

# IZIBONGO

Celebrating Art in Africa and the Diaspora

Issue 20 - 2017



The Watercolour Man

Tsepiso Lesenyeho

# Editorial Note

Once again, I bemoan the paucity of literature by Africans, concerning artists of the continent. I could find no magazine or newspaper articles, on the featured artist in this issue. Will it be the same when I come to feature other Sotho artists, such as Mothibeli Kometsi, Thabiso Moleleki and Steve Mashoabathe? There are articles on the early 20<sup>th</sup> century sculptor Samuel Makoanyane, but not on this 21<sup>st</sup> century master of watercolours.

I am happy to present to TSEPISO LESENYEHO.

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<https://reggaediscography.blogspot.co.uk/2017/01/the-dub-magazine-2017.html>

<http://rastaites.com/izibongo-issues-8-to-17/>

**Cover Art – from *African Craft.com***

<http://www.africancraft.com/index.php?sid=98724221479466012048221342797245>

**Morija Arts and Culture**

<http://www.morija.co.ls/arts-and-culture/>

Morija has long been a cradle of culture and learning in Lesotho. So much seminal thought and inspiration has taken place here that it seems quite natural that new shoots and branches of cultural activity are rapidly growing and taking on a momentum of their own. Clay is being shaped, pots thrown and fired. Paintings painted and more than this ideas are being exchanged. Art is a language. It is a language being spoken more and more in Morija. It is also a language that is understood universally and Morija is taking it's place in this cross-continental dialogue.

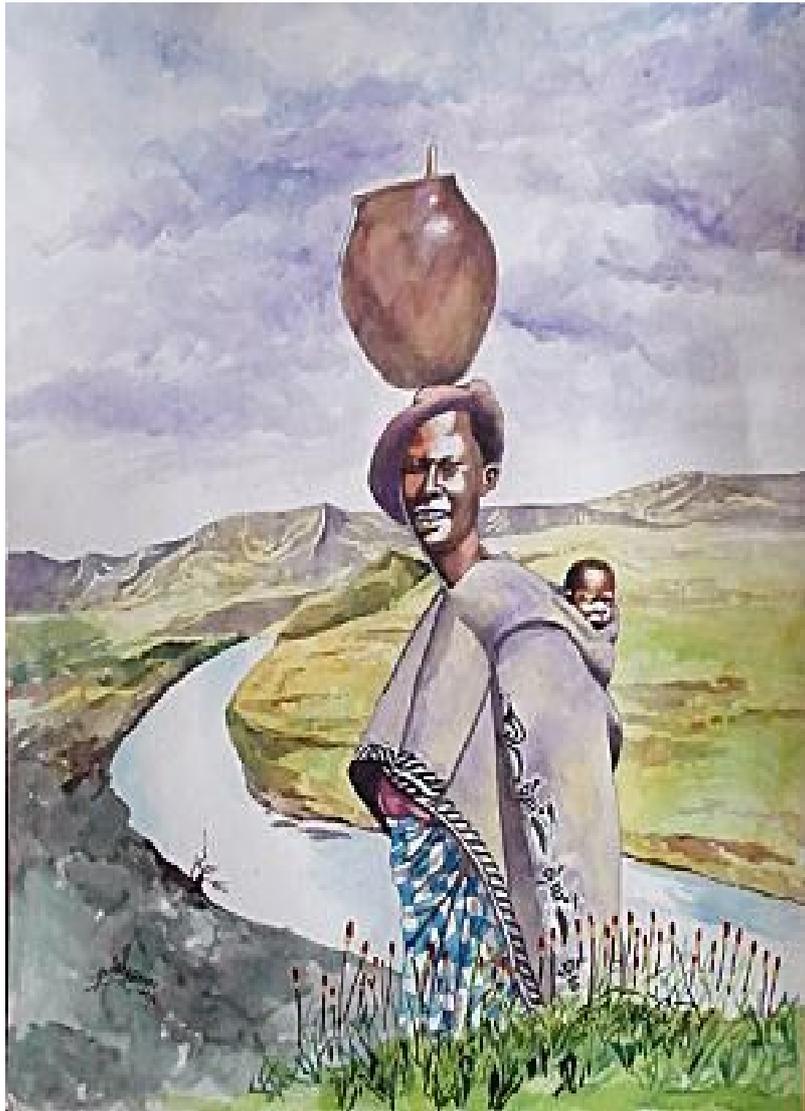
It currently serves as work and studio space for a number of artists. The aim for the complex is to provide artists and interested people with a space in which to learn, build their creativity and livelihoods. As the centre develops, it will not only provide mentoring and practical learning opportunities, space and equipment, as well as exchange programmes in the visual arts, craft and design, but also in other performing and practical arts. The concept is still in the developmental stage but already it is proving to be instrumental in developing a vibrant arts community in Morija.

*from Morija.co.ls*



from [Morija.co.ls](http://Morija.co.ls)

# Tsepiso Lesenyeho



*from African Craft.com*

A versatile artist of high repute, Tsepiso Lesenyeho's work speaks eloquently and in telling detail of life in Lesotho. Lesenyeho has worked and exhibited in many parts of the world will be showing exquisite watercolours of Lesotho and Basotho daily life.

*from Morija.co.ls*



**from *African Craft.com***

Tsepiso Lesenyeho was born in Mazenod, Lesotho, in 1970. He works almost exclusively in watercolor using pen and ink for detail.

**from SNAC**

# MASERU

**Tsepiso Lesenyeho** was born in 1968. He is originally from Maseru but now lives in Maseru. He began participating in art exhibitions in 1984, when he was 16. The materials he used at that time were very poor, as he wasn't aware of high quality art supplies. He drew on the backside of cardboard soapboxes. His mother was a domestic worker for some teachers from Maseru Prep School and she was able, through these teachers, to connect Tsepiso with the school's art exhibitions. He did very well, as all paintings were bought very quickly. Most of the other artists exhibiting were foreigners -- only 2 to 3 Lesotho artists participated.

His formal education did not progress well because he had a car accident in 1987, in which he had a brain fracture and broke his leg. But he still continued with his artwork even though there were rarely art exhibitions in Lesotho. He lost his wife in 2001 and he is now supporting his 13-year-old daughter alone.

Tsepiso began his artistic career with clay modelling as a child. In primary school, he began to draw, but with little instruction. There is little formal art education in Lesotho schools.

excerpts from article by **Sirri Morley**  
*African Craft.com*  
Feb.2006

# Mediums

Watercolours - Plaka - Acrylic

Charcoal

Oil Paint - Pencil - Ink



**from** *African Craft.com*

The work of Lesotho's artists is prized by collectors. Many artists are active in the country, and the sale of their work is an important part of Lesotho's economy. Many use motifs borrowed from the ancient petroglyphs left by the [San](#) people at Ha Baroana, a rock shelter east of Maseru. Contemporary artists include 'Mathabo Nthako, a female potter who uses traditional African firing techniques to create objects with themes that are religious and filled with subtle humour. Tsepiso Lesenyeho, a painter whose work often depicts village scenes, has earned a following among the Sotho as well as among visitors to the country.

**from** *Encyclopedia Britannica*



**from African Craft.com**

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**from African Craft.com**

# MORIIJA

MMA is in the process of becoming a registered not-for-profit Lesotho organization. Currently this process is not complete, and MMA does not yet have a not-for-profit registration number. MMA is dedicated to collecting valuable archival material and museum collections. The museum also works on a range of arts & culture projects, plus heritage and community-based tourism initiatives. These include a heritage mapping documentary film currently in post-production, consultancies to various heritage sites around Lesotho, a school & education outreach programme that includes visits from schools and communities, exhibiting and interpreting a collection of material culture, as well as multi-media and other presentations relevant to art, history, culture, science and life orientation. MMA was established in 1956 and has been active for the past 60 years. Morija Museum oversees the emerging Morija Cultural Precinct, of which The Hub is a new partner. The Cultural Precinct also includes the Museum, the Morija Arts Centre, Maeder House Gallery, Heritage Park, the Morija Amphitheatre and Café Mojo. This collaborative community of arts, learning and business enterprises builds on Morija's history as a cultural and tourism destination. The precinct partners share resources and expertise to provide a richer customer experience and more sustainable business environment. (For further information: <http://www.morija.co.ls/museum/overview/>)

from OSISA  
Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa

# MAEDER

Maeder House is one of the oldest buildings in Lesotho, dating back to 1843. It was the home of missionary artisan and artist Francois Maeder. The gallery provides Basotho artists with a place to exhibit and sell their work.

from *Morija.co.ls*



**from *African Craft.com***

In Lesotho, it is primarily foreigners who buy his work, as most Basotho do not have an interest in purchasing artwork. There is little awareness about the value of art. Tsepiso is interested in exhibiting outside of Lesotho to teach others about rural Basotho life.

**from *African Craft.com***

# GOING to MOSHOESHOE

(pronounced Mo-shwe-shwey)

In a time of complete chaos, when disaster came stomping through the land, grabbing what it wanted, devastating the rest; his name became an amulet to thousands, a talisman for the terrorised. They flocked to see him, to see if the lighthouse was real.

In a time when children laughed less - a time to pray; wishing for Moshoeshoe.

They dreamt of Thaba Boisu, the mountain stronghold of Moshoeshoe. Of a heaven in hell. Where skeletons could replace, the flesh that had disappeared. The orphans could once again grasp stability. Where drought and famine were not victorious. The ragged refugees could rest their war-torn feet. And when war came, it did not leave as conqueror.

There's an exodus from everywhere, leaving night and day; going to Moshoeshoe.

Blessed with the skill of diplomacy, admired by foe as well as by friend. This man could fight, this man could talk. Man of the crocodile clan, his totem on the flag of Lesotho. Founder of the Sotho state, icon of African freedom.

Because of his wisdom, the children returned to play; singing songs of Moshoeshoe.

**Natty Mark Samuels**



**from *African Craft.com***

Due to this fact, and the fact that there are many young Basotho students with an interest in art, Tsepiso would like to open an art school to support artistic creativity and to share his skills.

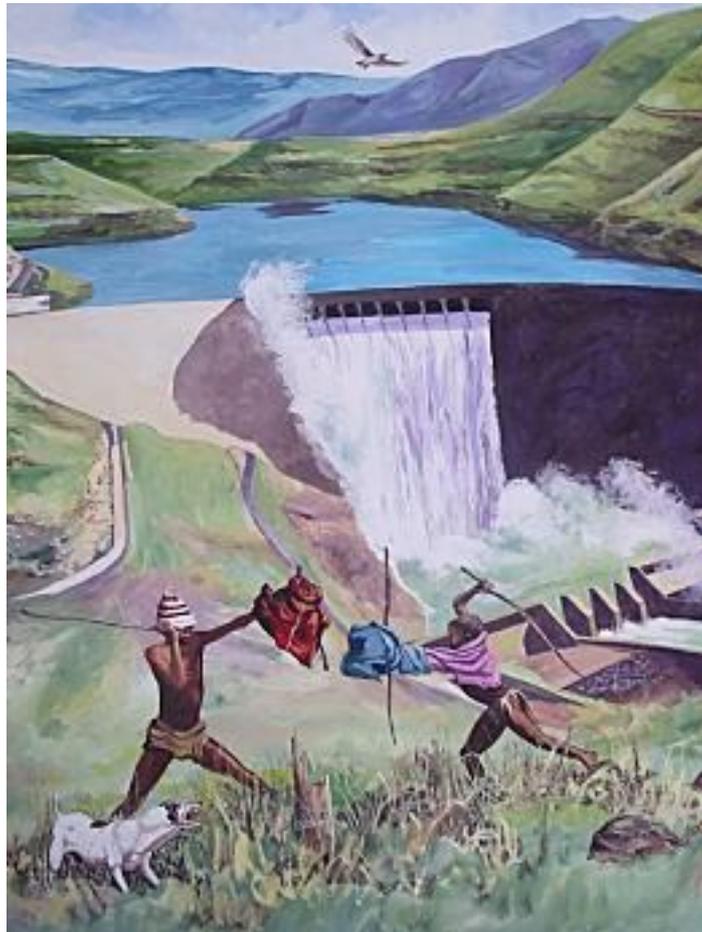
**from *African Craft.com***



**from** *African Craft.com*

Lesenyeho has exhibited at home and abroad and his work can be found in collections throughout the world.

**from** *Morija.co.ls*



**from *African Craft.com***

A prolific artist, enclosed within his all absorbing concentration, Lesenyeho produces work that speaks of a dislocation as well as a very clear connection.

**from *Morija.co.ls***



from *African Craft.com*

I am delighted to see this fine artist receive some much-deserved recognition. His beautiful paintings are the images of Lesotho I carry in my head.

**Jane Hale**

**Comment**

from *Morija.co.ls*



**Tsepiso Lesenyeho**

*from African Craft.com*

Although his paintings are incredibly life-like, he does not use photographs, but draws and paints from memory.

*from African Craft.com*