lost cattle, for the cocking of a shotgun or horse hooves approaching. Dutiful Wednesdays.

Thursdays were for religious undertakings that needed attendance for donation collection; what needed collecting was collected at most by church-attending village mothers. Thursdays, herd boys such as young Dyalvane drove cows through the cattle dips, a labyrinthine structure at the bottom of the hill, near the entrance to both Thabong 'Dontsa' village on the right and Ngobozana further up to the left. They passed Amasimi (communal crop fields) where the young Dyalvane also ploughed his family's plot with his elder Ta Mkhulu (uncle) who taught him.

When attending class, drawing was Dyalvane's inherent first subject. Such activities were non-requirements for the future vocations of Bantu people at the time (still the 80s) as they did not feed the regime's workforce strategies and were systematically evicted.

Dyalvane would get punished harshly for his attempts to attend to his soul's primary vocation of choice - to reimagine visuals of his village people. In the battered textbooks depicting Eurocentric beliefs of superior humanity and diagrams of biological measures of its validation that attempted to fuse this false image into truth, he studied the drawing style instead and drew from them.

Art was not encouraged in the minds of groomed educators because its value to the spirit demanded repression by the regime as part of the West's economic agenda. Beauty or appreciation thereof existed outside of the assimilation strategy and program, displayed behind glass museum boxes, photographs and chronologies of atrocities, now ticketed for viewing.

Cultural and traditional beauty had no place in the church. Traditional beads were replaced with holy water sanctified rosaries and crucifixes. Bell boys rang church bells for their mere peculiarity, swinging unfamiliar smoking balls on chains in line with white-robed rituals. Peculiar to see, as a herd boy growing up, witnessing your village community shifting in the balance of such paradoxical paradigms to survive the oppression of beauty, ancestral traditions and spirit. Whiter than white, gold-lipped, gold feather-streaked ears, water colour brush strokes of faint pink and yellow foreign flora decorated the bone china tea sets that were reserved for the clerically robed gentry who visited homes in the village, religious adherence check-ins over Easter and Christmas. Children would be reprimanded for entering this trove, sanctioned little fingers and mothers would only open them for these home visitation rituals.

Curiosity was never far from young Dyalvane as he knew well that his family remained in crucial support of *eXhanti*, a pillar of home in the center of ebuhlanti (kraal), a path between ancestral guides opened only by his elders of the same motivation - to remind members to be grounded in gratitude and resilient in character.

A mother- his mother, Ma Mbhele (clan name) Nofezile Vuyiswa Dyalvane nee Tshangela comes from Ndlovini. She sits at her black Singer sewing machine; she's been trained at the mission as a seamstress for the Anglican church, although her hands are made for the earth's nurturing. An elderly paternal Dabawo(aunt), Tobhina 'Tobz,' regulates family routines and management of this paternal home. A father, his father, Mthobeli Dyalvane, welds bulkheads of ships with his left hand at Globe Engineering on the foreshore of //Hui !Gaeb, otherwise known as Cape Town, in the dockyards. Bandy-legged, left-handed, and fast in action, he was given the name 'Magqadaza' by villagers describing these traits. He returned only once a year to the village as young Dyalvane grew up, his visit allocated to coincide with Christmas according to the regime's regulations of migrant workers' holiday time.

He seemed to be a familiar stranger until his retirement, until the time was given to understanding village life better. Time was given to talking with his children the best way he knew how - through making, fixing, and caring for the wellbeing of his livestock. A son- this son, as one of four, was allowed to investigate the inventory of his father's toolbox that included custom-made adaptive tools his father innovated. Welding components together, configured sufficiently for use by those who knew this land very well. The youngest Dyalvane son was not far from using his hands as his primary tools for making.

He slowly touched this "Bone China"; it stated these words in delicate print underneath each set in his mother's special cabinetry of safe keeps, reserved for religious clericals, and concluded that these cups and saucers had to be made from animal bones. He began looking carefully at cattle bones found in fields to make sense of the maker's link from one state of materiality to the next. The young

Dyalvane concluded that the process was displaced as much else felt like at the time, say while he was playing, making mud oxen along a stream's edge, or, without a doubt while drawing.

An unmovable essence of curiosity, perhaps unbeknownst to him at the time for lack of naming, was his ancestral stance against injustice and the diminishing of the spirit. A light that cannot be stubbed out and an alliance that cannot be touched. Dyalvane knew with optimism that something beyond the body existed. He said, "If I can draw it, I can make it."

More than the lashing quota he met with for drawing during a Primary School class lesson, he would keep drawing what he saw and hasn't stopped in his expansive imagination. More than the routines of colonial religious adherence witnessed, he would be raised as a child of the village and still is.

More than any humiliation associated with the haves and the have-nots, he gives the community the energy of his work through iNgqayi, gifting these traditional (beer brew) mqomboti vessels to village families for their ceremonies. More than the trend-driven swaps of many village homesteads' good furniture for lesser quality furniture by western and eastern traders, Dyalvane acknowledges his family as skilled in the ways of self-sustenance, greatly gifted with cultivation. He recognizes the soul light of the maker's way as inextinguishable from his name and that of his ancestors. He channels their voices through his thrown-like works in the 'iThongo' collection where vivid visions of glyphs and symbols that are silos of culture emboss the surface of the clay. He builds nest-like structures in a recent collection, 'Ingqweji', to remember a balance in nature's symbiotic relationships, where guidance and protection are nurturing.

A core memory of the Dyalvane family, Jolinkomo Clan by paternal heritage, was carrying a thatched rooftop from old village Cenyu to Ngobozana village to place atop the spherical structure of their sacred family rondavel. Grandfather James Dyalvane, in his words and actions, was a resourceful man. Not to be removed from his place of long residence, outliving his first wife. Having taken a second meant the growth of his family was steady. Nature's reclamation of his body is where his spirits' ascension and the residence of his remains are till today. In Cenyu. The land lay liminal.

Below, a little murky stream where access permissions are due before crossing, 'iBizana', flows slowly in the cleavage of two hills, one gradual in ascent while the adjacent one less forgiving.

Where we stand is a place stitched together by pathways of sacred ancestral pilgrimage. Before every ceremonial undertaking hosted by family members, the ritual of a morning journey to Cenyu, where Grandfather James Dyalvane and

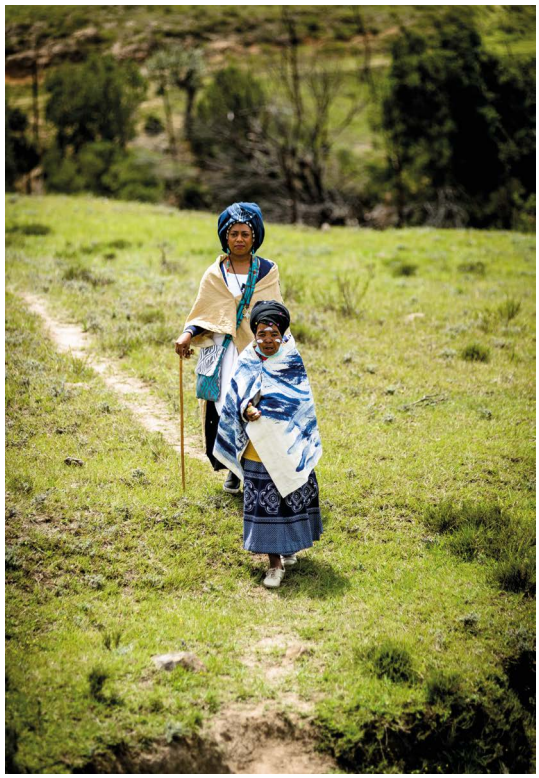
great-grandfather Payi rest, is undertaken barefoot. Speaking intentionally with acknowledgement from the heart in thanks for the great sacrifices made by ancestors gone before, requesting guidance and ceremonial wellness in actions.

Walking together, re-membering collectively the spaces of movement and structures - a swing hung from this tree that remains strong in stature, grown wide, circumferences of family rondavels visible only as long, grassier, circular-patterned patches. Moving memories.

Present, barefoot, healing from fragmentation begins for all, once again in the kraal. Recognizing a deeply purposed tethering to earth and umbilical cut from it simultaneously. As one foot lifts off the ground, another beats down on it like a drum accompanied by the traditional Xhosa drum, iGubu. This is to xhentsa (dance), to release what must be released from the body, from the unspoken. Clapping to mend pieces of joy lost, one hand against the palm of another. Singing to open the unconscious from the heart. Speaking in commune to respond to it. Unified as a family, as a people. A lighter way of being and moving through the world, from this land, from this kraal of community, trust is experienced.

Nogobozana gives language to the exact locale of what surrounds spaces by sub-sectioning the village into five areas. Those who live close to the stream call their area ‘Bizana,’ those who live central to transport routes and Ngobozana Primary School call their area ‘eLalini’ (village central) and so on. We are on the north westerly side of the hill called ‘eMadamini’ (damming of waters) because water collects in this area. After heavy rains, children investigate mud and what it does when played in here. Today, it’s just us walking and talking after winning clay from the miniature canyon. This clay will be energized in our explorations back in //Hui !Gaeb (Cape Town), by his hands, heart rhythms and flow. It will be put through fire, fortified by these elements of home and many lives lived before him.

Polypropylene, maize bags swung over our shoulders with walking sticks in our steady ascent, we’re suddenly halted by the sight of shards. Something shattered. The pathway had changed in colour already, a deep rich crimson. We hadn’t seen this on our determined descent route three hours earlier. A familiar pattern, line and maker’s signature immediately recognized as part of a collection pre-full-time vocation, pre-Denmark residency and pre-scholarship awarded to Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (previously Port Elizabeth Technikon) but made during his studies at Sivuyile Technical College (now College of Cape Town’s, Gugulethu Campus). The first educational institution that required him to draw everything, build a portfolio of work, make it to his heart’s content. Graduating with the highest merit awarded in 1998, supported through these studies by his third elder brother, Jongikhaya ‘Jay’ Dyalvane.



It is viewed as a good omen by families here, when something falls to its shattering, a celebrated release. Unlike the reactions I experienced within my own upbringing. Someone came back into their bodies at its breaking point to layer this land with a new archive, full of life.

We both stood elated with the anthropological realisation that 'dust to dust' - we will return to Clay.

Nkuthazo Alexis Dyalvane is an interdisciplinary artist born and raised in Cape Town, South Africa. Her affinity for the arts runs through her family of musicians, writers, artisans, builders, landscapers, and educators.

A mother and Andile Dyalvane's creative partner, she is also a confidant to artists and entrepreneurs in need of business support. Tooled with knowledge across various media, both self-taught and studied, she explores the materiality of multimodal communication, quantum entanglement, meta physics, Symbiosis (her independently hosted exhibition title in 2018), string theory and the intrigues of the cosmological constant. She creatively expresses herself through illustration, writing, clay, silence and sound frequencies while expanding her knowledge of plant and root medicines. Nkuthazo also heads curating Imiso Ceramics Studio space for gatherings, exhibitions and ceremony apart from other roles played to hold space for expressing gratitude in community.


WORKS

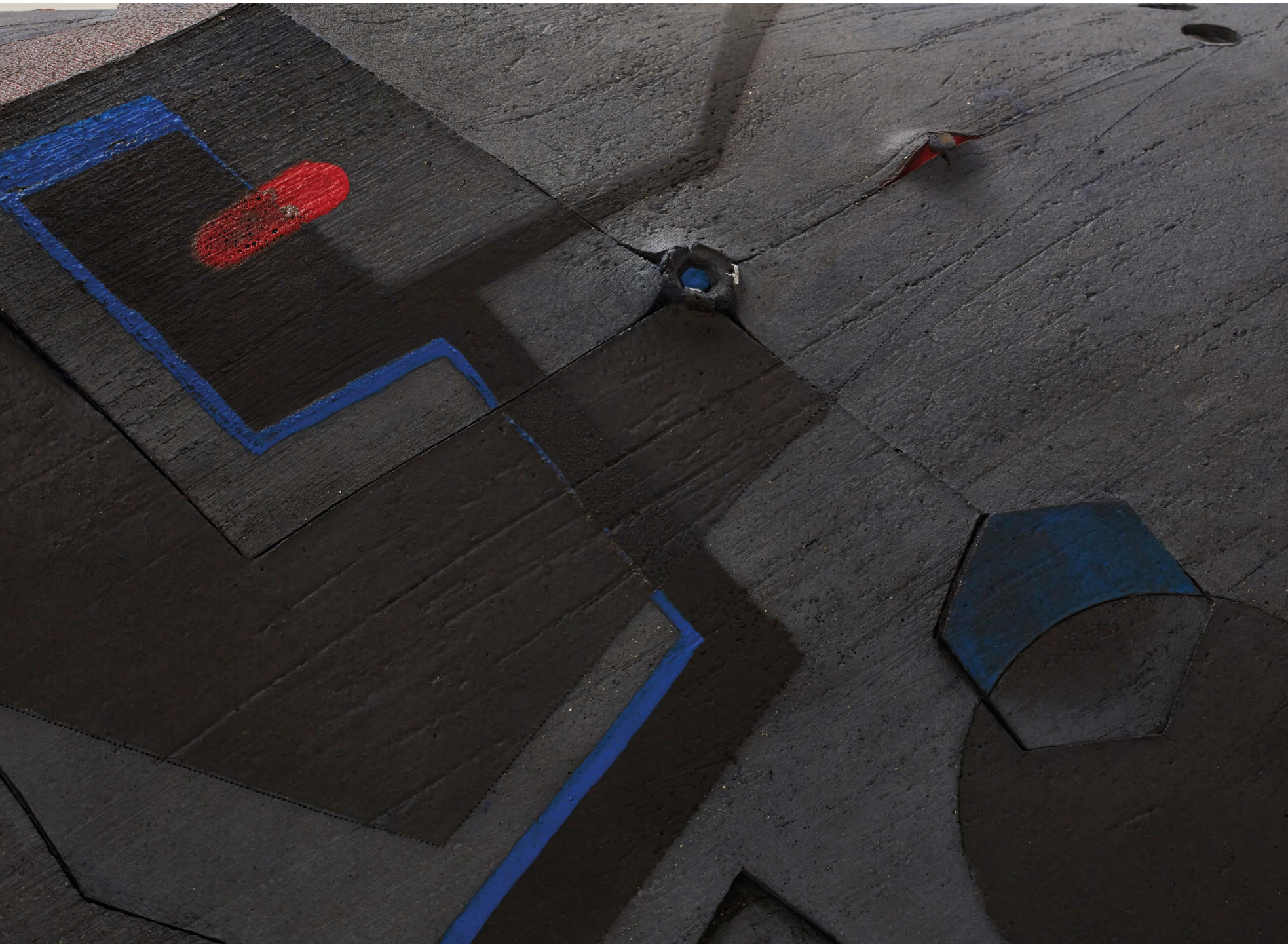
Black Docks, 2016, black clay, dimensions variable

Bizana, 2016, white stoneware, 33 x 73 x 50 cm

68 *Gudu I*, 2016, white stoneware, 58 x 39 x 30 cm

Gudu II, 2016, white stoneware, 60 x 38 x 27 cm

Gudu III, 2016, white stoneware, 68 x 27 x 38 cm



Idladla, 2016, black clay and wenge wood, 144 x 65 x 35 cm

74 *Nkcokocha*, 2016, black clay and wenge wood, 150 x 100 x 80 cm

Ngobozana, 2016, black clay, 33 x 85 x 24 cm

78 *Ifusi*, 2016, black clay, 80 x 153 x 6 cm

Majola I, 2016, white stoneware, 69.9 x 36.8 x 38.1 cm
Majola II, 2016, white stoneware, 88.3 x 34.3 x 27.9 cm
Majola III, 2016, white stoneware, 76.2 x 40.6 x 38.1 cm

82 *Ngwanya II*, 2016, white stoneware, 55 x 27 x 27 cm

Ngwanya III, 2016, white stoneware, 49.5 x 25 x 25 cm

Nkwakhwa I, 2016, white stoneware, 69 x 37 x 37 cm

Nkwakhwa II, 2016, white stoneware, 78 x 32 x 38 cm

88 *Nkwakhwa III*, 2016, white stoneware, 90.5 x 35.5 x 35.5 cm

Qobo-Qobo, 2016, white stoneware, 96 x 52 x 52 cm

Above, *OoJola I*, 2016, white stoneware, 21 x 26 x 31 cm
Below, *OoJola II*, 2016, white stoneware, 21 x 26 x 31 cm

Above, *Oojola III*, 2016, white stoneware, 21 x 26 x 31 cm
Below, *Oojola IV*, 2016, white stoneware, 21 x 26 x 31 cm

92 *Soze Langa*, 2016, white stoneware, 42.5 x 65.5 x 60 cm

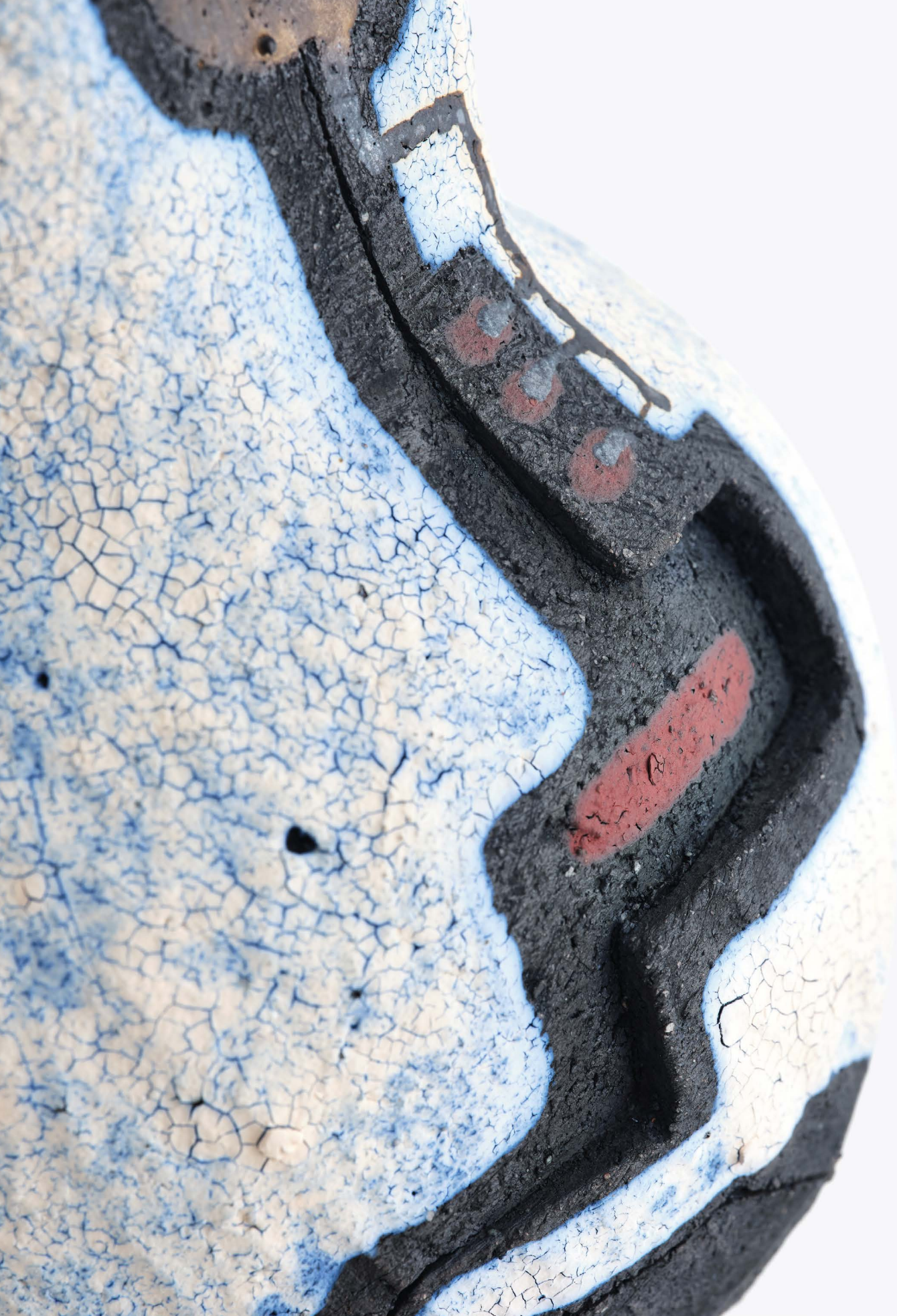
Soze Nyanga, 2016, black clay, 48.5 x 76 x 59 cm

94 *uMbandavu (Beans, Sorghum Dish)*, 2021, earthenware, steel, 32 x 21 x 20 cm

 iMithwane (Pumpkin Flower Shoots, Baby Potato Dish), 2021, 36 x 21 x 21 cm

uMfino (Wild Spinach, Mielie Rice Dish), 2021, terracotta, steel, 23 x 20 x 26 cm

uMqha (Mielie Rice, Melon Dish), 2021, earthenware, steel, 32 x 20 x 20 cm



uMxhaxha (Sweet Corn, Pumpkin Dish), 2021, earthenware, steel, 31 x 22 x 20 cm

102 *iMpukwe'dladla (Grain Silo Rat)*, 2017, terracotta clay, 45 x 33 x 38 cm

Ngqokoqhwane (Kernel Weevil), 2017, earthenware, 30 x 51 x 25 cm

104 *Inkunz'emnyama (Strength of a Bull)*, 2017, earthenware, 67 x 57 x 57 cm

Intshatshoba (Maize Stalk Flower), 2017, earthenware, 34 x 40 x 45 cm

106 *Isichopho (A Seat)*, 2017, earthenware, 40 x 66 x 66 cm

Umdlungu (Spoilt Corn), 2017, earthenware, 65 x 60 x 47 cm

108 *Ugcado (Dry Roasted Corn)*, 2017, earthenware, 75 x 65 x 70 cm

110 *Umlimandlela (Contour)*, 2021, earthenware, 46 x 28 x 28 cm

Imithombo (Corn Yeast), 2017, earthenware, 75 x 65 x 67 cm

114 *Gaz'tyeketye (Non-Genetically Modified Maize)*, earthenware, 55 x 55 x 95 cm

Utshongo (Roasted Corn Powder), 2017, earthenware, 60 x 32 x 32 cm

118 *Moon Jar: Africasso: Dripping Red*, 2019, glazed stoneware, 33 x 33 x 28 cm

Moon Jar: The Swan, 2019, glazed stoneware, 28 x 28 x 33 cm

120 *Moon Jar Scarified: Rhythm*, 2019, glazed stoneware, 28 x 28 x 33 cm

Moon Jar: Africasso: Let Loose, 2019, glazed stoneware, 28 x 28 x 26 cm

122 *Lwalwa*, 2019, glazed stoneware, 20 x 33 x 33 cm

Ntabeni, 2019, glazed stoneware, 28 x 28 x 18 cm

124 *eMadamini*, 2019, glazed stoneware, 14 x 28 x 28 cm

The Dancer, 2019, glazed stoneware, 41 x 31 x 31 cm

126 *iindonga Bowl: Isiziba*, 2020, glazed stoneware, 20 x 28 x 28 cm

128 *Igubu (Drum) I*, 2020, terracotta clay, 63 x 58 x 85 cm

130 *Isilawu (Purifying Herb)*, terracotta clay, 63 x 63 x 74 cm

eNtshonalanga (Sunset), 2020, terracotta clay, 63 x 60 x 71 cm

132 *Igubu (Drum) II,* 2020, terracotta clay, 59 x 57 x 85 cm

Ikhaya (Home), 2020, terracotta clay, 63 x 37 x 55 cm

134 *Impepho (Clary Sage)*, 2020, terracotta clay, 62 x 61 x 89 cm

Inkomo (Cattle), 2020, terracotta clay, 70 x 63 x 79 cm

136 *iThongo (Ancestral Dreamscape)*, terracotta clay, 63 x 37 x 53 cm

Izilo (Totem Animals), 2020, terracotta clay, 51 x 49 x 67 cm

138 *Ngobozana*, 2020, terracotta clay, 103 x 53 x 60 cm

Ubuhlanti (Kraal), 2020, terracotta clay, 106 x 67 x 62 cm

140 *Ulwazi (Knowledge)*, 2020, terracotta clay, 56 x 58 x 65 cm

Umnga (Acacia Tree), 2020, terracotta clay, 83 x 63 x 77 cm

142 *Utyani (Vegetation)*, 2020, terracotta clay, 60 x 65 x 89 cm

uYalezo (Messages), 2020, terracotta clay, 63 x 60 x 70 cm

144 *uMama (Mother)*, 2020, terracotta clay, 104 x 58 x 68 cm

uMtshayelo (Broom), 2020, terracotta clay, 62 x 64 x 82 cm

Left to right, *Zingce (Pride in Yourself)*, 2020, earthenware, 30 x 30 x 25 cm
Inkxaso (Support), 2020, earthenware, 30 x 30 x 30 cm
Zibone (See Yourself), 2020, earthenware, 40 x 28 x 28 cm
Phumla, 2020, earthenware, 33 x 27 x 30 cm

Amaza (Waves), 2022, glazed earthenware, 92 x 55 x 55 cm

Ingxondorha (Volatile Rocky Terrain), 2022, glazed earthenware, 73 x 54 x 54 cm

Isiziba (A Pool), 2022, glazed earthenware, 66 x 54 x 53 cm

Umthombo (Spring), 2022, glazed earthenware, 76 x 48 x 50 cm

Umgodi (A Mine), 2022, glazed earthenware, 75 x 48 x 48 cm

158 *iNgqweji Study I (Bird's Nest)*, 2021, earthenware, steel, 41 x 22 x 22 cm

iNgqweji Study II (Bird's Nest), 2021, earthenware, steel, 32 x 31 x 18 cm

160 *iNgqweji Study III (Bird's Nest)*, 2021, earthenware, steel, 39 x 26 x 19 cm

iNgqweji Study IV (Bird's Nest), 2021, earthenware, steel, 31 x 16 x 35 cm

iYuku (Baby Bird), 2022, earthenware, forged copper, 120 x 65 x 65 cm

164 *iNgqweji (Nest)*, 2022, earthenware, forged copper, 100 x 112 x 57 cm

iBubu (Flock), 2022, earthenware, forged copper, 120 x 85 x 60 cm

166 *Nomanxezane (Wasp)*, 2023, glazed earthenware, copper, 65 x 38 x 38 cm

Isiduli (Anthill), 2023, glazed earthenware, 57 x 43 x 37 cm

168 *iHlati (Forest)*, 2021, earthenware, 115 x 62 x 30 cm

170 *Nkwakhwa*, 2021, earthenware, 95 x 62 x 62 cm

Ngwanya, 2021, earthenware, 100 x 65 x 65 cm

Umbhompolo (Stalk of The Agave Plant Flower), 2022, smoke-fired earthenware, 55 x 45 x 45 cm

174 *iSihlwele (Ancestral Spirit)*, 2022, glazed earthenware, 95 x 58 x 55 cm

Ixesha (Time), 2022, glazed earthenware, 94 x 60 x 55 cm

176 *uCanzibe (Canopus)*, 2022, glazed earthenware, 85 x 60 x 58 cm

iSilo se Khaya (Domestic Animal), 2022, glazed earthenware, sandstone and mild steel, 6.5 x 49 x 69 cm

178 *uMlimi (Farmer)*, 2022, glazed earthenware, sandstone and mild steel, 5 x 49 x 78 cm

uSapho (Family), 2022, glazed earthenware, sandstone and mild steel, 6 x 43 x 86 cm

BIOGRAPHY / CV

ANDILE DYALVANE
B. 1978 (NGOBOZANA, EASTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA)

Andile Dyalvane is one of South Africa's master ceramic artists, hand-coiling monumental forms, predominantly from terracotta. He was born in 1978 near Qobo-Qobo in the Eastern Cape and spent his childhood embedded in traditional rural Xhosa lifeways, developing an intimate relationship with umhlaba (the land, clay, mother earth). Dyalvane obtained a National Diploma in Art and Design at Sivuyile Technical College in Gugulethu, Cape Town, as well as a National Diploma in Ceramic Design from Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Gqeberha, in 2003. As a member of the International Academy of Ceramics, Dyalvane has participated in residencies in Denmark, France, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Taiwan, and has proffered his insight through masterclasses and workshops both locally and internationally. His work is widely exhibited in museums across the world, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, Vitra Design Museum, Iziko South African National Gallery, Pérez Museum in Miami, Denver Art Museum and the Design Museum in Gent to list a few. His work emerges from the mud, in communion with ancestral clay. His work is bovine, horned, dreamed, sometimes red-breasted and lilac-winged, sometimes lacerated with tectonic fissures, sometimes armed with careful geometries. Dyalvane, alongside ceramic artist Zizipho Poswa, co-founded Imiso Ceramics in Woodstock, Cape Town in 2005. He is the recipient of the 2015 Design Foundation Icon Award and was awarded a Special Mention as a finalist in the LOEWE Foundation Craft Prize in 2022. When talking about his work, Dyalvanes describes clay as "a tool to communicate and connect; to communicate who [he is], and who we are, and what we have been through and what we are capable of doing. That is what it means to be human."

Olivia Barrell

Lives and works in Cape Town, South Africa

EDUCATION

2003 Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, National Diploma in Ceramic Design
1999 Sivuyile Technical College, National Diploma in Art and Design
1978 Born in Ngobozana, Eastern Cape, South Africa

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2021 *iThongo*, Friedman Benda, New York, USA
2020 *iThongo*, Southern Guild, Cape Town, South Africa
Selected Works from the Leach Pottery Residency, Southern Guild, Cape Town, South Africa
2019 *Our Cultures in Constant Collaboration*, Leach Pottery, St. Ives, UK
2017 *Idladla*, Southern Guild, Cape Town, South Africa
2016 *Camagu*, Friedman Benda, New York, USA

SELECT GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2023 Tel Aviv Biennale of Crafts & Design, MUZA Eretz Israel Museum, Israel
Mirror Mirror: Reflections on Design at Chatsworth, Friedman Benda, Chatsworth House, UK
2022 *Uyalezo – Song of the Desert River* [public land art], Kwasukasukela Arts Collective, Stonehenge Private Reserve, Tankwa Artscape Residency
Loewe Foundation Craft Prize Finalist Exhibition, Seoul Museum of Craft Art, Republic of Korea
2021 Jinju Traditional Crafts Biennale, Republic of Korea
Indian Ocean Craft Triennial, Western Australia
2020 *What Would Have Been*, Friedman Benda, New York, USA
Solace, Southern Guild, Cape Town, South Africa
Closer, Still, Southern Guild, Cape Town, South Africa
2019 *Communion*, Southern Guild, Cape Town, South Africa
Mess – Expressionism and Experimentation in Contemporary Ceramics, Future Perfect, New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles, USA
Iidonga Collection, Feature Designer of the Year, 100% Design South Africa
2016 *Gebak*, Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa
2015 *Homecoming*, Southern Guild, Cape Town, South Africa
Christie's Design Auction, London, UK
2014 Central Saint Martin University of Art, London, UK
Making Africa: A Continent of Contemporary Design, Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany
Terra Nova, New Taipei City Yingge Ceramic Museum Biennale, Taiwan
D-Street Gallery Exhibition, Western Cape, South Africa
2013 *The Craft of Ubuntu: An Exploration of Collaboration through Making*, Iziko Heritage Museum, Cape Town, South Africa
Southern Guild 2013 Collection, Museum of African Design, Johannesburg, South Africa
Heavy Metal, Southern Guild, Cape Town, South Africa

2012 *Long Table 101 Place Settings and Retrospective*, Iziko Heritage Museum, Cape Town, South Africa
ReCollect, Southern Guild Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
Southern Guild 2012 Collection, Johannesburg, South Africa
Everyday Discoveries: Tradition Reinterpreted, International Design House, Helsinki, Finland
South African Pavilion, Royal Festival Hall, London, UK
KKNK Festival Exhibition, Oudtshoorn, South Africa
2011 *Conversations*, AMARIDIAN Gallery, New York, USA
2009 *Brotherhood*, RED BLACK & WHITE Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
2006 *Picasso and Africa*, Iziko Museum, Cape Town, South Africa
2003 Solo Exhibition, UCT Irma Stern Museum, Cape Town, South Africa

AWARDS

2023 Loewe Foundation Craft Prize Jury
2022 Loewe Foundation Craft Prize, Special Mention
2019 Caroline Winn Regional/National Ceramic Ambassador Award, Ceramics South Africa
2015 Icon Award, Design Foundation
2014 Second Runner Up, Ceramics South Africa National Exhibition
2011 Top 200 Young South Africans, Mail & Guardian
2009 Artist of the Year, VISI Magazine
2006 Design Icon in the Western Cape, Cape Craft and Design Institute
EDIDA International Award in Ceramics, Elle Decoration South Africa
2003 Second Prize, Cape Craft Design Institute, 10 Years of Democracy
2001 FNB Vita Award, Best Decorated Piece
1999 FNB Vita Award, Best Exhibition Piece from the Western Cape

RESIDENCIES

2024 Cerámica Suro, Guadalajara, Mexico
2023 AoCG - Academy of Ceramics Gmunden, OÖ Landes-Kultur GmbH (OÖ AIR), Gmunden, Austria
2022 Tankwa Artscape Residency, South Africa
2019 Artist-in-Residence, Leach Pottery Studio, St. Ives, UK
Summer Workshop Programme, Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, Maine, USA
Clay Adventures with Andile Dyalvane, Master Class Touring Series, South Africa
2018 Clay Gulgong, Clay Festival Ceramics Master Demonstrations & Lecture, Australia
2015 Artist-in-Residence, Palo Alto Art Center, California, USA
2014 New Taipei City Yingge Ceramic Museum, Taipei, Taiwan

PUBLICATIONS

2023 *Clay Formes*, Olivia Barrell (ed.), published by Art Formes2020 *Self/Other/Clay/Skin: Reflections on Ceramics by Andile Dyalvane*, Juliet Armstrong, and Kim Bagley by Kim Bagley, de art
Africanfuturism: African Imaginings of Other Times, Spaces, and Worlds, Dr. Kimberley Cleveland
2019 *Communion*, published by Southern Guild and BMW South Africa
2018 *Skipping the Blockade Run: Andile Dyalvane and Camagu* by Dr. Elizabeth Perrill,

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ALMAS ART FOUNDATION

Almas Art Foundation (AAF) is a London based non-profit organisation that is committed to celebrating the invaluable contributions made by African and African diaspora artists to Modern and contemporary visual arts.

AAF aims to present and create an awareness for the practices of established and mid-career African and African diaspora artists through a programme of publications, exhibitions and films, documenting these artists' practices for a new generation of African artists, scholars and the wider international art community.

AAF aims to foster collaborations with emerging artists, curators and writers to support the arts ecosystem in Africa and facilitate residencies through partnerships with universities, institutions and independent initiatives.

ALMAS ART
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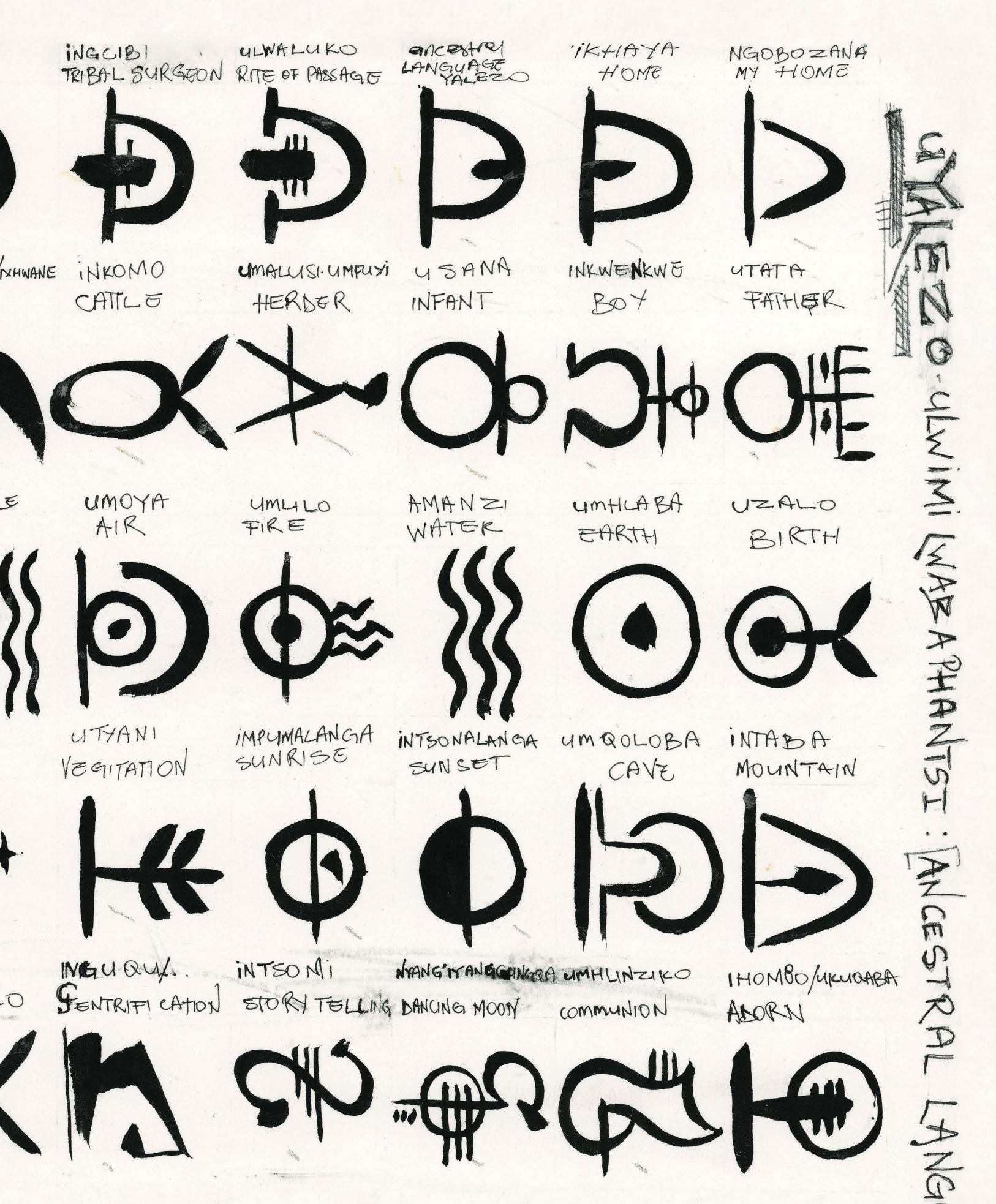
Front/Back cover: *Ulwazi (Knowledge)*, 2020, terracotta clay, 56 x 58 x 65 cm
Endpapers: Process Sketch for *iThongo*, 2020


iMBEWU
SEED
UMAMA
MOTHER
USAPHO
FAMILY
iNYANGE
THE ELDER(WISE I)
iXHWELE
MEDICINE MAN
iSANUSI
SHAMAN
UMLIMI
FARMER
UKUFA
DEATH
ABAPHANTSI
ANCESTERS
IZILO
TOTEM ANIMALS
iMFUYO
DOMESTIC ANIMALS
iMBUZI
GOAT
UMALUME
UNCLE
UMLAMBO
RIVER
INDONGA
DONGAS
ITHAFA/IDLELO
PASTURE
iMVULA
RAIN
ULWANDI
OCEON
UMAFUNGWASHWE
1st BORN GIRL
ISICAWU
CLEANSING HERB
iMPEPHO
CLERY SAGE
iNGQAYI
BEER POT
UMGA
ACACIA
iKHALA
ALOE
INDLALIFA
1st BORN SON
UMTSHAYELO
BROOM/BRUSHES
UBUHLANTI
CATTLE FOLD
UNANISO NGOLWAZI
IMPART IN KNOWLADGE
IGUBU
DRUM
IDLADLA
GRAIN SIL


iNGCIBI
TRIBAL SURGEON
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RITE OF PASSAGE
ancestral
LANGUAGE
YALEZO
iKHAYA
HOME
NGOBOZANA
MY HOME
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CATTLE
uMALUSI.UMPUYI
HERDER
u SANA
INFANT
INKWENKWE
BOY
UTATA
FATHER
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