

NESTA NALA : CERAMICS

1985 - 1995

by

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DECLARATION

This dissertation is the unaided work of the candidate. It has not been, nor is submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

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This thesis is dedicated to my parents.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis reviews two local collections of ceramics by Nesta Nala between 1985 and 1996.

The main text is presented in four chapters.

Chapter One outlines the development of Nala's career and discusses the collections of her work outlined in this study. Chapter Two provides a brief overview of Zulu domestic-ware traditions, and outlines the basis of Nala's technology and decorative methods. Chapter Three reviews texts that discuss Nala and her work and then critically examines the application of the term "traditional". Chapter Four interprets Nala's decorative themes of examples in the Durban Art Gallery and University of Natal collections. An attempt is made to contextualize genres of Nala's work represented in these collections on the basis of their intended market destinations.

PREFACE

This dissertation investigates the work of Nesta Nala made from 1985 to 1995. Research included a detailed examination of Nala works in the Durban Art Gallery and University of Natal collections. Field trips were undertaken to Nala's home during 1994, 1995 and 1996 and interviews conducted with the artist.

The following procedure has been adopted.

(i) References appear in the text accompanied by page numbers. A date is given where more than one text by the same writer has been used.

(ii) A glossary of Zulu words used in the text appears at the end of the text. References accompany the meanings of specialist ceramic terms. Everyday words have been translated from E.B. Doke and B.W. Vilakazi, Zulu-English Dictionary, 1972, and are not accompanied by references.

(iii) A list of references appears after the glossary.

(iv) Illustrations and tables are indicated in the text in bold type. A list of illustrations and tables appears after the list of references.

(v) An appendix of Nala works in the Durban Art Gallery and University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg) collections appears after the illustrations and tables. Acquisition numbers are preceded by the abbreviations DAG and UNP in the catalogue and text.

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INTRODUCTION

The national recognition of Nesta Nala as first prize winner of the 1995 F.N.B. Vita Craft competition and 1996 National Ceramics Biennale has led to much recent interest in her ceramics. This raises questions about the ways in which so-called "traditional" ceramics are perceived in popular and scholarly discourse, and in art gallery and museums collections.

The first section of this thesis introduces Nala and her working context, outlines her working methods and establishes the major themes underpinning the collected works. Chapter one gives a biographical overview and briefly reviews the Durban Art Gallery and University of Natal study collections chosen as the study sample. Zulu domestic ware traditions and Nala's methods of production and decoration are overviewed in chapter two. Published reports on Nala and Zulu ceramics in general provided most of the source material, additional information was found in visits to local museums collections. Field trips to Nala's home facilitated interviews, working demonstrations and first-hand observation of the ceramist at work.

The second half of the thesis focuses on the relationship between Nala's work and received Zulu ceramic traditions. Four texts that discuss Nala are reviewed in chapter three and specific reference made to changing perceptions of Nala's work between 1984 and 1996. This is followed by a discussion of the term "traditional" as it has been applied to Nala.

Chapter four discusses Nala's formal and decorative themes and then suggests different genres in Nala's work determined by their market destinations. The first section interprets stylistic aspects of the collected ceramics based largely on empirical observations and detailed recording of the works themselves; the second section considers specific examples of Nala's ceramics embodying her response to external patronage, including tourist and collector's productions.

CHAPTER ONE

BIOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW

Nesta Mathom Nala lives in the Thukela valley at Oyaya near Ndongondwane in the Mamba area of Inkhanyezi. The Nala family have a tradition of ceramic production and Nesta in particular has achieved a considerable national reputation for her work.

Nala began making vessels at the age of twelve, taught by her mother, Sipiwe, who had learned the skills from the mother of her common-law husband (Nesta's paternal grandmother). Nala is now fifty-three years old and has for many years been regarded as the senior potter of the family, although her mother continues to produce her own work (Cruise p124). Nala has not married, and has raised her children as a single parent. She supports her family entirely from the production of ceramics. In turn, Nala has taught four of her daughters to make ceramics; reports mention Bongi (Levinsohn p81), Jabu, Thembi and Zanele (Wissing p33).

Nala produces handbuilt vessels which are pit-fired with wood and aloe leaves, based predominantly on received traditions of Zulu beer-pottery. These vessels are spherical in shape with flattened bases and incised rims or short necks. She also makes double-gourd shaped and lidded vessels, as well as forms based on commercial Western utensils such as vases, salt cellars and bottles (field observation 1996, Wissing p33).

After construction Nala's vessels are decorated in a variety of ways; her methods include raising, incising, rouletting, impressing and burnishing to create a range of motifs. A few of the vessels remain a mottled red-brown after the biscuit firing, but most are finished by further blackening processes and attain high sheen.

Little is recorded of Nala's production prior to the early 1980's. Before this period her work was patronised by Zulu customers who bought directly from Nala, often placing orders for specific items (fieldnotes, 1996). These were primarily domestic wares, comprising a range of vessel shapes used in the production, storage and consumption of beer and other indigenous foodstuffs. In 1976 Nala began to sell tourist wares to the Vukani Association in Eshowe (fieldnotes 1996). This organisation, started in 1972 under the guidance of Reverend K. Lofroth, aimed to promote Zulu craftwork and provide a regular income for craftworkers (van Heerden p135). Vukani had approached Nala after "talent scouting" in her area (fieldnotes 1996).

In 1983 Nala met Leonard van Schalkwyk, an archaeologist from the Ondini Museum, Ulundi, who was working at the Ndongondwane sites at Wozi and Mamba, close to Nala's homestead (Cruise p124). In getting to the Mamba site he had to drive past Nala's homestead. He approached her to make him a pot hoping that it could possibly replicate an Iron Age vessel (conversation with van Schalkwyk 1996). Nala was fascinated by the Iron Age designs on the sherds that van Schalkwyk showed her and was inspired to use them on subsequent vessels (Wissing p32), leading to new motifs and themes in her work.

Following this period Nala's work began to be increasingly patronised by white collectors, most notably regional art galleries and museums. Jannie van Heerden, Art and Craft subject advisor for KwaZulu-Natal schools (and a well-known promoter of Zulu arts) was instrumental in introducing Nala's work to collectors and patrons. These included the Durban Art Gallery, the Tatham Art Gallery in Pietermaritzburg, African Art Centre and Grassroots Gallery in Durban and Kim Sacks Gallery in Johannesburg.

During the mid 80's Nala began to sign and date her vessels at the suggestion of van Heerden (interview 1996). This helped to identify her work, ensuring their value as collector's items,

particularly as beer-wares (and other Zulu ceramics) have tended not to be signed. In the late 80's and early 90's a growing awareness of indigenous art was accompanied by local publications first by Rhoda Levinsohn and then Wilma Cruise that featured Nala's work. Her name was consequently established in the forefront of contemporary Zulu ceramics.

Nala began to enjoy national and international recognition after her works were represented on the Cairo International Ceramics Biennial 1994. In 1995 she won the F.N.B. Vita Craft award (National Ceramics Quarterly 30:8-9, 33:27), and then first prize in the vessel category of the 1996 National Ceramics Biennale (National Ceramics Quarterly no 37:8-22).

COLLECTIONS OF NALA CERAMICS

Ceramic vessels made by Nesta Nala are represented in a number of public collections in KwaZulu-Natal, including the Durban Art Gallery, Killie Cambell Collection, Natal Museum, the Tatham Art Gallery, and Vukani Museum, Eshowe. This study refers to works belonging to the Durban Art Gallery study collection, and University of Natal Fine Art study collection. These two collections were chosen as a study sample for this dissertation because they represent the two largest collections of Nala work in KwaZulu-Natal. Together they comprise forty-four pieces by Nala, representing a time span from 1985 to 1995.

DURBAN ART GALLERY

The largest public collection of her work in KwaZulu-Natal, Durban Art Gallery's collection includes thirty-one pieces by Nesta Nala. The museum first acquired a Nala vessel by purchase from the African Art Centre in 1985, before her work became widely recognised. This piece is unsigned and was labelled "unknown Zulu artist" in the acquisition register (pers. obs. Cat.No.38).

Nala's work was only specifically collected much later. Twenty-six pieces, all signed and dated, were commissioned in 1993 by Jill Addleson, then Director of Durban Art Gallery. The size of the pieces, number of works and approximate prices were stipulated as part of the commissions (Communication: J. Addleson, 1995).

A further three pieces, all signed and dated, were acquired in 1995 after the Vita Craft 1995 exhibition held at the Durban Art Gallery. The Durban Art Gallery's collection also includes ceramics by other members of the Nala family, her mother, Sipiwe, and daughters Jabu and Thembi.

Characteristically, Nala's ceramics in the Durban Art Gallery are based predominantly on Zulu beer-pottery traditions (Kennedy p225-227). Twenty-one vessels are spherical in shape, seven are spherical with raised necks and one each are respectively gourd-shaped, bottle-shaped and lidded. Features of the works include "virtuoso" displays of construction and composition including finely burnished surfaces, intricate detail and a wide variety of decorative themes with an emphasis on raised motifs (fig 26a,b). Visual inspection reveals much similarity in the proportions of similar vessel shapes, while changes in decoration appear to be very gradual between 1993 and 1995 (pers. obs.).

UNIVERSITY OF NATAL

A study collection of Zulu ceramics in the Fine Art Department of the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, was begun in 1993 in conjunction with funded research projects initiated by Ceramics staff Ian Calder and Juliet Armstrong. This collection includes thirteen works by Nesta Nala and additional works by her mother.

Seven of Nala's vessels in the study collection were donated in 1994 by the University of Natal Anthropology department. These works were originally collected by Eleanor Preston-Whyte in the mid 80's during anthropological field research.

Preston-Whyte was directed to Nala by Zulu roadside craft vendors who were familiar with her reputation as a skilled potter (interview 1996). One of these works has a recorded purchase date of 1984, this makes it one of the earliest pieces in the study sample.

The other six pieces of Nala's work in the University study collection were purchased during a Fine Art Department field trip to Nala's home in 1993. Nala was notified of the visit in advance and asked to make pieces available for sale, although details of size, shape and decoration were not specified as in Durban Art Gallery's commissioned works. Nala's works are signed and dated 1993 except for one which is unsigned. During the same field trip a further Nala vessel was bought from the Vukani Association in Eshowe which is signed and dated 1991.

In general, the attributes of Natal University's study collection is very consistent with the Durban Art Gallery. Twelve vessels are spherical in shape, two with raised necks and one is gourd-shaped. Heights vary from 15 to 25 centimetres. Pattern motifs are varied, including a greater variety of themes than Durban Art Gallery's collection (**fig 26**).

Although the two collections obviously represent a limited time period of production in relation to Nala's career, they are significant for several reasons. The variety of motifs and theme variations reveal something of Nala's decorative processes, and the sample also suggests both Nala's response to commissioned patronage, and her patron's aesthetic preferences. These aspects are to be explored in the text ahead.

CHAPTER TWO

This chapter is presented in three sections. First Zulu ceramic traditions will be briefly overviewed in relation to Nala's work, and particular reference made to the generic names, features and functions of vessels within a domestic context. Secondly, Nala's ceramic technology will be detailed; where techniques have not been recorded during field research reference will be made to published sources. Lastly, in connection with the study sample, Nala's decorative methods and stylistic vocabulary will be discussed. Zulu terms referred to in this chapter are those used by Nala during field interviews in 1995 and 1996.

ZULU DOMESTIC WARE

Nala's career as a ceramist encompasses the production of wares for internal (domestic) and external (tourist and collectors) patronage. Until 1976 Nala was primarily involved in the production of Zulu domestic wares (fieldnotes 1996). Nala's first documentors, Levinsohn and Cruise, report the high regard in which Nala's vessels produced in this mode were held by her Zulu patrons. She was reportedly given the title "Mrs Nala" as a symbol of professional status within her community (Cruise p124).

In 1976 Nala began to produce vessels for sale to tourists and by the mid 80's was producing ceramics primarily for tourists and collectors. Many of these vessels continue to be based on the well-known forms of domestic vessels, and are produced with similar technologies. As a result they continue to be strongly associated with domestic wares. Consequently, most of Nala's pieces in Museum collections have been attributed generic Zulu names for beer-vessels. These pieces often differ however in size, surface refinement and style of decoration from what Nala considers to be the usual requirements of domestic wares (fieldnotes 1996).

A brief overview of Zulu ceramic traditions will establish some of the received themes underpinning Nala's work in the collections surveyed. Typically, Zulu domestic ware comprises a range of vessels used for the preparation, storage, serving and consumption of indigenous foodstuffs, especially sorghum beer (utshwala). Utshwala can be brewed either as an alcoholic drink or nutritious food, and is associated not only with domestic hospitality and social harmony but also spiritual belief (Armstrong and Calder p107). Beer forms an important means of commemorating ancestral spirits (amadlozi), who are considered to dwell in the dark umsamo area of the home where brewing takes place, domestic vessels are stored, and offerings to the amadlozi are made (Calder and Armstrong p108).

Zulu ceramics are constructed by hand using the coil technique and fired in open pits to about 900 degrees celsius with soft fuels such as aloe leaves, dung and fibrous woods (Calder and Armstrong p109). The terracotta clays used to construct these vessels remains porous at this temperature.

This porosity may serve as an advantage in rural Zulu homes because liquids for example, stored in low-fired vessels, remain cool and fresh due to slight evaporation through the vessel wall (Arnold p139). Ceramic vessels are also reported to impart a specific flavour to foodstuffs prepared or stored in them when residues collect in the porous walls (Arnold p138).

Large pots like the imbiza and impofana are used for brewing. Neither of these vessels is made by Nala. Particularly coarse clay is required for their construction (Reusch p117), suggesting perhaps that Nala does not have access to such clay or prefers to use finer clay.

These undecorated vessels usually remain a mottled terracotta colour after firing and are often smeared with a thin layer of cow dung (Calder and Armstrong p110). A range of smaller vessels used for serving and drinking usually undergo a blackening process (ubukufusa), according to Zulu

convention. This involves respect (ukuhlonipha) for ancestral shades who are said to be especially honoured by the darkened vessels (Calder p89).

The largest serving vessel (iphangela) is seldom made by Nala, possibly because the size and fragility of this vessel, like the imbiza, makes it unsuitable for sale to an external market. Large vessels would seem to have no apparent function in suburban homes: their size is too obtrusive in a decorative\curio domestic context.

Nala chooses to concentrate instead on the smaller ukhamba, umancishane and uphiso forms. These vessels are more easily transported to urban centres or other points of sale with less expense. They can be quickly and easily replicated as they require less physical effort, drying time during construction, less fuel and other material resources to complete. As a result the production of smaller vessels provides a higher profit per item.

UKHAMBBA

This is a spherical shaped vessel used mostly for serving and drinking utshwala, but infrequently may also be used for curds (amasi) (Wissing p33). Izinkhamba are usually blackened and decorated (Grossert p498). Decorations are placed around the belly of the pot, in a wide or narrow band falling between a little below the widest point to about 3 centimetres below the lip (pers. obs.). The lip is usually incised at an inward sloping angle of about 45 degrees (pers.obs.).

Wissing describes the ukhamba (**fig 20, 21, 24**) as one of Nala's favourite forms (Wissing p33). Nala's izinkhamba show regularity in their height and proportions. The heights range between twenty-three and twenty-nine centimetres with an average below twenty-six centimetres (**fig 25**).

UMANCISHANE AND ISICATHULO

The small beer drinking vessel (umancishane)(**fig 18, 19**) is very similar in shape and decoration to the ukhamba but is usually between 10 and 18 centimetres in height. Levinsohn observes that the name derives from the root word signifying stinginess (-ncisha), and records further that "when beer is served in this container, it may indicate that the guest should simply visit for a short period, drink his beverage and leave, or that the host is short of beer. Upon receiving the umancishane, the visitor generally realises its implications "(Levinsohn p80).

Oumancishane made by Nala's mother for internal consumption are between fourteen and eighteen centimetres in height (collection analysis), while Nesta makes vessels that correspond exactly in size but are labelled "ukhamba" in the study sample collections (**fig 25**). Nesta also produces miniature vessels below 10 centimetres in height. She provides the alternative name isicathulo for the smaller sized omancishane (fieldnotes 1994)

UPHISO OR INGCAZI

The uphiso or ingcazi is a spherical flask, twenty to thirty centimetres high, similar in shape to the ukhamba but with a short, narrow cylindrical neck about 8 centimetres high used to transport beer (Grossert 1968 p495). The small opening and raised neck help to reduce splashing. Nala reports that sieved beer is poured into one of these vessels in order to appease the amadlozi after which it is poured into an ukhamba for drinking (fieldnotes 1994).

Nala's izimphiso in the study sample are between nine and thirty-four centimetres in height (**fig 22**). Durban Art Gallery's accession records reveal that some of these vessels have been erroneously accessioned as "iquthu" (field interview 1996). This term is usually applied to similarly shaped spherical fibre baskets with short vertical necks and lids used to contain grain, tobacco or medicine

(Van Heerden p133). These vessels are easily confused with the spherical, watertight fibre basket used for carrying liquids (isichumo) (Grossert 1987 p21).

CERAMIC TECHNOLOGY

Central to Nala's production of ceramics is a body of knowledge inherited from several generations of the Nala family. Nala, who learned her skills as a ceramist from her mother and paternal grandmother, has passed them on in turn to her daughters, Bongi (Levinsohn p81), Jabu, Thembi, and Zanele (Wissing p33). Their methods of production have much in common with techniques used by other Zulu women potters and can be considered part of a generalised Zulu ceramic tradition (Lawton p57-64).

Nala's skills, learned through observation and practice, involve the skilled application of conventional techniques and an understanding of the changeable nature of ceramic materials. Constant experimentation with ceramic technologies and decorative methods appears to be part of Nala's working process, with the result that innovation rather than repetitiveness characterises her production. Variations occur according to the genres of ware produced, and in keeping with Nala's access to new information or resources.

Nala's ceramic process begins with the collection and processing of raw materials. Good clay (ibumba) is found on a nearby mountainside (Levinsohn p76) and near the Thukela river (Greenberg p15). A red and a dark clay that compliment each other are combined to provide the specific working and fired properties of plasticity, texture and strength that Nala requires. Dry clay is stored in an old iron cooking pot next to the animal byre until needed (field observation 1996).

First the clay is crushed to a fine powder on a grindstone (itshe) (Levinsohn p76), and sieved through a fine meshed net to remove grit (Greenberg p15). It is then soaked in water to an even

consistency before being mixed (Wissing p32). Next it is kneaded by hand (**fig 2**), and left for a short period until Nala feels it is ready for coiling (Levinsohn p76). The practice of allowing clay to mature in its plastic form appears to be well known among Zulu potters (Lawton p8).

Levinsohn claims that Nala mixes ground sherds into the clay (Levinsohn p76). The effect of the addition of a non-plastic material is to prevent excessive shrinkage while drying and also produces a mechanically stronger fired material. Nala however states that although she understands the principle behind this practice she does not currently employ it herself (fieldnotes 1994).

Nala builds up her vessels by hand using the ring or coil technique. This takes place indoors in a building set aside specifically for clay work (field obs. 1994). First a lump of wet clay is flattened to form the disk-like base of the pot. Onto this the walls of the vessels are formed with successive vertically rolled coils of clay that are pinched into position (**fig 3,4**), and smoothed with tools created from adapted kitchen utensils, a spoon with the handle removed, knife, and scrapers made from pieces of dried gourd rind (**fig 10**)(fieldnotes 1996).

A circular base woven from plant fibres (inkhatha) is used to support the flattened lump which forms the base of the pot. (Wissing p32, Levinsohn p76). As building commences, the walls are scraped and thinned with careful attention paid to symmetry and proportion (**fig 5**).

Once the form of the vessel has been completed, it is left to dry slowly indoors beneath sheets of plastic until it is sufficiently firm to handle (**fig 6**)(pers. obs.). Levinsohn observed that previously the pots were covered with blankets (Levinsohn p76). At this stage excess clay is scraped away from the base and the rim is carefully cut and smoothed. The pieces are then decorated while the clay is still soft enough to allow incisions and applied decorations to be made. They are then thoroughly dried outside for a week before firing takes place (Levinsohn p76).

Both Levinsohn and Wissing are unclear as to when exactly the pots are burnished or polished with a small smooth stone (imbokode). Nala's apparent reluctance to reveal her technique has added to conflicting records. Field research shows that burnishing appears to occur both before and after decorating (**fig 8**), and sometimes perhaps again when the vessels are thoroughly dry. (fieldnotes 1996).

Firing takes place in fine weather, usually during the afternoon (Levinsohn p76). The vessels are placed in a shallow pit, sited far enough away from the houses to prevent a fire-hazard (fieldnotes 1996). Both Nala's family and hired girls assist in collecting fuels (fieldnotes 1994). These consist mainly of dried aloe leaves, (umhlaba) (*Aloe spectabilis*)(**fig 11**); indigenous woods such as umThombothi (*Spirostachys africana*) and umSululu (*Euphorbia tirucalli*)(**fig 12**); and grass (Greenberg p15)(Wissing p33).

An illustration from Wissing's text reveals eleven vessels being fired together, stacked on their sides on a bed of dried aloe leaves (**fig 13**)(Wissing p30). Firing takes about two hours and the vessels are left in the embers to cool (Levinsohn p76). Wissing states that large vessels used for storing liquids may be fired twice, possibly referring to blackening, but does not explain this special process further (Wissing p33).

Vessels emerge from the biscuit firing with mottled terracotta surfaces. This colouring is the result of uneven reduction affecting iron oxide present in the clay. A few of Nala's tourist wares remain in this varicoloured state (this aspect will be discussed later in the text), while most commissioned wares undergo further processing to produce a glossy black finish (**fig 14**). Two methods are reportedly used by Nala to impart a blackened surface to her works.

Cruise records that:

"A second firing in grass is used to blacken the surface of the pot, whereafter the entire vessel is rubbed with animal fat to give it a sheen and seal its porous walls" (Cruise p124).

Levinsohn describes an alternative process used by Nala in which the vessels are refired with dried cow dung:

"the fire must become red hot after which it is smothered with powdered dung. As a result, these pots emerge possessing a black surface which is then rubbed with gooseberry leaves, a small flattened stone, imbokode, ... and animal fat. This final rubbing process gives a glossy black finish to the pottery." (Levinsohn p76).

The technique for blackening described by Cruise is achieved by the deposit of carbon particles on the surface of the vessel wall from the burning grass. The technique described by Levinsohn is quite different in that it relies on a process termed reduction in which iron oxide present in the clay turns black due to a lack of oxygen in the firing atmosphere (Rhodes p264). These two different procedures may reflect techniques used for different types of vessel, a change in technology, or lack of understanding by Levinsohn, who unlike Cruise, was not herself a ceramist.

Many reports on Nala's methods are tentative, or confusing in their derivations. It is not clear how much of Levinsohn's reports were based on direct field observation of ceramic processes. Her description of leaves rubbed against the vessel wall to impart a shiny residue may derive from Lawton, who quotes Bryant, 1949, as describing the use of Cape Gooseberry (umgqumugqumu) (*Physalis peruviana* L.) for this purpose; and Krige, 1950, who describes a similar use of nightshade leaves (umsobo) (*Solanum nigrum*) (Lawton p60). Both Lawton and Krige are cited

*would either
have been
different?*

in Levinsohn's bibliography, but it is not clear how these sources are reflected in Levinsohn's text. Both Wissing and Cruise state that completed pots are polished with fat, Nala may use commercial cooking fat to enhance the shine of her wares (field obs. 1996).

The spectrum of Nala's ceramic techniques includes her ability to repair cracked or broken domestic vessels. She reports that this is achieved by burning a piece of plastic onto the vessel and rubbing this with a knife (fieldnotes 1994). The incorporation of manufactured materials such as plastic for repairs, or Western eating utensils adapted as ceramic tools suggests that the ceramic traditions inherited by Nala are not immutable.

DECORATIVE METHODS

In order to discuss the decorative themes found on Nala's vessels an outline of her constructional methods is necessary. The discussion will refer to the way in which she creates motifs or patterns: by incising into the clay, modelling onto the surface or impressing with tools.

Nala's decorative process involves two stages; pattern areas or motifs are first delineated or outlined, and then filled-in or enhanced with textures. **Figure 26b** tabulates the various methods used by Nala on pieces in the study sample.

DELINEATING\OUTLINING METHODS

INCISED LINES

Incised lines are created by drawing directly (ukufaxaza), onto the surface of the leather-hard clay with a sharpened or pointed tool, sometimes creating deep grooves (**fig 22,23**) (field obs.). Nala often enhances incised outlines along their length with tiny triangular indentations (**fig 20,21**). These are individually formed with a tool edge. Both impressed and incised outlines are often used together (**fig 26**).

RAISED CORDS

Raised cord decorations resembling twisted ropes are made by adding a strip of clay to the wall of the vessel (fig 7), and then smoothing down the sides (fig 17,18,19,23,24). The cords can be rounded, square or pointed in profile and are impressed (*ukunyathela*) with a tool along their lengths to form regular patterns (field obs.). Raised cords are one of Nala's most frequently used decorative techniques in the sample studied (fig 26b).

Nala creates a variety of different effects by combinations of alternating vertical and diagonal impressions applied to these cords. The resulting patterns suggest variations of plaited, twisted and woven strands which Nala calls *intambo* (string or cord) (fieldnotes 1996). These decorations are unique to Nala's style within the context of Zulu ceramics. A possible source of Nala's inspiration are the deeply incised bands of chevron pattern that occur around the neck junctions of late Iron Age vessels (which van Schalkwyk had showed her in 1983).

Similar decorations were mentioned and illustrated by Schofield, moulded on Iron Age vessels found at the Hot Springs adjacent to the Ndongondwane site excavated by van Schalkwyk. He suggests that "vertical strips of clay were worked up out of the pot wall while it was wet, then transverse grooves were made in them with a piece of stick or other similar object" (Schofield p155, ill.27 p152). He also describes his drawing of a Natal Museum vessel from Hot Springs in the Thukela valley on which "the band round the neck is so carefully finished that it resembles a piece of cord" (Schofield p159).

Raised cords are used by Nala to delineate a variety of pattern motifs including single and multiple straight bands stretching around the vessel (fig 17), arcade motifs (fig 22,24), shields (fig 19), circular motifs (fig 16), and lozenges.

ENHANCING/TEXTURING METHODS

INCISED LINES

Nala uses incised lines to create textures within delineated motifs (**fig 16,17,20,21,24**). These are mostly finely spaced parallel or crosshatched lines (**fig 20,21**), but on one piece are concentric and radiating (**fig 16**). Incising is Nala's most commonly used texturing method (**fig 26**).

SCRATCHED TEXTURE

A scratched texture appears on only one of Nala's vessels (**fig 23**). Unlike incised lines, which are drawn individually with the end of a pointed tool in the leather-hard clay, scratched textures are created by dragging the broad edge of a tool, such as a knife blade, across dry clay. The blade catches particles of grit in the clay, lifting and dragging them across the surface, resulting in finely scratched lines that are irregular in length and arrangement.

IMPRESSIONS

Nala occasionally uses impressions as a filler within delineated motifs. These take the form of small, regularly but widely spaced depressions created with the edge of a tool (ukucindezela) (fieldnotes 1996).

ROULETTED IMPRESSIONS

Nala uses the serrated edge of a freshwater mussel shell to create rouletted lines (pers. obs.). As the shell's edge is rolled over the clay it imprints the serration. Rouletted impressions appear on only one of the study sample vessels (**fig 22c**). Lawton refers to rouletted lines formed with the grooved edge of a piece of tin, made by Zulu potters from Melmoth (Lawton p56), while Bryant states that roulette impressions were absolutely unknown (Bryant p401).

BURNISHED AREAS

The methods described above all produce, by nature, roughened and tactile areas on the otherwise smooth surface of a vessel. Nala sometimes uses burnishing as a decorative device within textured motifs, as opposed to the general finishing treatment of the vessel wall (described under ceramic technology). These provide tactile and visual contrast with the surrounding textured areas (**fig 21**).

RAISED PELLETS

Raised pellets, referred to by Nala as amaqanda ("eggs") take the form of small lumps of clay attached to the wall of the vessel (fieldnotes 1996). Raised pellets are more commonly referred to in published texts as amasumpa meaning "warts" (Armstrong 1995), but it is interesting to note that the Nala family do not use this term. Nala uses raised pellets singly or in rows to fill into areas within a motif (**fig 19,22,23**), or to emphasize the end of a raised cord (**fig 24**) or junction of two or more lines.

This particular form of decoration has been the focus of scholarly reports about Zulu ceramics. It has been suggested to be intrinsically associated with cattle culture and to bear allusion to an historic Zulu practice of cicatrisation, now discontinued (Armstrong p82,83). Nala's earlier works did not use this type of motif, but present innovations that appear to be unique to Nala's style include texturing the raised pellets with tiny impressions created with the pierced end of an umbrella spoke (field obs.).

Some of Nala's amaqanda are rounded in profile (**fig 19**), suggesting that they were applied individually to the wall of the vessel, while others are closely spaced and slightly faceted suggesting that they may have been modelled in groups from a raised strip of clay (**fig 17**). They are either smooth (**fig 19,24**), or textured with small round impressions (**fig 22c**). On some of Nala's vessels

the pellets have been modelled onto an incised background in order to create a richly textured effect (fig 18,22).

Zulu domestic-ware traditions comprise a range of vessels used mostly for serving and drinking beer. These are important in maintaining customary social hospitality and honouring ancestral spirits. Many of Nala's works in the study sample are based on the forms of domestic vessels such as the ukhamba, uphiso and umancishane, and her manufacturing techniques are similar for these domestic umsamo wares.

Nala uses a ceramic technology inherited from family tradition to produce her work. This technology comprises gathering and hand-processing raw materials, coil construction and pit-firing with wood and aloe leaves. There are however, notable departures from domestic traditions in the methods employed by Nala to decorate her vessels. Nala's oeuvre includes incised and impressed lines, raised cords and pellets, incised, scratched, impressed, burnished and rouletted textures. These are used in often unusual or even spectacular combination as if to draw attention to her sheer technical virtuosity and inventive brilliance.

Nala's conscious departure from umsamo conventions has given her an expansive vocabulary of innovative motifs she clearly enjoys manipulating and developing.

CHAPTER THREE

This chapter is presented in two sections. The first section reviews four texts that discuss Nala and her work. The second section discusses the use of the term "traditional" in the context of Nala's work constructed by these writers.

REVIEW OF FOUR TEXTS DISCUSSING NALA

This section will review Rhoda Levinsohn's Art and Craft of Southern Africa, treasures in transition, 1984; Wilma Cruise's Contemporary Ceramics in South Africa, 1991; Suzette Munnik's Celebrating Heart, (Review article), National Ceramics Quarterly No 33, 1995; and Robin Wissing's Dynamic Development, The Nala family of Potters of Middle Drift, (Feature article), Vuka S.A. vol 1, 1996. Attention will be drawn to ways in which the authors of these articles perceive the relationship between Nala's work and Zulu ceramic traditions. Critical examination of these texts will also reveal how the writers reflect changing perceptions of Zulu ceramics between 1984 and 1996. This period corresponds with the study sample of Nala works examined in chapter four.

LEVINSOHN: ART AND CRAFT OF SOUTHERN AFRICA, TREASURES IN TRANSITION (1984)

Levinsohn's text of 1984 is a survey of art and craft produced in four areas of Southern Africa. Unlike earlier, generalised studies of Zulu ceramics (Bryant, Grossert, Lawton), this text is significant in that it features a specific Zulu ceramist (Nala) and her work. The publicity resulting from this text has contributed considerably to Nala's current status as one of the most widely known and acclaimed Zulu ceramists, and was the first to foreground the work of a named potter working in an indigenous genre. (Garth Clarke's Potters of South Africa featured Rorke's Drift's Dinah Molefe as a studio potter in the 1970's). Although Levinsohn discusses Nala's technique in

detail much of the text is presented in the form of preconceived ideas about traditionalism. Three interesting issues are raised in regard to a Nala's work.

The first point is an assumption that Zulu ceramics are (or were at that time) undergoing a demise. This is reinforced throughout Levinsohn's text by keywords such as "dying" and "endangered". The title of the chapter is even titled "Pottery - a dying tradition". The reasons for this assumption are suggested in her introductory passage subtitled "Art endangered". Levinsohn attributes this demise to the negative effects of acculturation which she defines in the text by reference to Redfield, Linton and Herscovits as "those phenomena which result from groups of individuals having different cultures coming into firsthand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture of either or both groups." (Levinsohn p17).

In contradiction of this view Levinsohn suggests "external" support structures as a means for the continued survival of indigenous craft products. She suggests that Zulu ceramics, unlike basketry, has failed to attract a tourist market because of its fragility and relative lack of decoration in comparison with beadwork and basketry. These factors are suggested to be contributing to its demise.

The second issue raised by Levinsohn's text is the author's primitivist idealisation of Zulu ceramic traditions. Levinsohn terms herself a "Romanticist" and "Traditionalist", and promotes the view of indigenous black cultures as having previously operated in isolation. She acknowledges that dynamic transformations can be the result of culture contact but condescendingly laments the disappearance of values connected with the "simple yet rich" lifestyle of rural people. This view implies that it is regrettable that rural blacks aspire to Western values or the material rewards of external patronage.

Levinsohn represents Nesta Nala as a "traditional" Zulu potter, conforming to a stereotyped, unchanging way of life. She claims that Nala lives in the setting of an "integrated Zulu village" in which men tend the animals and cultivate while women run households and maintain craft traditions. However, actual field observation reveals that the Nala household is matriarchal, both Nesta and her mother are unmarried and support their dependants as practising potters (Wissing p33).

Levinsohn then itemises various Zulu ceramic vessel shapes and functions. The role of vessels in the consumption of sorghum-derived beer (utshwala) is discussed, as well as the practice of offering beer to the shades and Nomkhubulwana, the legendary Goddess of the Grain (Levinsohn p80). At no point is it explained that these rituals were already moribund when Bryant recorded them in 1949.

The third important issue raised in Levinsohn's text is that of continuity and change. Levinsohn overlooks the changes evident in Nala's own work compared with conventional umsamo ceramics. Nala is presented as working in a standard mode of Zulu ceramic production, possibly differing from other potters only in her degree of dedication and skill. Levinsohn claims that a "comparison of museum examples with those pots currently produced reveals that form, technique and decoration have remained the same" (Levinsohn p69). The evidence in Levinsohn's text itself contradicts this view.

One of the outcomes of Nala's contact with the Vukani Association in the late 70's and early 80's was the production of miniature vessels for sale to tourists (Cruise p124). After her contact with van Schalkwyk in 1983 these were decorated with Iron Age inspired motifs. Although Levinsohn makes no mention of these miniature vessels designed for the tourist market, or of the new designs,

miniature vessels decorated in this style are illustrated in her text, although they are not captioned as Nala's (Levinsohn p77).

One of the vessels illustrated by Levinsohn is decorated with a naturalistic floral motif (Levinsohn fig57 p77). Despite quoting Graburn as having identified naturalism as one of the effects of market oriented innovation, Levinsohn insists that Nala, "who is truly devoted to preserving a significant segment of her culture, has not ventured into new forms nor succumbed to the pressures of change." (Levinsohn p81). Levinsohn also endorses Meyerowitz's claim that external influence would "rob the work of its uniqueness and creativity" (Levinsohn p69).

The development of Nala's career subsequent to Levinsohn's publication has tended to prove exactly the opposite.

CRUISE: CONTEMPORARY CERAMICS IN SOUTH AFRICA (1991)

Cruise's text was designed as an index of ceramic artists (potters and sculptors) working in South Africa. Ceramists are discussed in page-length texts with a short introduction preceding each chapter. Two important issues in relation to Nala are raised by this text.

Unlike previous dictionaries of South African potters which have tended to list ceramic artists alphabetically, Cruise has grouped them thematically into chapters. The titles of these chapters reflect categories created on the basis of form ["sculpture", "expressions in two dimensions"], while others reflect current styles ["the Anglo-Oriental Tradition", "fire as expression"] (Cruise p6,7).

Nesta and Sipiwe Nala are discussed in a chapter titled "The Tradition of the Rural Potter". This title appears to have been based on a perceived element of traditionalism inherent in the artist's work. Ceramists listed in this chapter, however, originate in diverse cultural backgrounds (Zulu,

Swazi, Venda), and their work does not constitute a cohesive style on the basis of either form or content. Consequently Cruise reinforces the myth that the social and aesthetic mores that these black, rural potters experience are inherently different from those of other [mostly white] potters interviewed in her book.

Cruise seems to have relied on Levinsohn's text for much of her information on Levinsohn's implicit belief that Zulu pottery is a dying tradition. This is reiterated by Cruise's observation that Nala and many other rural black potters belong to an older generation of women who learned the art from their mothers, but whose daughters are not "carrying their heritage into the future" (Cruise p124). Levinsohn however recorded that Nala had already passed her skills on to her daughter Bongi at the time her text was written. Three of Nala's daughters, Thembi, Jabu and Zanele, currently practice ceramics (interview, 1996).

Cruise's text does little to expand the existing information about Nala although it does reveal some local changes in attitude to the subject of indigenous ceramic traditions. The inclusion of black rural potters in a work covering the scope of contemporary art\craft practice relates to the current trend of relocating "fourth world" art from the rarefied realms of anthropology to that of popular craft. Despite this the groupings of artists within the chapters chosen by Cruise remain problematic.

Cruise also under-plays the role of external patronage in the continuance of indigenous art forms, a role exemplified by Cruise's inclusion of Nala in her text. All the potters featured by Cruise in her chapter on rural black potters (Rebecca Mathibe, Miriam Mbonambi, Bina Gumede), have received patronage from art galleries and have works in museum collections.

MUNNIK: CELEBRATING HEART, NATIONAL CERAMICS QUARTERLY (1995)

Munnik's one-page review article was published in the September issue of the South African Potter's Association quarterly journal, following Nala's first national award.

The title of Munnik's article is based on the claim that Nala's success has resulted from a shift in the locus of ceramic credibility away from "the head and the hand back to the heart... of tradition and utility" (Munnik 1995 p27). While these ideas may represent Munnik's concerns about "craft" associated values, they have the insulting implication that Nala, as a "traditional" black artist, works "from the heart" because she lacks intellectual capacity. Munnik's simple equation supposes that Nala works in an intuitive\instinctive (primitive), as opposed to a cerebral\intellectual mode.

Munnik cites the importance of recognising indigenous craft at a national level, yet in doing so de-emphasises Nala's own role in this process. The basis of Munnik's critique is a comparison of Nala's work with those of other ceramists (Martha Zettler, Digby Hoets, Rodney Blumenfeld) on exhibition.

Much of the work is discredited as an unfavourable response to what Munnik proposes as the "multi-cultural dilemma" of South African ceramic artists. Exactly what Munnik means by this term is not made clear in her text. Elsewhere, multi-culturalism has been defined as the "ideal of harmonious coexistence of differing cultural or ethnic groups in a pluralistic society" (Cashmore p216).

Munnik's questioning of the origins and validity of the eclectic, Modernist and "Anglo-Oriental" trends respectively evident in the artists work is therefore contradictory. Presumably then, the "dilemma" she proposes is only one which concerns white artists, and is solved by a fashionable and superficial "Africanisation".

More importantly Munnik ignores the obvious evidence of cultural exchange in Nala's work. This aspect, which is associated with multiculturalism, she praises at length in Blumenfeld's work.

Munnik suggests his pieces:

"are inspired by the forms and surfaces of indigenous craft. They could not in fact exist without it. Yet, in their synthesis of sensual and cerebral perception, they are authentic, innovative and unique" (Munnik 1995 p27).

Nala's original and inventive work is instead described by Munnik as "traditional folkcraft" (Munnik 1995 p27). This obscures Nala's individuality, submerging the value of her work in communal aesthetic, rather than assessing its individual merits. This view is further romanticised by Munnik's assertion that Nala's work "resonates with the heartbeat of tradition" (Munnik 1995 p27).

Much of Munnik's misreading of Nala's work stems from the significance she places on the impact of its "authenticity". While Nala's pieces do, as Munnik suggests, draw on received cultural sources, the context for which they are created has in many ways altered inherited values and created new meanings, which challenge Munnik's concept of authenticity.

Nala no longer works under the assumed "authenticity" of Zulu patronage. Instead she has chosen to supply a mainly white tourist market since 1976, in which she has actively marketed her work through the Vukani Association and African Art Centre.

The resultant emphasis on quality and production has in part distanced Nala from the communal aesthetic and technical values Munnik espouses. Nala for example is reluctant to reveal her methods of burnishing and blackening in fear of imitation (personal observation), and many of her current decorative themes were inspired not by tradition, but the sherds revealed to her by van Schalkwyk.

This is not to belittle an appreciation of Nala's achievements, for as Nettleton suggests, "it is time to admit that so-called "tourist" art is as genuine a response to social realities as any other art" (Nettleton p43).

WISSING: ANCIENT TRADITIONS-DYNAMIC DEVELOPMENT, THE NALA FAMILY OF POTTERS OF MIDDLE DRIFT (1996)

Robin Wissing's article was written for the periodical Vuka S.A. (vol.1 No. 3, 1996). The article is headed by the statement, "Collectors have recognised the uniqueness of Nesta Nala's exceptional skill following Nesta's prestigious First Prize award at the First National Bank Vita Crafts Now Exhibition of 1995."

Wissing's overview of the Nala family and their work touches on many important issues that previous writers have not tackled. After a brief explanation of the significance of vessels in the preparation of beer and the commemoration of the amadlozi, Wissing attempts a discussion of Nala's formal themes. These he places in context of her watershed contact with van Sckalkwyk, describing both her earlier and current styles (p32).

Two important issues need to be examined regarding Wissing's text. Firstly, although the forms of Nala's vessels are discussed in terms of domestic-ware types and other innovative forms these are not placed within the context of external (non-domestic) patronage. An exception is the mention

of work inspired by a visit by Jannie van Heerden and Kim Sacks in 1994 which resulted in the commission of larger vessels from Nala (Wissing p32).

The second point raised by Wissing's text is the relationship between Nala's work and that of her mother and daughters. Neither Levinsohn nor Cruise make any mention of differences in style or mode of production. Wissing refers to the work of Nala's daughter Thembi, mentioning recent motifs but although implied, does not actually discuss the differences in style among the three generations of potters.

Wissing's text places Nala's work within the context of its production more accurately than Levinsohn, Cruise or Munnik's. The issues raised by his text regrettably remain unresolved due to the concise format of Wissing's article. Unanswered questions remain as to the relevance of existing categories used to label Nala's pieces, and relationships between the styles of different Nala family members.

Each of the writers discussed in this section have prepared their texts for different audiences. This is revealed by the way in which they portray Nala and the context of her production.

Levinsohn is an historian and collector of African Arts resident in the United States (Levinsohn 1984, back-cover-caption). Her text is presented to an audience familiar with an ethnographic mode of representing African arts. She presents Zulu ceramics as an immutable tradition unable to assimilate and survive processes of acculturation.

Both Cruise and Munnik's texts reveal their concerns as ceramists with specialised knowledge of ceramic processes and terminology. Cruise emphasises Nala's status as a contemporary ceramic "artist" on a par with other Black and White potters and ceramic sculptors in South Africa. Focus

in the text appears to lie in presenting a diverse array of current South African ceramic styles and techniques. This precludes any in-depth discussion of patronage systems or stylistic interfaces between potters that may have provided new insight into Nala's (or other ceramist's) work.

Munnik writes specifically for an audience of ceramic artists and attempts to present a formula for achieving "authenticity" in the present social context of South Africa. Her misunderstanding of Nala's work is based on stereotypes of "tradition" and "authenticity". Consequently, there is no evaluation of Nala's work as cross-cultural expression within a national, or international context.

Wissing's article was written for a popular journal following Nala's 1995 Vita Craft award. Nala is introduced to a wide audience who are unlikely to be familiar with either Zulu ceramic traditions or current studio pottery developments. Consequently Wissing focuses on Nala's cultural sources and current inspirations and characterises Nala as a dynamic personality involved in creating a personalised expression.

His title in particular however, does not escape the stereotyped image described by Nettleton of "transitional art" to suggest "movement from less to more sophisticated, from non-art to art, or more accurately, from unconscious to conscious art" (Nettleton p301).

DISCUSSION OF THE TERM "TRADITIONAL"

The texts of Levinsohn, Cruise and Munnik all use the term "traditional" to describe the ceramic vessels made by Nala, while Wissing makes direct reference to the concept in the title of his article. The meaning of the term "traditional" needs to be examined to determine whether it is in fact appropriate in a discussion of Nala and her work.

In discussing the cross-cultural art market in South Africa in her article titled "Black artists, White patrons", Elizabeth Rankin states that:

"The concept of Fine Art is a white import to Black Africa. Objects of great skill and beauty have of course been produced for many centuries, works fulfilling practical or symbolic functions integral to African social structures, but a concept of art divorced from specific social needs, especially easel painting produced as a commodity to be bought and sold on the open market, had no place in black tradition."

Consequently, terms used to label the aesthetic products of black South Africans have been easily open to political and cultural misuse/misinterpretation.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines tradition as "something that has prevailed from generation to generation". In this sense the term can be based on a number of elements or concepts, such as technique, materials, form, function, symbol or meaning. Obvious limitations arise when the term is used only on the basis of materials and techniques, especially where form and content are known to have changed. For example a description of 20th century European modernist painters as "traditional" could hardly be justified by their use of oil paint on a stretched canvas.

A common use of "traditional" is to identify a perceived grouping on the basis of a number of formal characteristics. This is often linked with an ethnic or culture group, to form labels such as "traditional Zulu pottery". As Nettleton points out in her writing on 19th and 20th century tourist sculpture, problems can arise from this usage as a result of insufficient historical information about the continuity of styles as well as generalizations of ethnic groupings (Nettleton p32).

Such generalizations often obscure the subtlety and complexity of cultural variations among ethnic peoples. Moreover in the context of museum and gallery collections and displays "an emphasis on the object's cultural distance replaces the focus on its place within a documentable historical framework" (Price p83). An impression is easily created of a timeless or "primitive" art.

The overuse and misapplication of the term "traditional" effectively obscure the issues of idiosyncratic expression in the Nala family. Scholars and collectors have often prized the originality or uniqueness of individual Western artists but seldom displayed much interest in their African counterparts. In the past, even where information on individual artists has been available, the apparently anonymous nature of much African art has reinforced the assumption that this information was irrelevant. An example is Durban Art Gallery's attribution of their first Nala work to an "unknown Zulu artist". Although this is not always the case at present, the connotations linked to the term "traditional" remain.

Both the matriarchal nature of Nala's home and her family's dependence on ceramic production for their livelihood is notable. These general circumstances reinforce the observation that they are not representative of "traditional" Zulu potters as recorded by writers such as Bryant, Schofield and Lawton.

Ideas about whether art objects are considered "traditional" or "nontraditional" are often linked to the intended use or function of the object. Graburn, 1979, distinguishes two types of art made by fourth world peoples whom he defines as "the collective name for all aboriginal or native peoples whose lands fall within the national boundaries and techno-bureaucratic administrations of the countries of the First, Second and Third Worlds" (Graburn p1).

The first types of arts are those made for and used by people within their own "part society". Examples of such are the vessels used by Zulu people for the preparation and consumption of utshwala, for example the beer-vessels (izinkhamba) made by Sipiwe Nala. These arts are important in maintaining ethnic identity and social structure and are often termed "traditional".

The second type is made for the external, dominant world and often called "tourist" or "airport" art. These are important in projecting "boundary-defining" messages of ethnicity. They are often nonfunctional replicas of "traditional" arts or entirely new art forms that have no function within the originating society. Occasionally "traditional" arts are suitable for tourist consumption with little alteration, for example the small vessels (omancishane)(**fig 18**) made by Nesta Nala (Cruise p124). Objects that may have lost their original function can also be adopted as "tourist" arts, such as Nala's miniature double-gourd vessels (**fig 16**).

Grabum identifies another category of objects made for external consumption as "commercial fine-arts". These are pseudo-traditional pieces that adhere to culturally embedded aesthetic and formal standards. Examples belonging to this category are the vessels currently made by Nala for art collectors and galleries.

The term "pseudo" however implies a loss of integrity. "Airport" or "tourist art" often has similar connotations. This is the result of "traditional" artworks gaining higher prestige, and therefore value, than "tourist" works, as a result of the notion of authenticity. This idea is part of what King describes as the erroneous affectation that "native peoples somehow cease to exist or at least lose their souls ...if they employ white man's materials or symbols, or create to sell to the white man" (King p361).

Nesta Nala appears to have avoided such perceived loss of integrity, perhaps because of the origin of much of her work in a "craft" idiom. Because her artworks still appear inherently functional as beer-vessels many collectors believe them to be "authentic", that is no different from vessels made for consumption within a Zulu cultural idiom.

Cross-cultural influence and change are however part of all art traditions, including Zulu ceramics. Creative individuals, such as Nesta Nala, in response to particular circumstances, are often the agents of change as can be seen in her appropriation of Iron Age designs, and her commissioned pieces.

Where fourth-world art continues to be made for internal or domestic use, this often includes updated messages of social or ethnic identity. Increasingly the needs of "Fourth world" people include not only an assertion of their ethnic differences but also a means to negotiate an increasingly pluralistic world where "communication, education and travel allow every group knowledge of and access to almost every other" [Graburn, 1979].

Comments about the idea of 'tradition' in American art that "if native art is seen in the context of its political and cultural situation, then the need to distinguish "traditional" from "non-traditional" art disappears and is replaced by a more subtle understanding of the way in which art traditions emerge, flourish and decay and whether or not they are influenced by white cultures during the process," (King p360) are useful in contextualising Nala's work.

Nala can be seen as a creative individual who works with the received traditions of her cultural heritage and chooses to communicate her personal and ethnic identity across cultural boundaries. Rather than being "enshrined within a mystique of an historicity and cyclical perpetuity" associated with "tradition" (Nettleton p32), Nala's works are dynamic responses to external patronage,

technological experimentation and her own artistic vision. Likewise it seems inevitable that a Western audience\patron will see Nala's ceramics through an acculturated "lens" and Western cultural education.

CHAPTER FOUR

This chapter discusses Nala's actual works in greater depth with reference to specific examples from the study sample collections. The chapter is presented in two sections. The first section will examine some of the decorative\formal themes evident in Nala's collected work and construct a chronology of her styles. The second section will compare Nala's tourist and collector's-ware genres with reference to patronage and stylistic features. Specific examples from the study sample will then be discussed.

INTERPRETATION OF NALA'S FORMAL AND DECORATIVE THEMES

Before individual works from the study sample can be discussed some of Nala's decorative and formal concerns need to be explored. Aspects to be investigated include motif and pattern themes, symmetries, textural contrasts and formal composition.

The decoration of Nala's vessels reveals several levels of meaning. The patterns and motifs result from an inherited repertoire of decorative themes or microstyle, on which Nala improvises and innovates. Received aesthetic concerns include symmetry, visual contrasts and the composition of vessel forms.

Earlier reports provide little insight or interpretation of the decorative themes found on Zulu ceramics. Writers such as Bryant, Grossert and Lawton have shed some light on the domestic uses and meanings of Zulu ceramics within an ethnographic mode, but provided only brief descriptions of vessel decorations. Art historians too have done little to provide understanding of the specific aesthetic frameworks involved in Zulu ceramic production and consumption.

Recent publications have ignored this neglected area of enquiry. For example, in her thesis on the arts of Zulu-speakers, Sandra Klopper omits discussion of ceramics except in passing; while Carolee Kennedy mostly limits the discussion of ceramics in her thesis on Art, Architecture and Material Culture of the Zulu Kingdom, to issues of the uses and forms of domestic clay containers. Interestingly, Kennedy provides a brief discussion of the aesthetic criticism of vessels with uneven shapes or lack of attention to ornament. She provides the Zulu term "igqizolo" which refers to a heavy or clumsily made object, but does not elaborate further (Kennedy p234).

In the absence of a currently accepted methodology for discussing Zulu ceramics this section will draw on ethnographic and fine art related disciplines.

PATTERNS AND MOTIFS

Vessel decorations are an important idiosyncratic element of Nala's expression, raising questions about the creative dynamics involved in her productions. Nala's conformity with, or adaption of received decorative modes and the aesthetics surrounding them, needs to be examined in order to gain a fuller understanding of her work. Ingrid Herbich suggests that among Luo potters in Kenya:

" The nature of craft learning, the age, sex and social status of the learner, the extent and nature of social pressures for conformity, the degree of specialisation of the craft, the symbolic content of stylistic elements for makers and users, and a host of other factors may all play equally significant roles in the generation of such patterns." (Herbich p203).

Many of these factors, although described within a specific cultural context, may also play a role in the production of decoration on Nala's vessels, suggesting that a variety of messages and levels of meaning should be considered when her patterns and motifs are examined.

The study sample suggests that decorative patterns often appear to occur cyclically in standardised themes on Nala's vessels. These themes encompass the use of exactly repeated motifs, similar variations of motifs, and repeated or varied compositions of motifs. Many of the early themes evident in the study sample of Nala's work show conformity with the decorations on domestic beer-vessels made by her mother, Siphwe Nala. This suggests that in addition to her innovations, Nesta's artistic vision continues to be based in part within received tradition.

The term micro-style is used by Herbich in her discussion of Luo potters to describe the repertoire of associated decorative, formal and technological themes employed by a community of potters (Herbich p196). Herbich suggests that among the Luo they are "conditioned by patterns of learning and the social context of the potter" (Herbich p198). Such styles may serve as markers of specific ethnic or group identities and boundaries, implying the notion of a group focus or social context. This term may be useful in a discussion of Nala's work to describe the sources of ethnic formal and decorative themes evident in her work.

A reason for the occurrence of microstyles is suggested by a comparison with beadwork styles among Zulu people. Micro-styles may be entrenched among families or groups who have close interaction, with the result that they serve to identify the products of a certain district or area to associates or members of a group (Jolles p42). The concept is useful in that, with microstyles in mind, the nature of Nala's innovations becomes evident.

Bryant, Grossert, Schofield and Kennedy discuss the decorative motifs found on Zulu vessels as occurring only in the form of raised pellets. These are described as arranged in lines and various geometric configurations, including loops, circles, blocks of squares, diamonds, rectangles and chevron shapes (Grossert 1987 p35). Both Bryant and Grossert maintain that scratched, incised and impressed designs are avoided or absolutely unknown (Bryant p401).

Lawton provides the most insight into regional microstyles that may form part of Nala's inherited stylistic vocabulary. She describes Zulu potters of Eshowe who decorated their vessels with "a band of vertical dragged lines made with a plastic comb and outlined with grooved lines" (Lawton p54).

In the nearby Melmoth area she describes triangular designs, arc designs outlined with the grooved edge of a piece of tin and patterned with stamped designs created with the head of a nail, and rectangular motifs consisting of "a grid-like pattern of small raised rectangles and deep grooves, made with a flat strip of iron" (Lawton p56). Many of these geometric motifs appear in Nala's decorations.

The pattern and motif themes evident on each of the vessels in the study sample have been tabulated in **figure 26a**. Compositional elements of design on each vessel have been generalised for the purpose of analysis, as there are many variations of each theme. The resulting theme categories are in no way representative of Nala's decorative idiom as a whole. At best they suggest favoured themes and combinations of motifs, and the extent of variation within a limited sample of Nala's work.

One of the most dominant received forms of Nala's decoration is the "zone" on which patterns and motifs occur. This is invariably the area extending from the rim to a little below the widest point or shoulder of the vessel (pers. obs.). Innovative areas among Nala's decorative themes include figurative motifs, personal decorative methods already outlined, Iron Age inspired decorations, and a general emphasis on complexity and variety of decoration. Aspects of these innovations will be explored in more detail when specific examples are discussed in the second half of this chapter.

The following terminology has been used in the descriptions of Nala's decorations:

MOTIF- a distinct or separable element in the design of a pattern (Smith p123).

PATTERN- a complex design consisting of repeated motifs.

BAND- a strip of pattern or texture, sometimes bordered with horizontal or curved lines.

Nala's patterns and motifs in **figure 26a** have been divided into two groups:

SEPARATE \ INDIVIDUAL MOTIFS

These motifs are placed individually on the vessel wall unconnected to other motifs or patterns (**fig 16a, 16b**). They include non-representational geometric shapes: circles, diamonds, V-shapes, lozenges (rhomboids), spades (derived from playing-card figures) and triangles; as well as representational motifs: fish, beehive-houses and flowers.

CONTINUOUS MOTIFS

These are patterns which extend around the vessel wall without any breaks. They include chevrons (zigzags), arcades (a series of linked arcs), enclosed arcades (two arcades that enclose a space between them), horizontal lines and bands, and vertical repeat units (patterns created by regularly dividing a band into rectangular units with vertical dividing-lines, rather like a ladder drawn on its side).

Nala's use of motifs and patterns does not appear to be related to the specific vessel forms on which they appear. Instead they form a personal vocabulary of inherited and innovative decorative themes used in accordance with personal preference and the intended market destination of the work (pers. obs.).

SYMMETRY

Symmetry can be identified in two aspects Nala's work, the form (which will be discussed later under "composition of form"), and in the construction of motifs and patterns and their arrangement on the vessel surface. Numerous categories of symmetry have been analysed and codified for the purposes of crystallographic pattern classification (Washburn and Crowe, 1988).

In the context of Nala's work what is of particular interest is the arrangement of vertical lines of symmetry. Washburn and Crowe refer to this as reflection or bilateral symmetry (Washburn and Crowe p46). Motifs that can be divided by an imaginary vertical line, where each half is an exact mirror reflection of the other, are described as bilaterally symmetrical.

The regular arrangement of bilaterally symmetrical motifs around Nala's vessels reveals that she divides the spherical form of her vessels into imaginary segments (halves, thirds, quarters, fifths), in which patterns\motifs are exactly repeated (eg. **fig 19,20**). Nala's use of symmetry is common to many Zulu ceramists (pers. obs.), and suggests an origin in the personal visual understanding of vessel decorations revealed through use, especially drinking or serving. Regarding the visual interpretation of Zulu vessels two aspects of understanding suggest consideration:

1. Zulu beer drinking vessels, such as the ukhamba and umancishane are held with both hands and lifted to the mouth, giving the drinker an elevated view of the vessel in relation to the decorative fields. In a rural homestead these domestic vessels are often stored at floor level providing similar high viewpoints. This is in contrast to Western ceramics which are used, stored and displayed on raised surfaces.
2. Profile views familiar to Western viewers are often imposed on Zulu ceramics and other art objects in museum or gallery displays and in published illustrations (Art and ambiguity p175,

Smashing Pots p139, Ancient Traditions Dynamic Developments p31). Profiles are also emphasized in ethnographic studies for the purposes of shape classification (Lawton p21-29). The result is that pattern symmetry in these illustrations or displays is not as strongly apparent as it would be if seen or shown from an elevated perspective.

Symmetry in Zulu ceramic vessels may therefore be understood in terms of a visual ambiguity which is not always apparent outside the domestic context of their use. The complexity of patterns is accentuated by the possibility of multiple viewpoints. These viewpoints are integral to the private or social domestic functions of beer vessels, and reveal themselves best when seen in movement during the gestural context of serving or drinking. It is not possible to understand this aspect in the context of fixed, and usually static museum displays.

Nala's use of pattern symmetry on vessels in the study sample takes two forms. When large individual motifs are used, usually two or four of these are placed on opposite sides of the vessel (**fig 20**) when viewed from above. Sometimes two different, opposite matching pairs of motifs are placed in the same way (**fig 16c**). This arrangement is especially evident on the lid of DAG 899 (**fig 23b**). When Nala uses a continuous band or panel of decoration, this is always placed horizontally around the vessel, encircling the mouth when viewed from above (pers. obs)(**fig 24b**).

It would seem then, in this respect, that Nala's use of symmetry is best understood\decoded in the context of received traditions of compositional aesthetics.

TEXTURAL CONTRAST

The monochromatic blackened surfaces of most of Nala's vessels accentuate tactile and visual contrasts in the work. The vessels are highly lustrous with sharp highlights where they have been finely burnished. This contrasts sharply with matt, textured areas or raised motifs that project from

the surface (**fig 21,22**), resulting in juxtapositions of light and shadow with strong visual impact. Where patterns involve different textures, these are often also opposed, such as alternating raised and incised motifs (**fig 22**), or incised parallel lines drawn in alternating directions. The consistency of this stylistic feature suggests a cultivated aesthetic appreciation.

Visual contrasts signal the tactile quality of Nala's vessels. Glossy surfaces which alternate with and thereby emphasise the textured patterns on her vessels encourages a tactile exploration of their surfaces. That this aspect of decoration may coincidentally serve practical considerations is mentioned by Armstrong, who suggests that raised decorations may assist with gripping beer-vessels when they are filled (Armstrong p81).

Decorative elements on Nala's vessels can however be perceived outside the imperatives of function. Nala's obvious delight in manipulating the clay into an astonishing variety of textures is evident in the intricate decorative methods described in chapter two.

COMPOSITION OF FORM

Nala's vessels display a sensitivity to balance and "gesture" in the composition of their forms. In this context balance refers both to symmetry of form and the proportional relations between the width of the mouth, base and body of the vessel.

The notion of "gesture" is a figurative allusion to what the Oxford English Dictionary defines as the "expression of feeling" connected to movement. In this case the movement of the clay wall in its curvature from foot to lip of the vessel. The analogy is strengthened by the anthropomorphic vessel terms themselves and reinforces the impression of each vessel having a "character" of its own.

The nuances of Nala's composition of form are closely related to Zulu domestic ware, from which the geometric forms of many of Nala's vessels derive. These vessels have been designed with certain practical considerations in mind (pers. obs.).

Beer-vessel bases need to be wide for stability, especially if the centre of gravity of the vessel (determined by the widest point of the vessel) is relatively high. Vessel mouths need to be wide enough to facilitate drinking and the curvature of the wall needs to be even to allow the liquid contents to flow evenly when tipped (pers. obs.). Within these functional constraints however, are a variety of possible proportional combinations as suggested by the subtle differences between individual potters' styles.

The "character" of a vessel's composition is implicitly transferred to the literal gesture of its user, especially a drinker, who must lift the vessel (which may be very heavy when filled) and tip it slowly so as not to lose his balance or grip. Such gestures and their related compositional forms could be contrastingly conjectured as awkward\ungainly or controlled\elephant, generous\full or stingy\mean.

Nala's control of symmetry adds to an overall impression of equilibrium in her works. Her vessels display proportions particularly suggestive of generosity, stability and harmony in keeping with customary notions of Zulu hospitality (Armstrong p81). The walls of her vessels commonly grow out from the base in a full, rounded curve that creates an impression of buoyancy. Invariably, a slight shoulder is created and then the wall flattens out towards the rim in a subtle change of plane.

CHRONOLOGY OF NALA'S STYLES

Works made by Nala during the 1970's or earlier are not represented in the two collections reviewed in this text. Examples of works from this early period can be found in the Vukani

collection, housed in the old post office, Eshowe; and the African Art Centre's collection, Durban. According to Wissing Nala's early pieces in these collections are predominantly decorated with incised floral designs (Wissing p32).

After Nala's encounter with Iron Age sherds in 1983 a number of new decorative themes appear in her work. These include raised cords arranged in slanting lozenges, often combined with floral motifs or raised pellets (Wissing p32), and incised chevron patterns arranged in bands around the vessels.

Works in the Durban Art Gallery and University collections were collected subsequent to Nala's contact with van Schalkwyk. The first group of pieces were collected around 1985. This is followed by a gap in collecting of approximately five years. The majority of pieces were collected in 1993 and a few in 1995. Some changes in style are noticeable over this 10-year period.

Earlier pieces have two, three or four large individual motifs placed around the vessel (**fig 16,20**). Many of these are similar to motifs seen on Sphiwe Nala's vessels but also include unconventional motifs derived from playing cards (**fig 20**). Large individual motifs are followed in later vessels by a continuous band of pattern, often placed below or between horizontal incised lines (**fig 19,21,22**). Representational imagery appears in the late 80's, including fish (**fig 24**), shields (**fig 19**) and house motifs (**fig 23**). Nala's burnishing technique becomes increasingly refined with highly lustrous surfaces in the later vessels. Nala's most recent competition pieces are slightly larger than any of the earlier pieces of equivalent form, such as her recent ukhamba (DAG 900) and uphiso (DAG 3338) for the Vita Craft competition.

GENRES: TOURIST AND COLLECTOR'S WARES

The ceramic vessels made by Nesta Nala can be seen to fall into two genres, those of Tourist and Collector's wares. These terms were chosen to distinguish the market destinations of the various thematic and stylistic concerns in Nala's work. The terms are by no means intended to imply mutually exclusive categories, but rather generalised trends in the artist's production.

Tourist buyers are outlined by Jules-Rosette as pleasure seeking travellers and consumers "of the unfamiliar and exotic" (Jules-Rosette p2). The "tourist arts" they consume serve primarily as travel souvenirs or commodified symbols of cross cultural contact. The tourist's role as consumer can be generalised as informal and is often described as ill-informed (Jules-Rosette p2). Collectors can be distinguished from tourists by their connoisseur status and serious financial or scholarly interest in the collected art. Institutions such as art galleries and museums rather than individuals, are often responsible for the patronage of collectors' wares.

Nala's genres have shared elements of personal style, technique and decorative themes, and the current popularity and demand for Nala's work have led to the inclusion of "tourist" works in museum and gallery collections.

Nala states that she last concentrated on vessels for sale to Zulu patrons for domestic use in 1976 (fieldnotes 1996). She reports that her recent work is considered inappropriate for such use by her former patrons because the increased emphasis on decorative "quality" (Nala's term, fieldnotes 1996), results in prohibitively expensive selling prices. By "quality" is meant the time and effort required to produce a detailed patterning and highly refined burnish.

As already noted, examples of Nesta Nala's domestic vessels are not represented in the collections. Many features of domestic ware are however evident in Nala's subsequent work.

Nala's work produced between 1985 and 1995 is characterised by tourist and collector's genres. Although external patronage now dominates Nala's production, this is more likely to be linked to the economic potential of the market rather than a decline in former patronage as Levinsohn suggests.

The advent of signatures and dates on the bases of Nala's vessels (**fig 24d**), may be attributed to an impact of the external markets for which she geared her production. Graburn comments that the use of signatures often coincides with the introduction of "fourth World" arts to national and international markets. The use of signatures establishes a similarity between "fourth World" art objects and Western art "already characterised as "art" and populated by named artists" (Graburn p23).

Vessels currently made by Nala appear to be intended almost exclusively for a collector's market. The following section will discuss each genre with reference to specific examples from the study sample collections.

TOURIST WARE

The production of Zulu tourist pottery has been shown to date from at least 1905 (Calder p90), and is probably part of a more firmly rooted Zulu ceramic tradition than generally credited. It is arguable that Nala's current work owes more to this tradition of cross cultural exchange than to the more obvious sources of beer-pottery. Tourist wares have been shown to communicate the ethnic identity of their makers through the use of conventionalised devices or symbols (Graburn p24). These symbols "serve to invoke an experience of the "exotic other" and serve as markers of "African authenticity" to tourists and visitors "(Calder p90).

For the producers of these wares tourist arts offer an opportunity for people under dominating political forces and economic pressures to express their own ethnicity or cultural identity (Graburn p24). Often the subject matter presented in artworks expresses pride in the maker's cultural assets. These visual symbols are often simplified into an easily accessible visual code and incorporate "neo-traditional" motifs in order to communicate across cultural boundaries.

Nala's earliest datable museum pieces made for the tourist market were produced during the 1970s. These vessels were sold to the Vukani association in Eshowe and also occasionally to visitors to Nala's homestead. Nala's tourist wares can be distinguished from other genres by a number of key features.

Many of the forms made by Nala for this market appear to be innovative. Vessel shapes are inspired by forms found outside the conventions of domestic wares. Wissing records that Nala has made vessels that are based on prototypes such as Western salt cellars (Wissing p33). Pieces for sale at the African Art Centre, Durban in 1995 appeared to have been based on Western flower vases (Pers. obs. 1995). The following examples of tourist wares can be found in the study sample collections.

EXAMPLE 1 (fig 16a,b,c)

This is a small double-gourd shaped vessel acquired by Durban's Art Gallery in 1985 (Cat.No. 38). Height=12.4cm. Unsigned.

This form of vessel appears to have no specific domestic functions within contemporary Zulu ceramic traditions and is made by Nala only for outside consumption (fieldnotes 1996). Nala suggests that the form is derived from a larger domestic-vessel type (isigubo). This gourd-shaped vessel was twenty to thirty centimetres high and used for making curdled milk or for carrying

liquids (Grossert p495). The obvious similarity between these shapes may obscure a possible relationship with miniature double-gourd snuff or medicine containers (Brenthurst collection Cat.No.375). As such it is feasible that the function of this form in ceramics may have become obsolete, resulting in its adaptation for the tourist market.

Nala's piece is decorated with two motifs repeated on opposite sides of the lower volume of the double-gourd shape. These take the form of a flower and circular wheel-like motif. Lawton describes the use of "flower" motifs being used by Mabaso potters in the Tugela Ferry area in 1961. She reports that this (and other) "designs were done according to fashion and were not traditional" (Lawton p52). Examples of floral motifs used by Nala in the 1970's are described by Wissing and illustrated in Levinsohn (fig 57, p77). This example of the motif consists of incised radiating petals. The circular wheel-like motif is also incised and has a raised cord around the edge.

EXAMPLE 2 (fig 17)

This is a small flask-shaped vessel labelled "iquthu" in Durban Art Gallery's Collection (Cat.No. 768). The work is signed and dated "Nesta Nala 2-9-1993" on the base. Height=12.6cm.

The idiosyncratic narrow neck and lipped rim of this vessel is reminiscent of a glass bottle. This suggests that like the salt cellar and meat platter forms reported by Wissing, this work is innovative in form and was made for an external market. Doke and Vilakazi give the meaning of umquthu as a powdered protective charm (Doke and Vilakazi p717). This vessel could possibly derive its form from the small glass bottles used widely to contain medicines (pers. obs.).

The vessel is decorated with a horizontal band of pattern consisting of a raised cord impressed into small block-like divisions with an incised chevron pattern beneath it. Chevron patterns are a commonly used theme in Nala's work. They appear on twelve of Nala's vessels in the study sample

collections in many variations. The pattern is created from a zigzag line drawn between an upper and lower outline stretching in a band around the vessel. The pattern can alternatively be viewed as interlocking rows of right-sided and inverted triangles.

This version has hatched lines filled into the triangular areas in alternating directions. An identical version of this motif used on another vessel (UNP 66) was reported by Nala to be inspired by Iron Age sherds (fieldnotes 1994).

EXAMPLE 3 (fig 18)

This is a miniature spherical vessel in Durban's Art Gallery dated 16-9-1993 (cat.no. 771). Height=8.1cm.

A feature of many tourist pieces is a reduction in dimensions from those of domestic utensils. This is a good example of the miniature drinking vessels (umancishane) made by Nala. These vessels are between eight and twelve centimetres in height (**fig 26**). A reduction in size does not lessen the inherent functionality of these pieces, but reduces the unit cost of making them, and has the added advantage of reducing fragility and bulkiness for transport. A small item is also easily integrated into the tourist buyer's home. Smaller pieces lend themselves to intricate decorative detail which is time consuming to produce and can fetch higher prices.

This work is decorated with one of Nala's Iron Age inspired designs consisting of three raised cords. The impressions on these cords alternate in direction forming a "herringbone" chevron pattern typical of late Iron Age wares from the Thukela valley (Schofield p159).

EXAMPLE 4 (fig 19)

This is a small beer vessel (ukhamba) from the Fine Art Collection signed and dated "Nesta Nala 11-6-1993" (ac.no. 120). Height=18cm.

This work is uncharacteristic of Nala's style in general in that it remains unblackened. It's lack of the expected carbonised surface patina, representing the conventional final ceramic processes associated with umsamo wares, may serve as a reason for its inclusion in the collection. A more likely reason for its "incomplete" appearance is that the mottled orange-brown surface, displaying signs of "primitive" unmechanized processing, is favoured by Western patrons. The Western tourist buyer would most likely be unconcerned about the vessel's appropriateness for serving food in the context of a Zulu home. Nala's willingness to sell "unfinished" work suggests that this piece belongs to a tourist mode of production.

The vessel is decorated with an abstract shield motif. This is the only example of this theme in the study sample. The design appears to be based on the pointed oval shape of the Zulu shield (ihawu) on its side, with repeated motifs in a continuous band around the vessel. The shield shapes are created from raised coils of clay that have been added to the surface, and then impressed with the edge of a tool along both sides. The result is similar in appearance to Nala's raised "Iron Age" chevron patterns. Within each shield shape there are four raised pellets (amaqanda). These echo the pattern of slits that run down the centre of a shield.

COLLECTOR'S WARE

Most of the vessels currently made by Nala are commissioned by Western art dealers, collectors and galleries. These vessels can be termed Collector's ware. Other terms such as "commercial Fine Arts" or "pseudo-traditional arts" have been suggested for works that conform to culturally embedded aesthetic and formal standards while being produced with external sale in mind

(Graburn p6). The majority of Nala's vessels in the Durban Art Gallery and many in the University of Natal collection belong to this genre of work.

There is an irony in Nala's success in the Western art world being associated with a perception of her as a "traditional" potter. This success is largely the result of Nala's ability to promote her indigenous art form by responding to Western aesthetic tastes. Graburn suggests that these arts are generally demanded as status objects by buyers who wish to get "close to the native spirit" by having "authentic" or "genuine" artifacts to show. Closeness to what is believed to be traditional by the collector is the goal (Graburn p14).

Many of the vessels in the study sample collections have been attributed generic Zulu vessel names, such as ukhamba, uphiso, and umancishane. These collector's ware vessels made by Nala share many of the formal features of domestic ware but differ from them primarily in function and aesthetic content.

One of the most striking features of Nala's collector's pieces is their virtuoso display of symmetry in the form, intricacy and detail in decoration and refinement of surface finish. The time and effort given to the production of these vessels are in direct proportion to the prices that they can command. This feature often distinguishes these pieces from run-of-the mill tourist wares. For example in 1994 Nala stated that she did not make raised pellets on pieces sold to the Vukani association because the money that she received from that market did not warrant the effort of their production (Fieldnotes, 1994).

EXAMPLE 5 (fig 20)

This is a spherical shaped vessel from the Fine Art Collection (ac.no.103). The work was acquired by the University of Natal's Anthropology Department around 1985. Height = 23.5cm.

The work takes the form of a beer drinking vessel (ukhamba) and is an example of Nala's early work. It is decorated with two incised motifs on either side of the mouth. The v-shaped motif used to decorate this vessel is used on a number of Nala's early pieces in different variations. The motif is drawn with the left-hand arm of the v overlapping the right. This seems to be derived from similarly drawn motifs also found on Siphwe Nala's vessels (personal observation). In this variation the motif has stepped sides and the area between the arms have been filled with a "spade" motif derived from a playing card. The outlines of the motif are filled in with crosshatched lines.

The piece is closely related to domestic ware and shows a strong similarity to Nala's mother's work, while the unblackened surface associates the piece with an external market.

EXAMPLE 6 (fig 21)

This is a spherical-shaped vessel from the Fine Art Collection (ac.no.119). It is signed and dated "Nesta Nala 14-6-1993". Height = 24.6cm.

This piece clearly shows a development in style from the previous example. Many features of Collector's ware are apparent. The vessel displays accuracy in the symmetry of form, its surface is polished to a mirror-like shine and careful attention has been paid to the evenness of the rim and foot.

Decoration takes the form of a continuous horizontal band of pattern rather than individual motifs. The pattern is created from larger and smaller step-sided triangular motifs incised between two

lines. The motifs are filled with crosshatched and hatched lines while the "negative" spaces between the motifs are burnished. This creates a rich textural contrast.

The complexity of the decorative motifs and intricacy of the incised lines, neatly covered with tiny indentations, clearly places this work in a collector's mode of production.

EXAMPLE 7 (fig 22a,b,c)

This large spherical vessel with a flared, straight neck is part of Durban Art Gallery's collection (Cat.No.3338). Height=33cm.

This vessel was Nala's prize winning piece in the Vita Craft'95 competition. The work, based on the form of an uphiso, displays an extraordinary virtuosity in execution and decoration.

The composition of decoration takes the form of a deeply incised line with motifs arranged in an arcade beneath it. A small triangle with a mussel-shell rouletted pattern is inserted into the small space left over when the arcade pattern was drawn (**fig 22c**). The series of arcaded motifs comprise a raised cord, textured amaqanda applied to an incised background, and a single incised line.

Arcade motifs appear in many variations on Nala's vessels. This pattern may derive from an established microstyle in the Inkhanyesi district. Lawton describes the use of arc designs called moons (inyanga) on vessels from the Emfanefile area near to Eshowe (Lawton p56). These she describes as outlined with a grooved line made with the edge of a piece of tin, and patterned with nail-head impressions.

EXAMPLE 8 (fig 23a,b)

This spherical vessel with a short flared rim and lid is part of Durban Art Gallery's collection (ac.no. 899). It is signed and dated "Nesta Nala 20-5-1995". Height = 29.5cm.

This unusual piece was one of the vessels submitted by Nala to the Vita Craft'95 exhibition. Unlike other Collector's ware vessels discussed this piece's idiosyncratic form seems more closely associated with tourist ware than domestic-ware traditions.

Decoration combines both representational and abstract motifs. The body of the vessel has a continuous band of pattern consisting of an incised line, separated from a series of raised cords arranged in an arcade by raised pellets.

On the lid, two beehive-shaped house motifs, (igqugwana) are separated by semicircular raised lines, raised pellets and incised scratches. This is the only example of a beehive-house motif in the collections. The motif is incised with a tool-impressed outline and crosshatched texture. The image has been stylized to represent the curved outline with thatch "topknot", doorway and curved lines perhaps representing ropes.

EXAMPLE 9 (fig 24a,b,c,d)

This is a large spherical vessel from Durban Art Gallery's collection (Cat.No.900). It is signed and dated "Nesta Nala 18-5-1995". Height = 25.5cm.

This piece takes the form of an ukhamba. It displays the same virtuosity as the previous two examples. The large size suggests an attempt at added visual impact. The work is decorated with both representational and abstract motifs. These consist of two raised cords, arranged in a right

sided and inverted series of arcs. Occupying the space between these cords are incised fish motifs, one fish to each enclosed segment.

Nala reports that she was inspired to create these images for personal enjoyment and does not feel dictated to in any way in making such choices (fieldnotes 1994). Three vessels in the study sample collections have this motif (UNP 59, DAG 900 and DAG 754). The forms of the fish have been stylized to a representation of the outline, mouth, eye, gill and fins. All three examples are incised onto the vessel between upper and lower arced lines. The fish in this example are filled in with crosshatching contrasted against a plain background.

In overview Nala's genres can be seen to be accompanied by thematic and stylistic concerns with a certain amount of overlap. First tourist and later collector's wares have been Nala's predominant production since 1976, representing the increasing potential of external patronage rather than a decline in demand for domestic vessels.

Many of Nala's works produced for tourists have innovative forms based on Western ceramic prototypes such as vases and salt cellars, and decorative schemes which communicate their Zulu cultural identity to Westerners. Reductions in size and unblackened surfaces often characterise tourist wares.

The introduction of signed works signalled the beginning of Nala's current production of collector's ware. These works, often acclaimed for their authenticity, are based on cultural aesthetic and formal standards while being made for an external patronage by mostly white buyers and art dealers. Nala's works in this genre can be identified by their virtuoso skill in construction and decoration. They are often slightly larger than their domestic prototypes for added visual impact. Decorations on Nala's vessels often incorporate innovative methods to produce intricately complex designs.

CONCLUSION

The period of Nala's production from 1985 to 1995 discussed in this study coincides with a general upsurge of interest in her career. Little is recorded of her early career prior to the 1980's, it was only after her contact with van Skalkwyk that pieces began to be sought after by local and then national patrons. Two of her earliest patrons, the Vukani association in Eshowe and African Art Centre in Durban have collections that include works made by Nala in the 1970's.

Much of Nala's work is based on Zulu domestic-ware traditions. In particular Nala's forms are based on the ukhamba, uphiso and umancishane, constructed from hand-processed raw materials, which form part of a range of vessels used for brewing and serving utshwala. In a domestic context these vessels are an integral part of ancestor commemoration and the social hospitality associated with beer drinking.

Published texts by Levinsohn, Cruise, Munnik and Wissing reflect a different understanding of Nala depending on their professional background and the assumed interests of the audiences for which they have prepared their texts.

Levinsohn is an historian and African art collector resident in America. She presents Zulu ceramics in an ethnographic mode, providing a valuable description of her ceramic technology and methods, but describing it as an immutable tradition unable to adapt to the pressures of acculturation. Nala is described as a traditionalist trying to maintain a dying art form.

Both Cruise and Munnik's texts reveal their concerns as professional ceramists, with specialised knowledge of ceramic processes and terminology. Cruise emphasises Nala's status as a contemporary South African ceramic artist but contradictorily places her in a "separated" category

Munnik provides a review of the Vita Craft exhibition on which Nala won first prize. Her misreading of Nala's achievements is based on a stereotyped view of Zulu pottery as "traditional" and "authentic". The critique tends to provide a formula for white artists to achieve similar authenticity through a carefully contrived africanisation, rather than evaluating Nala's expression.

Wissing's journal article was also written following Nala's awards. He introduces Nala to an audience assumed to be unfamiliar with Zulu ceramics, focusing on her cultural sources and current inspirations. His characterisation of Nala as a dynamic personality involved in updating Zulu traditions is highly informed but does not escape the polarised vision which opposes tradition and innovation.

The term "traditional" has often been used to describe Nala and her work. Associations with tribal ethnicity, historicity and cyclical perpetuity however make it inappropriate, and obscure many idiosyncratic elements in Nala's work. Findings suggest that Nala can be viewed as an artist working with the received traditions of her cultural heritage but choosing to express herself across cultural boundaries with creative integrity. Her works are often imaginative responses to external patronage, technological innovations and her own changing artistic vision.

Nala's decorative themes result from a complex interplay of received cultural and personal expression. Patterns and motifs occur in themes of individual motifs or continuous patterns. The origin of some of the aesthetic communication in Nala's vessel decorations appears to be linked to aspects of utility in the domestic wares that many of the works are based on.

Symmetry of pattern, for example, can be seen to reveal a visual ambiguity resulting from different viewpoints when vessels are in use. Elevated viewpoints are emphasized when drinking vessels are held with both hands and lifted to the mouth. This is not evident in fixed museum displays

Symmetry of pattern, for example, can be seen to reveal a visual ambiguity resulting from different viewpoints when vessels are in use. Elevated viewpoints are emphasized when drinking vessels are held with both hands and lifted to the mouth. This is not evident in fixed museum displays where profile views of vessels are often emphasised and vessels never seen in movement. Nala's use of bilateral symmetry, common to many Zulu vessels, often takes the form of opposite pairs of matching motifs, or bands of frequently repeated motifs encircling the mouth when viewed from above.

The tactile appeal of Nala's vessels is emphasised by visual contrasts between smooth, reflective burnished areas and textured motifs. Balance in proportional composition is carefully considered and can be seen to be linked to the gestures of serving and drinking.

A variety of innovative decorative themes result from Nala's personal expression. Figurative motifs such as fish and houses appear to be inspired by personal observation and choice, and Iron Age motifs result from contact with local archaeological finds: Innovative decorative methods have developed from experimentation with tools, such as umbrella spokes, and improved burnishing methods.

Works in the collections show changes in Nala's style in the period under consideration. Earlier pieces tend to be decorated with two, three or four single non-representational motifs, including some derived from playing cards. Later pieces tend to have a continuous band of pattern, often placed between or below horizontal incised lines. Representational imagery appears in the late 80's, including fish, shield and house motifs. Later vessels become increasingly perfected with finely burnished surfaces and detailed decoration.

Nala's current production can be described as falling into two modes or genres: tourist and collector's wares. Each of these is accompanied by different thematic and stylistic concerns with a fairly large overlap. Since 1976 Nala has concentrated on tourist and collector's wares for mainly white buyers encompassing South African museums and galleries, and art dealers. This patronage reflects the economic potential of this market rather than a decline in demand for domestic wares.

Tourist wares have played an integral role in Nala's career, her earliest pieces being produced in the late 70's. Many of Nala's tourist wares have innovative forms based on Western prototypes, unblackened surfaces and a miniaturised scale.

Nala's collector's wares reflect Zulu cultural aesthetic and formal standards, but changes in production and patronage have in many ways altered received forms. These works have the appearance of "authenticity" and are often given generic Zulu vessel names in collections. Features of Nala's collector's works include virtuoso skill in construction and decoration, often with intricately complex and innovative patterns. Many vessels have been made slightly larger than their domestic prototypes for added visual impact.

The continued success of Nala's career appears to be assured not only by the skill and imaginativeness of her work, but by her personal dedication and artistic integrity.

GLOSSARY

Everyday words have been translated from E.B. Doke and B.W. Vilakazi, Zulu- English Dictionary, 1972, and are not accompanied by references. Individual references accompany the meanings of specialist ceramic terms.

amadlozi	Human spirits or souls
amaqanda	Eggs or large beads used by Nala to refer to raised nodules on her vessels (fieldnotes 1996)
amasi	Sour or curdled milk
amasumpa	Raised nodules on ceramic or wooden vessels
ibumba	Clay which has the necessary properties for pottery making (Kennedy p233)
igqizolo	Heavily or clumsily made object (Kennedy p234)
ihawu	General term for a shield
iquthu	Refers to a small lidded basket (Kennedy p202)
igqugwana	Beehive-shaped house
imbiza	Large, coarse textured, reddish brown beer vessel for fermenting and storing beer (Kennedy p225)
imbokodwe	Pebble used to burnish pots (Levinsohn p76)
impofana	Similar in appearance to the <u>imbiza</u> but smaller, also used for storing beer (Kennedy p226)
ingcazi	Narrow necked water vessel An alternative name for the <u>uphiso</u> (fieldnotes 1995)
inkatha	Grass ring or coil
intambo	String or cord
iphangela	Largest of the decorated, black serving vessels (Kennedy p226)

isicathulo	shoe An alternative name for <u>umancishane</u> (field notes 1995)
isichumo	Large globular shaped basket with narrow neck and small mouth essentially identical in size, shape and function to the ceramic <u>uphiso</u> (Kennedy p204)
itshe	Grinding stone (Levinsohn p76)
ubukufusa	To blacken, smoke To discolour or destroy the fresh colour of something
ukhamba (pl izin-)	Globular shaped black drinking vessel (Kennedy p226)
ukucindezela	To exert pressure upon, press against, press down or squeeze
ukufaxaza	To dent in, press in, cause a pitting, engrave or make grooved marks on pottery
ukublonipha	To respect, regard with awe, reverence or honour
ukunyathela	To stamp, crush, suppress or keep down
umancishane (pl oma-)	Smallest of the blackened and decorated drinking vessels
umgqumugqumu	Cape Gooseberry (<u>Physalis peruviana</u>)
umhlaba (pl imi-)	Several species of large aloe including <u>Aloe spectabilis</u> (Palgrave p85)
umquthu	Powdered protective charm
umsamo	Back part of the homestead opposite the doorway
umThombothi	Tamboti (<u>Spirostachys africana</u>) (Moll p203)
umsobo	A species of nightshade (<u>Solanum nigrum</u>)
umSululu	Rubber hedge Euphorbia (<u>Euphorbia tirucalli</u>) (Moll p7)
uphiso (pl izim-)	A vessel similar in shape and decoration to the <u>ukhamba</u> but with a small opening and raised neck (Kennedy p227)
utshwala	Sorghum beer

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Figure 1

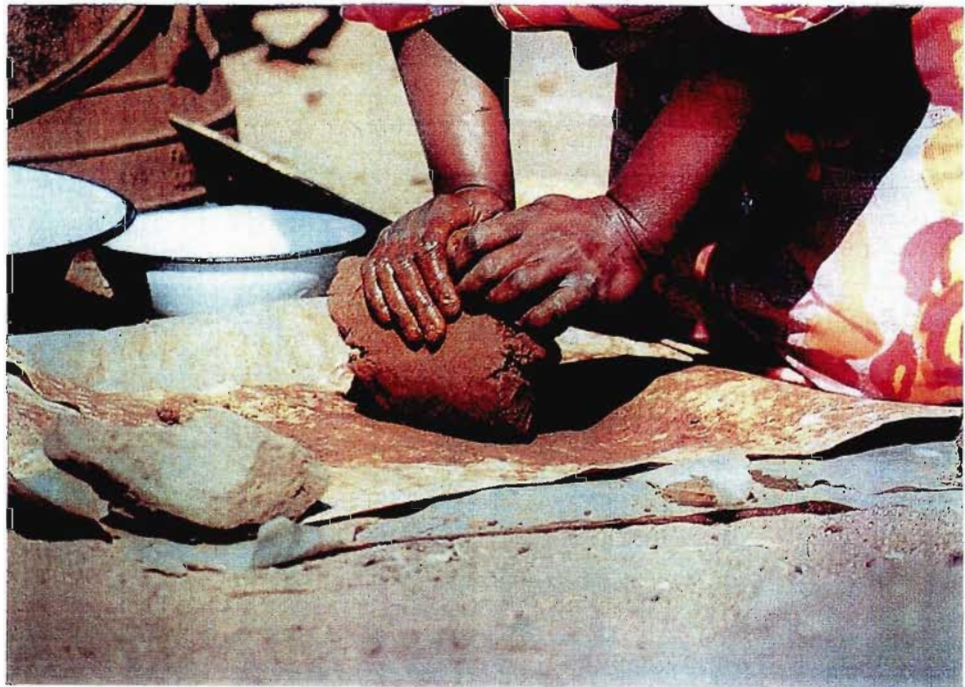


Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

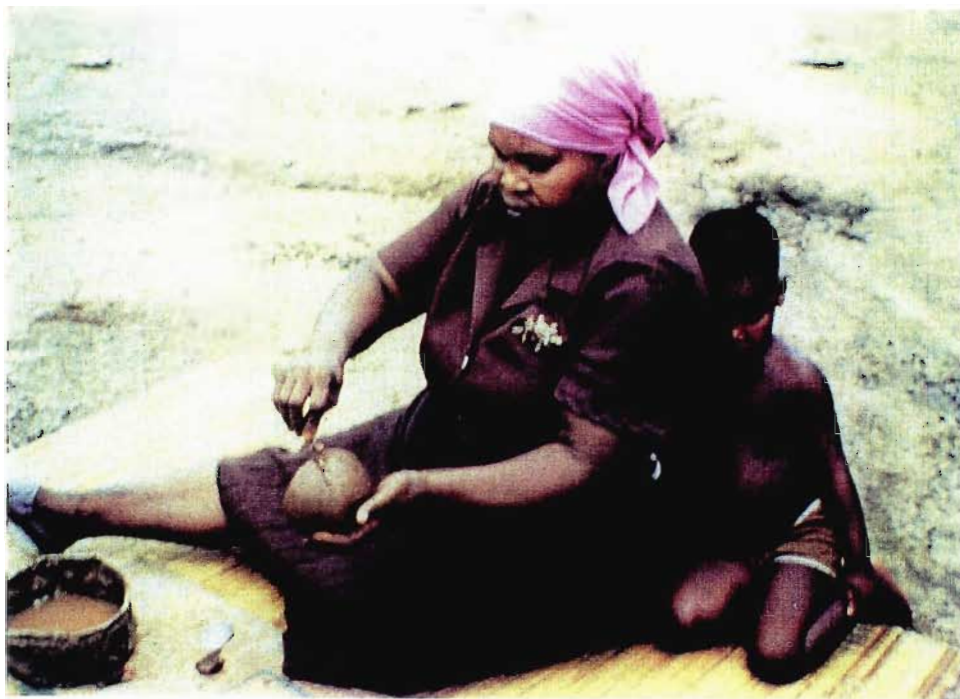


Figure 5

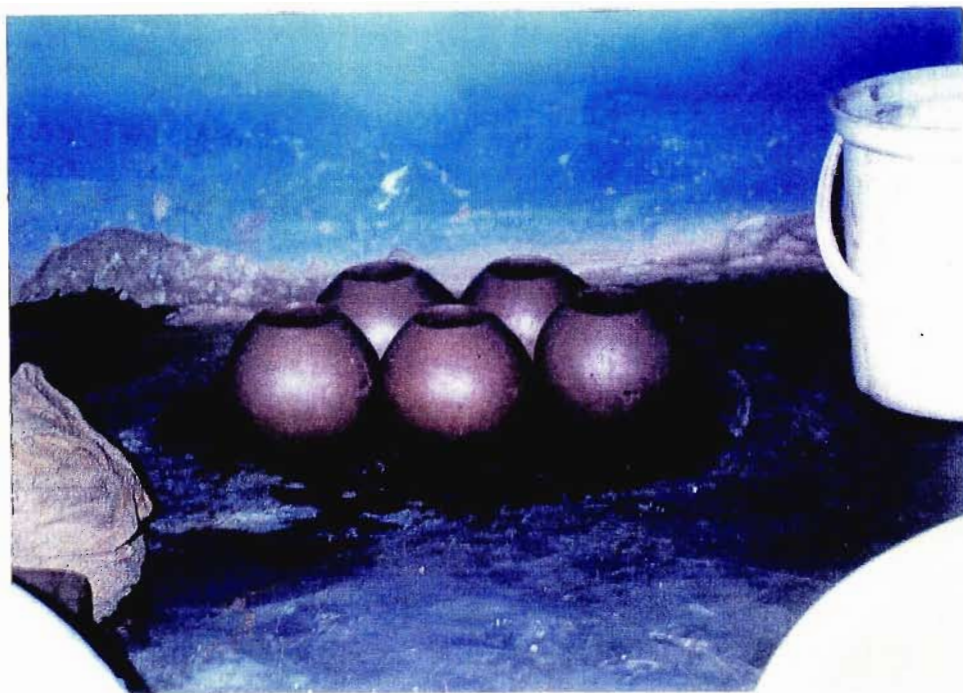


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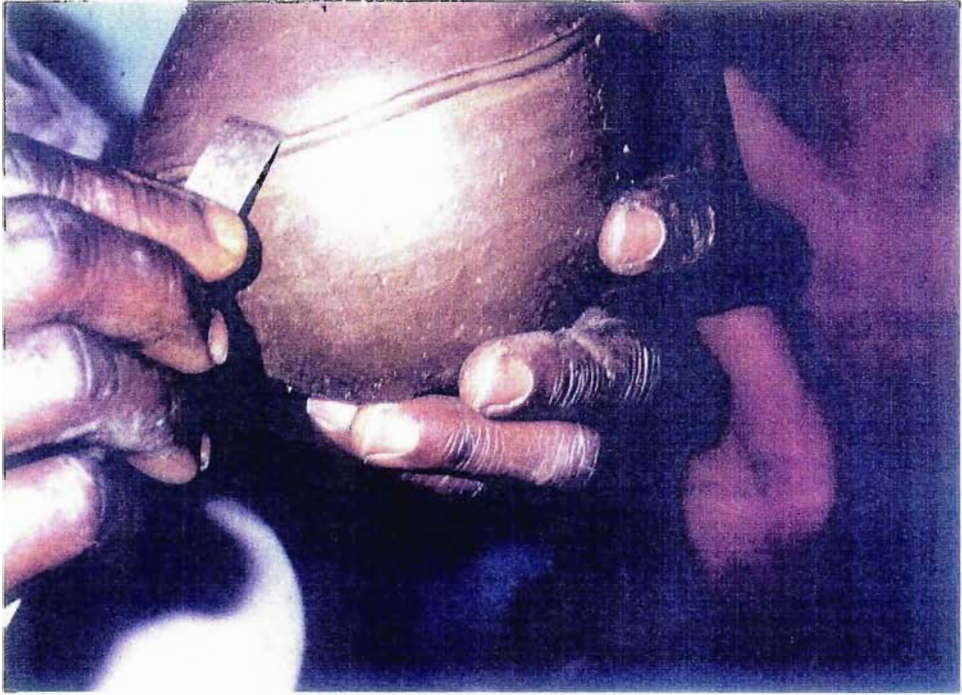


Figure 7



Figure 8

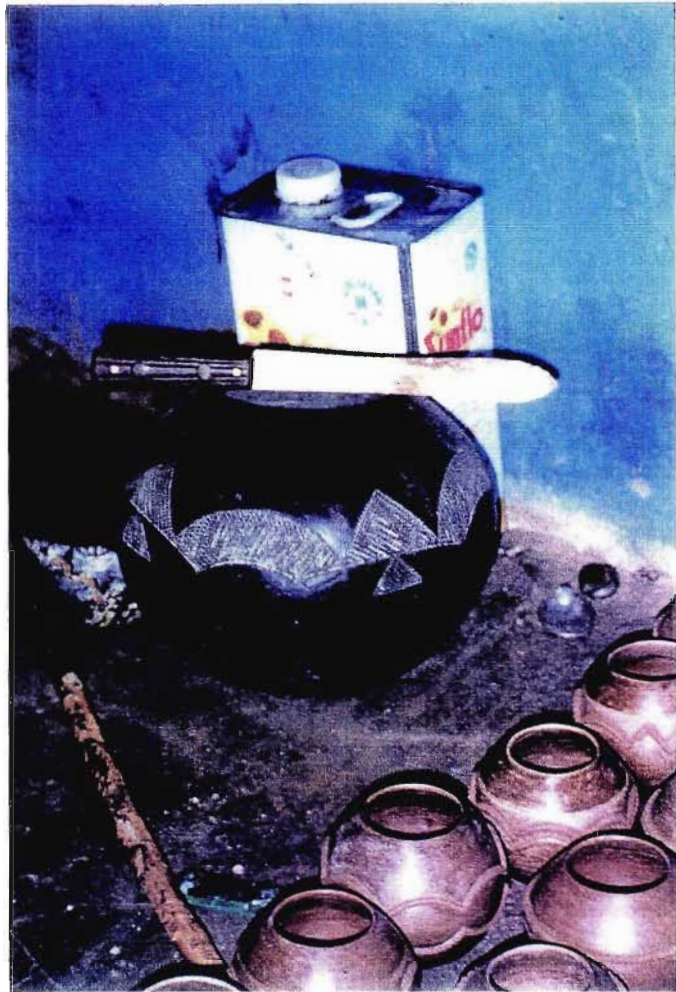


Figure 9



Figure 10

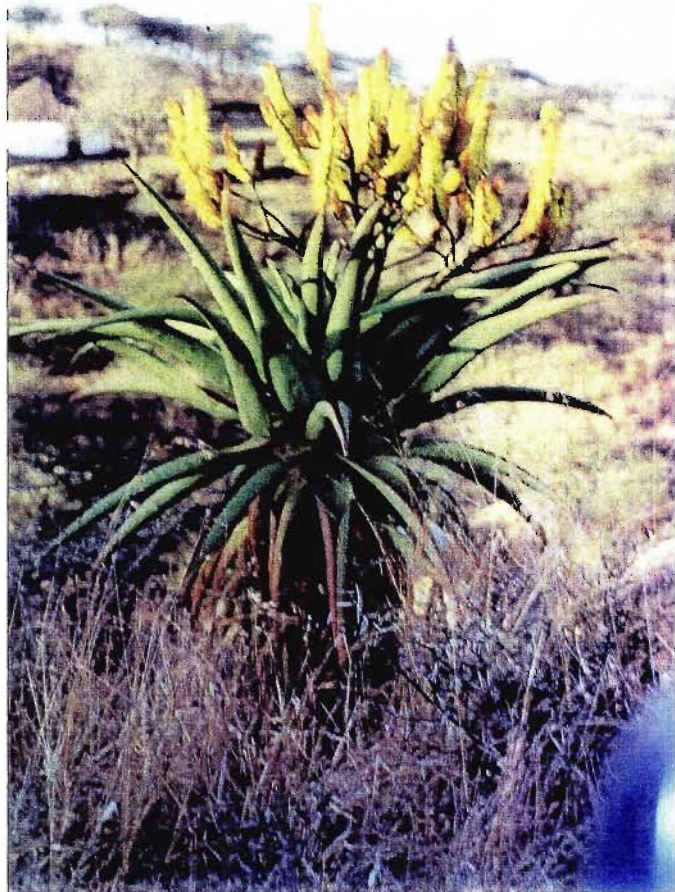


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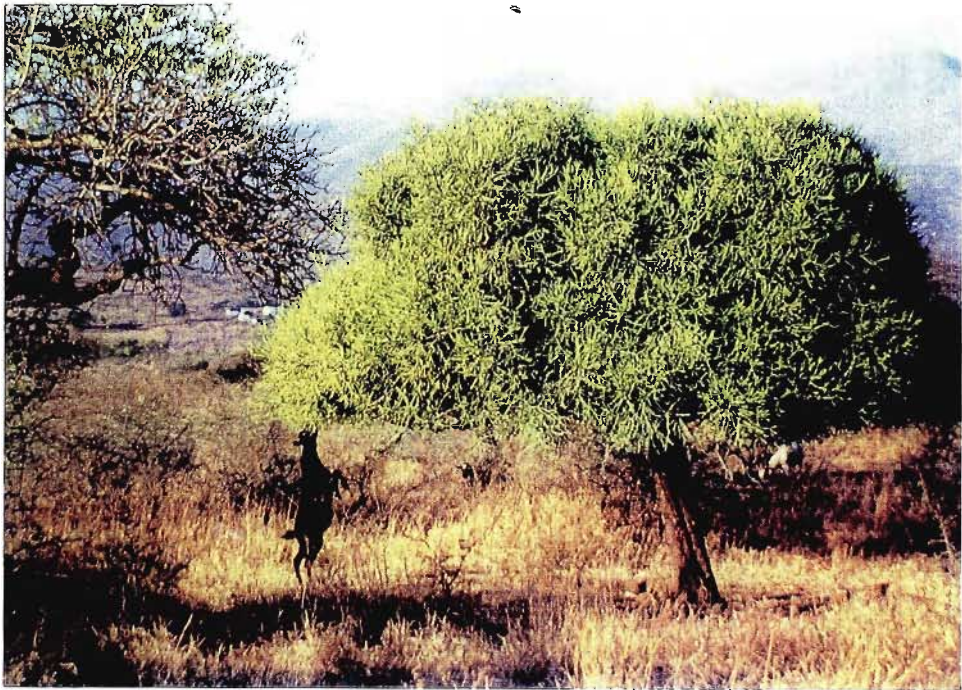


Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14

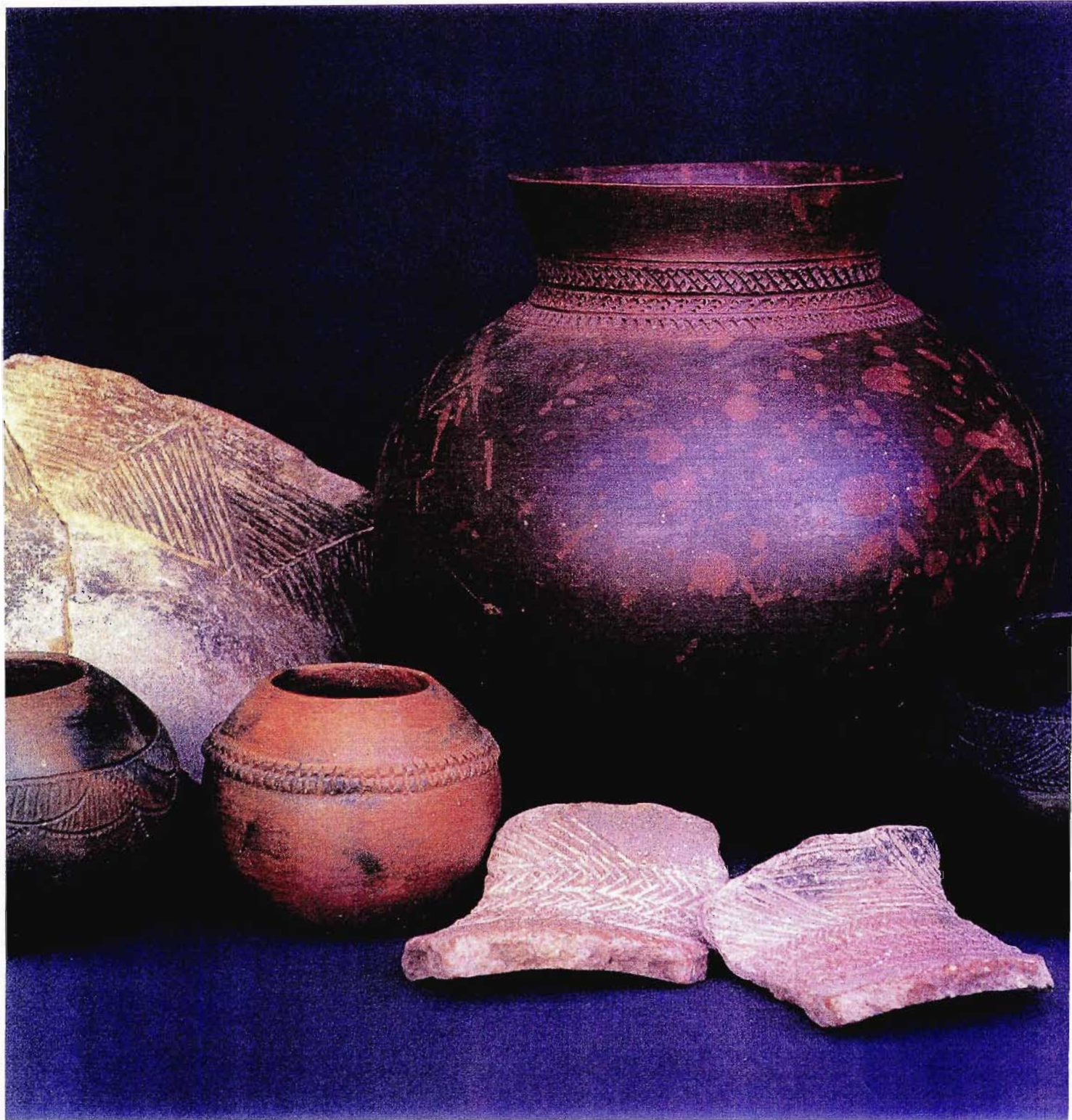


Figure 15



Figure 16a



Figure 16b



Figure 16c



Figure 17

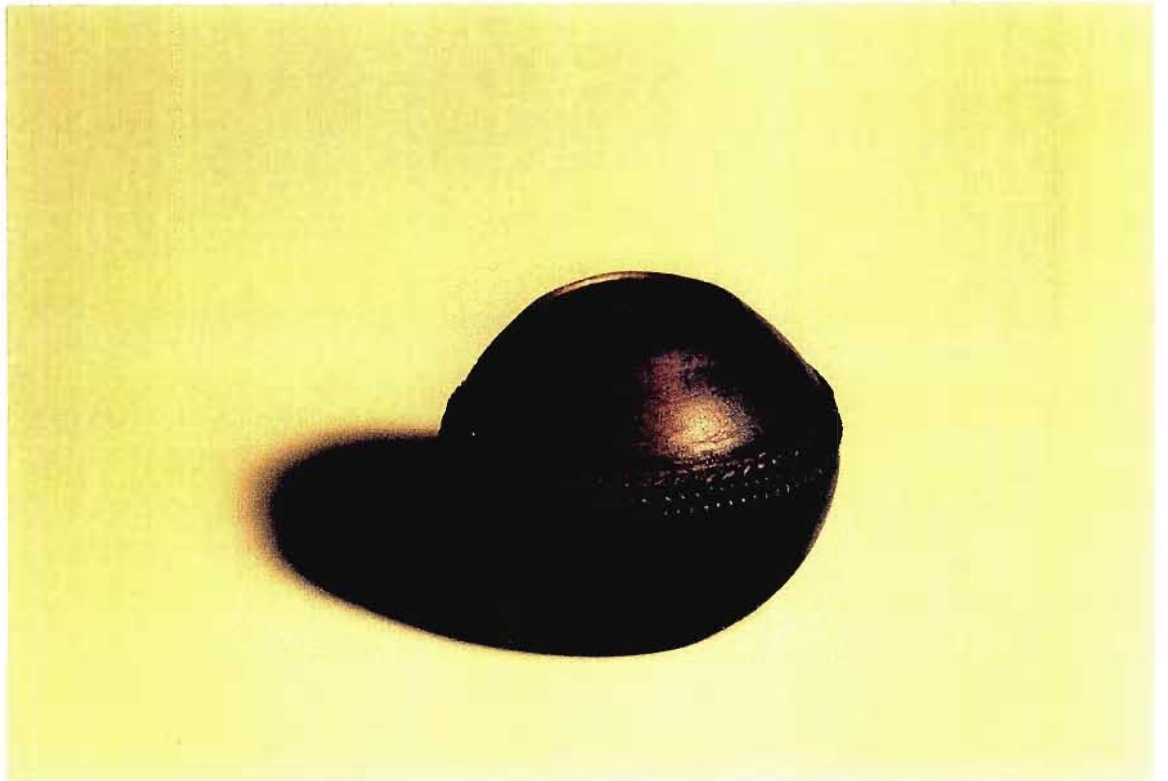


Figure 18



Figure 19

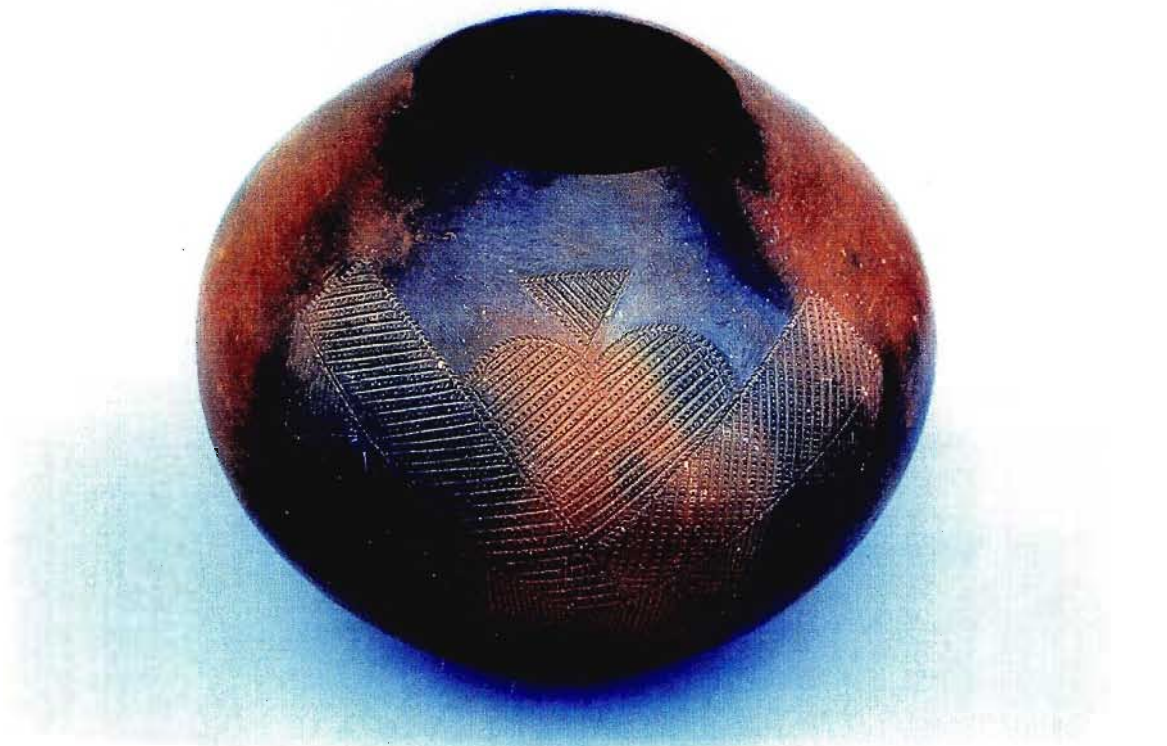


Figure 20

Figure 21

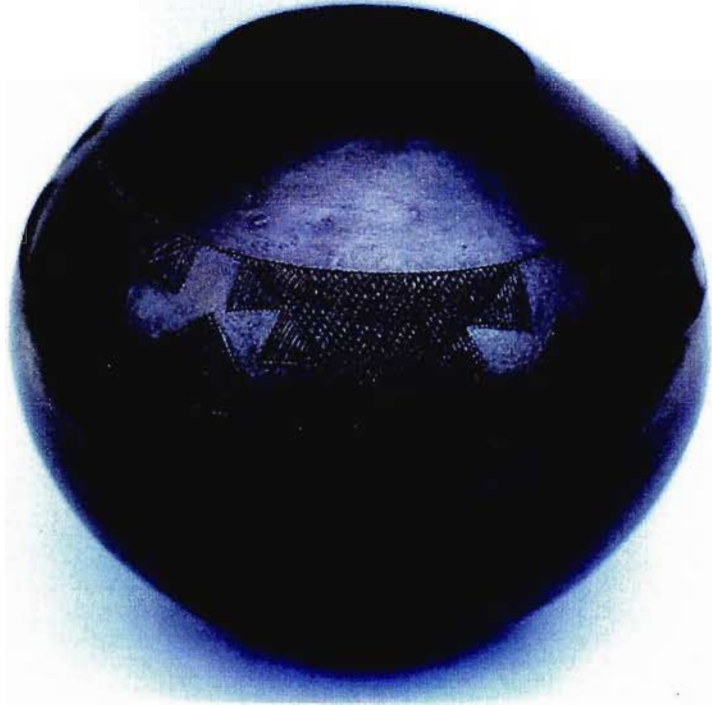


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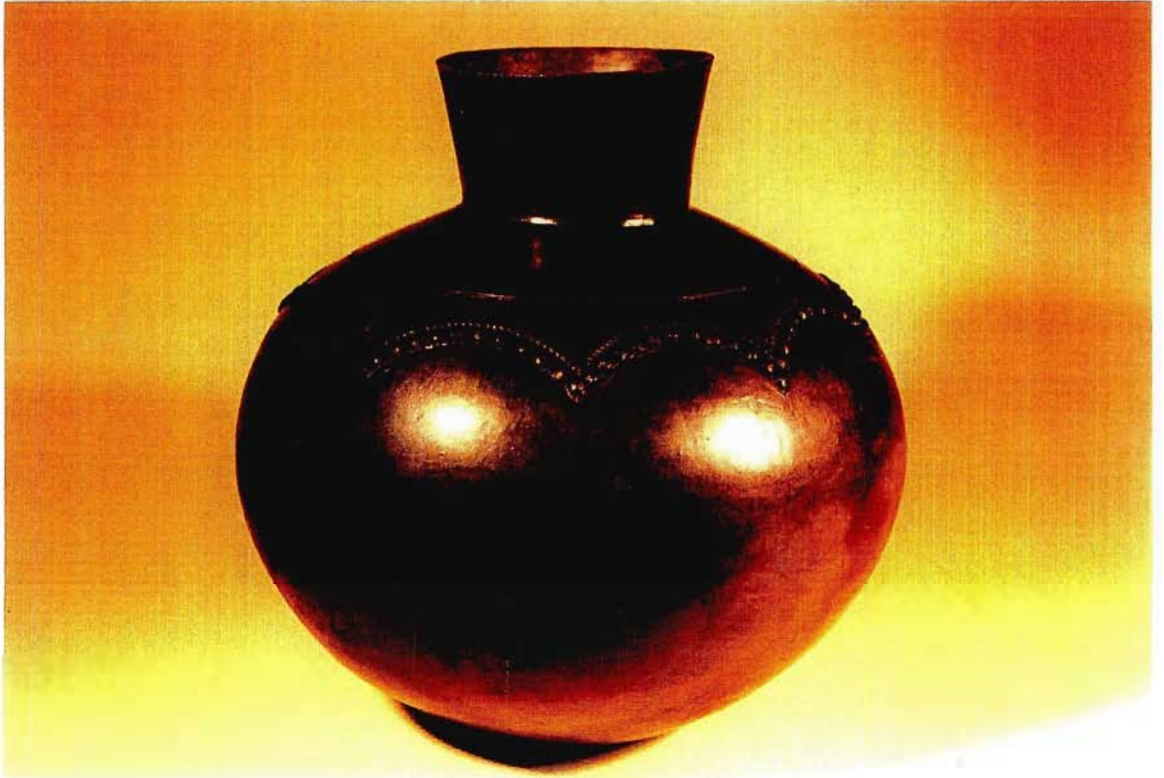


Figure 22a



Figure 22b



Figure 22c

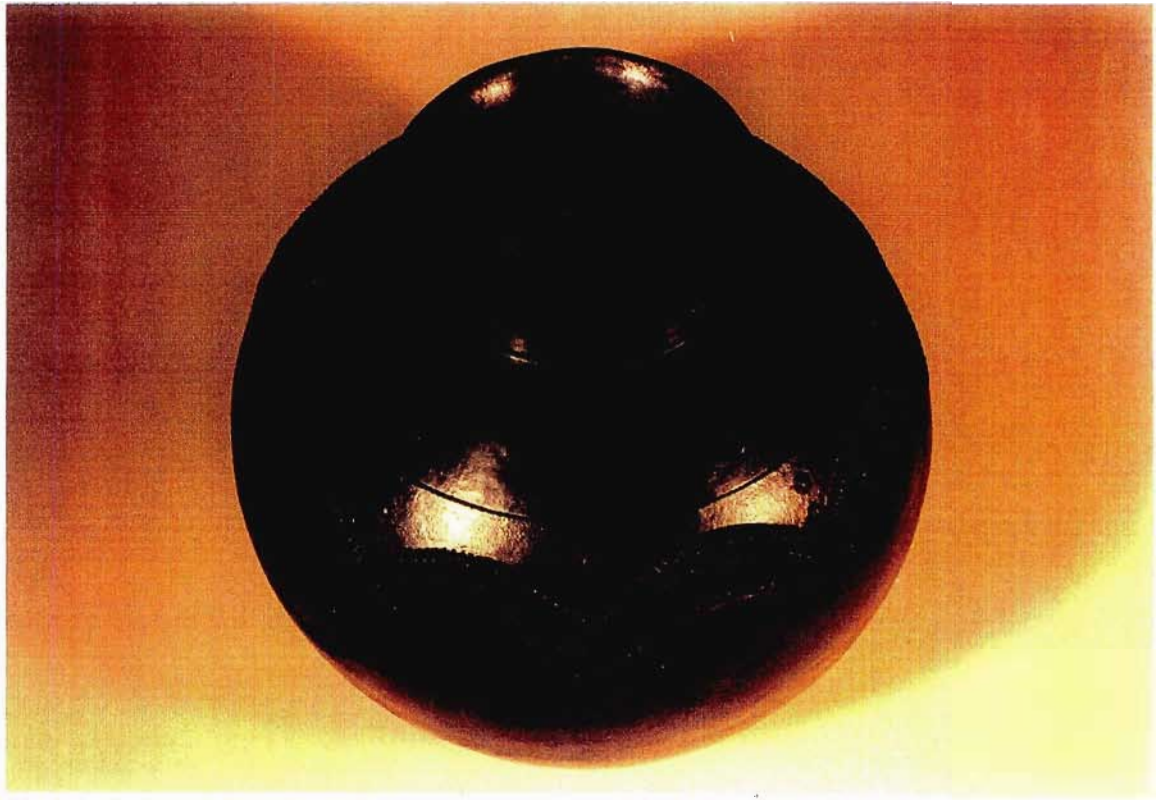


Figure 23a

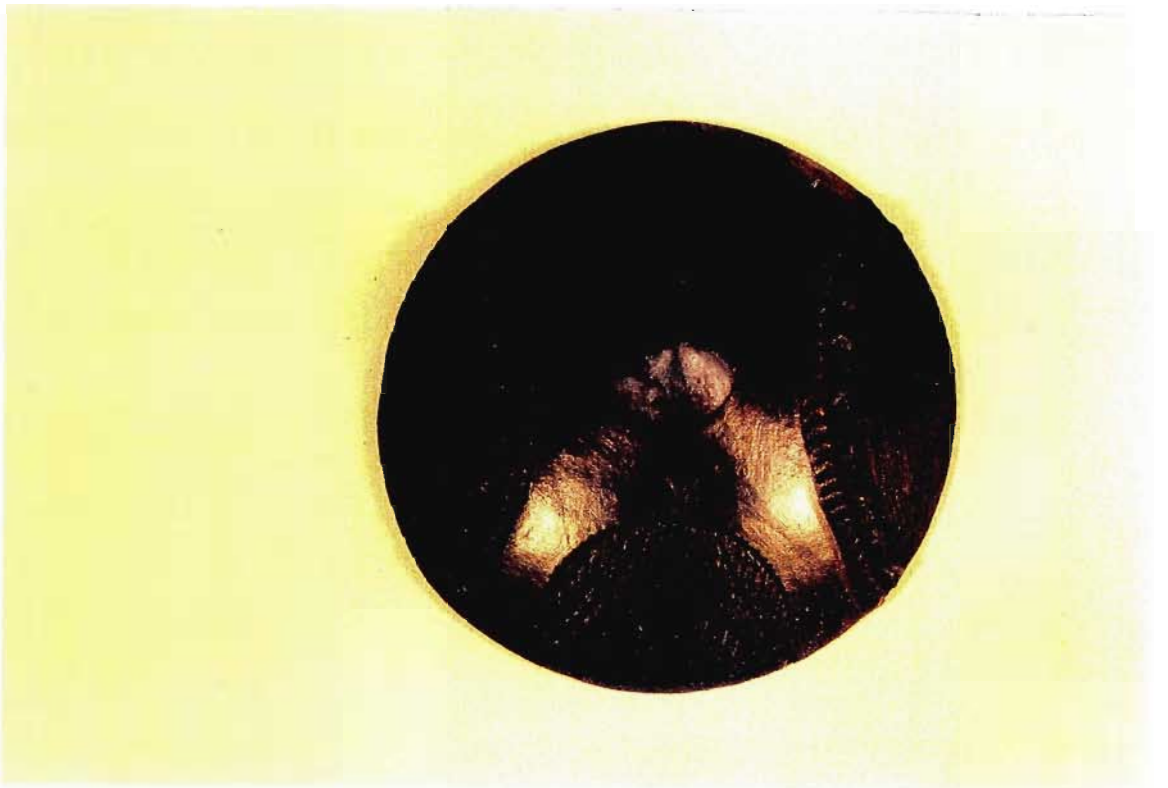


Figure 23b



Figure 24a



Figure 24b

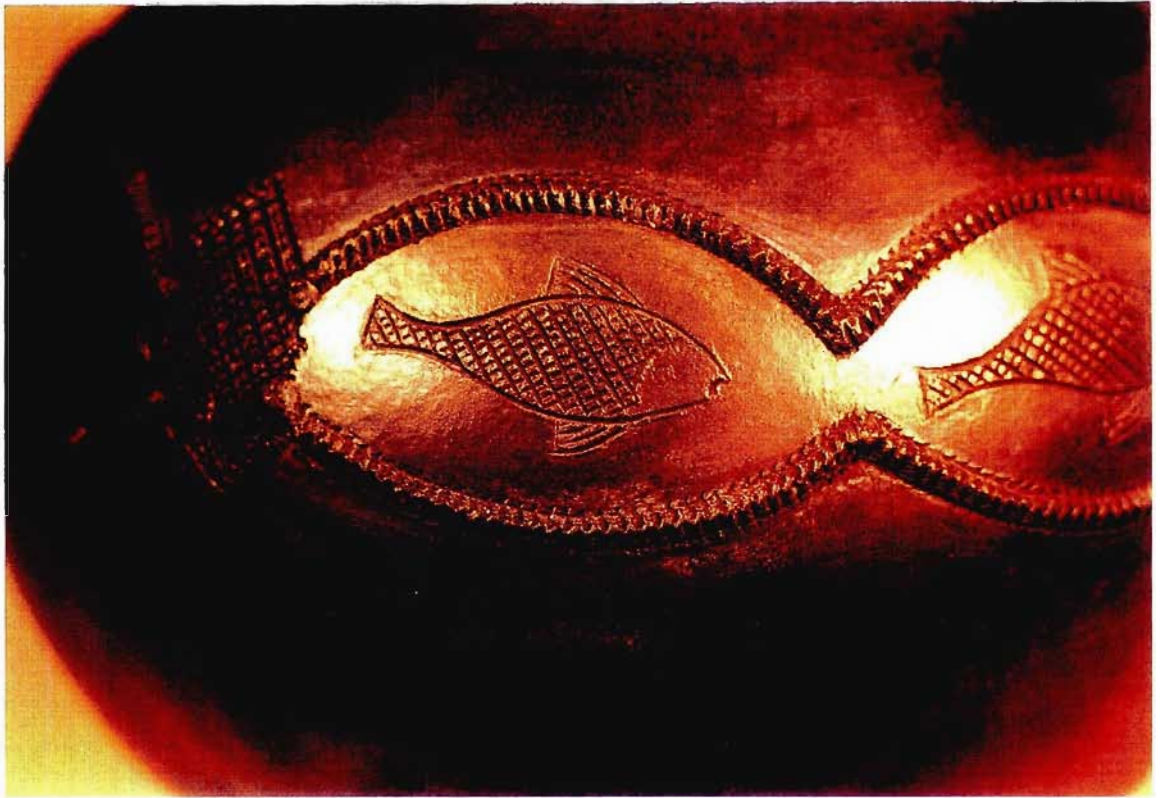


Figure 24c

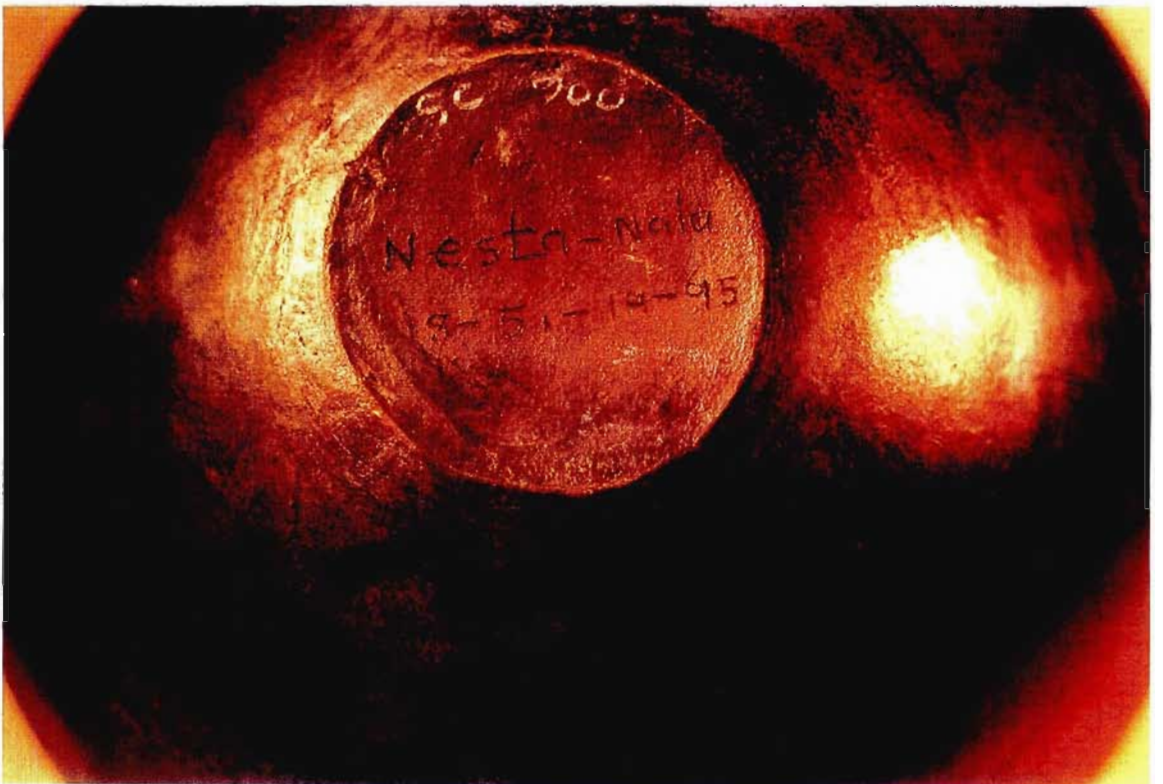


Figure 24d

Nesta Nala: vessel heights

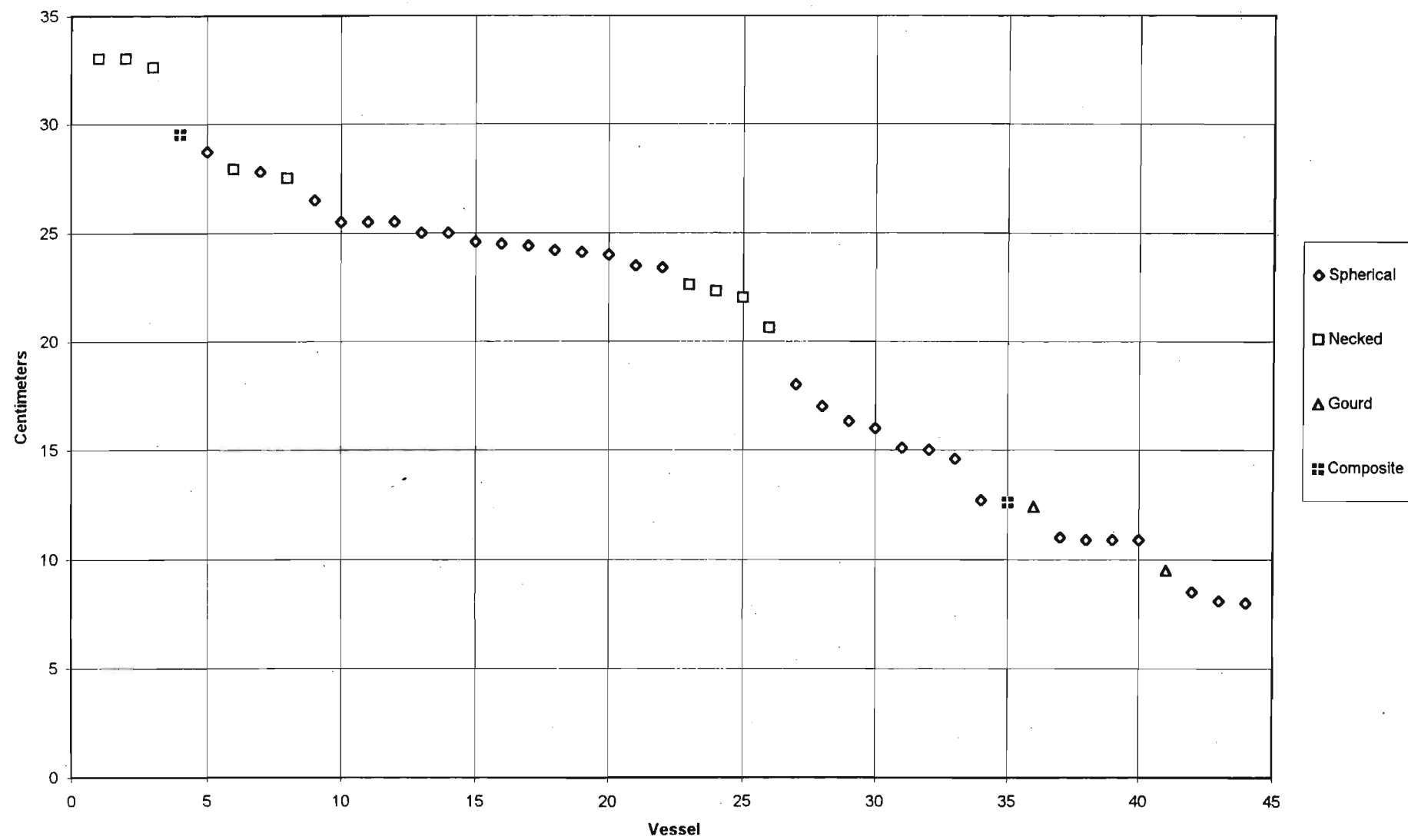







Figure 25

DAG	Ch	Ar	EA	HL	VR	C	F	D	V	L	S	H	P	F
751				*										
753				*										
750	*			*										
748	*			*										
771				*										
764				*										
766				*										
765	*			*										
759	*			*										
755	*			*										
757	*			*										
743	*			*										
768	*			*										
763				*	*									
742				*	*									
899		*		*								*		
3338		*		*									*	
752		*											*	
749		*											*	
770		*											*	
767		*											*	
750		*		*									*	
745		*											*	
769			*										*	
747	*			*										
746		*												
756	*			*	*									
900			*										*	*
754			*										*	*
744								*					*	
38						*	*							

UNP	Ch	Ar	EA	HL	VR	C	F	D	V	L	S	H	P	F
85				*										
64				*										
119				*									*	
117	*			*	*								*	
83	*													
103									*		*			
86									*					
66	*			*										
102										*				
89			*					*					*	
84			*					*					*	
120			*											
59			*											*

CONTINUOUS MOTIFS		
Chevron	Ch	
Arcade	Ar	
Enclosed arcade	EA	
Horizontal line	HL	
Vertical repeat units	VR	










INDIVIDUAL MOTIFS		
Circle	C	
Flower	F	
Diamond	D	
V-shape	V	
Lozenge	L	
Spade	S	
House	H	
Pendant triangle	P	
Fish	F	

Figure 26a

	Acq. No.	In	In & Im	C	R	R & Im	B	S	P	Im	H
1	DAG 751	*	*			*					
2	DAG 753			*		*					*
3	DAG 752		*	*		*					*
4	DAG 749	*	*	*	*						*
5	DAG 750	*	*	*							*
6	DAG 748		*	*							*
7	DAG 3338	*		*		*			*		
8	UNP 89	*	*								*
9	UNP 85			*							
10	DAG 770			*							
11	DAG 771			*							
12	DAG 769	*	*								*
13	DAG 767		*	*		*					*
14	DAG 764		*	*							*
15	DAG 766			*	*						
16	DAG 765	*	*	*							*
17	DAG 763	*		*							*
18	DAG 759	*	*	*							*
19	DAG 755	*	*		*						*
20	DAG 758		*	*							*
21	DAG 757	*	*	*							*
22	DAG 756	*	*								*
23	DAG 754	*		*							*
24	DAG 742	*	*	*	*						*
25	DAG 744	*	*		*						*
26	DAG 745	*	*	*		*					*
27	DAG 747	*									*
28	DAG 746		*								*
29	UNP 120			*	*						
30	UNP 59		*			*					*
31	UNP 103	*	*								*
32	UNP 66	*	*								*
33	UNP 102			*							
34	UNP 119	*	*				*				*
35	UNP 83		*							*	*
36	UNP 117	*	*				*			*	*
37	UNP 84	*	*								*
38	UNP 86	*									*
39	DAG 900	*		*	*						*
40	DAG 743	*	*	*		*					*
41	UNP 64			*							
42	DAG 38	*		*							*
43	DAG 768	*	*	*							*
44	DAG 899	*	*	*	*			*			*

Legend	
In	Incised
In & Im	Incised and impressed
C	Corded
R	Raised
R & Im	Raised and impressed
B	Burnished
S	Scratched
P	Printed
Im	Impressed
H	Hatched

Figure 26b

CATALOGUE OF NALA WORK

UNIVERSITY OF NATAL STUDY COLLECTION

1. **UNP 59.** Spherical vessel (ukhamba). 1993.
Signed on base-"Nesta Nala 6-6-19-93". Height = 23.4cm.
Burnished, carbonized surface. Incised and impressed outlines.
Hatched and burnished textures filled in.

2. **UNP 64.** Gourd-shaped vessel (isigubo). 1991.
Signed on base-"Nesta Nala 1991". Height = 9.5cm.
Burnished, carbonized surface. Raised cord.

3. **UNP 66.** Spherical vessel (ukhamba). 1993.
Signed on base-"Nesta Nala 14-6-1993". Height = 24cm.
Burnished, oxidised surface. Outlines incised and impressed in alternating directions.
Hatched texture filled in.

4. **UNP 83.** Spherical vessel (ukhamba). c1985.
Unsigned. Height = 25cm. Burnished, carbonized surface.
Incised and impressed outlines with cross-hatched and impressed textures filled in.

5. **UNP 84.** Spherical vessel (ukhamba). c1985.
Unsigned. Height = 25.5cm. Burnished, carbonized surface.
Incised and impressed outlines with hatched texture filled in.

6. **UNP 85.** Necked vessel (uphiso). c1985.
Unsigned. Height = 22cm. Burnished, oxidised surface. Raised cords.
7. **UNP 86.** Spherical vessel (ukhamba). c1985.
Unsigned. Height = 26.5cm. Burnished, carbonized surface.
Incised outlines, incised cross-hatched texture filled in.
8. **UNP 89.** Necked vessel (uphiso). c1985.
Unsigned. Height = 33cm. Burnished, oxidised surface.
Incised and impressed outlines with cross-hatched texture filled in.
9. **UNP 102.** Spherical vessel (ukhamba). 1984.
Unsigned. Height = 24.5cm. Burnished, carbonized surface. Raised cords.
10. **UNP 103.** Spherical vessel (ukhamba). c1985.
Unsigned. Height = 23.5cm. Burnished, oxidised surface.
Incised and impressed outlines with cross-hatched textures filled in.
11. **UNP 117.** Spherical vessel (ukhamba). 1993.
Unsigned. Height = 25cm. Burnished, carbonized surface.
Incised and impressed outlines. Hatched, cross-hatched, impressed and burnished textures filled in.
12. **UNP 119.** Spherical vessel (ukhamba). 1993.
Signed on base-"Nesta Nala 14-6-19-93". Height = 24.5cm.
Burnished, carbonized surface. Incised and impressed outlines.
Cross-hatched, hatched and burnished textures filled in.

13. **UNP 120.** Spherical vessel (ukhamba\umancishane). 1993.

Signed on base-"Nesta Nala 11-6-19-93". Height = 18cm.

Burnished, partially carbonized surface. Raised cord and raised pellets.

DURBAN ART GALLERY STUDY COLLECTION

1. **DAG 38.** Gourd-shaped vessel (isigubo). c1985.

Height = 12.4. Burnished, carbonized surface.

Incised lines and raised cords.

2. **DAG 742.** Spherical vessel (ukhamba). 1993.

Signed on base-"Nesta Nala 8-9-1993". Height = 24.1cm.

Burnished, carbonized surface.

Incised and impressed outlines, raised cords, raised pellets and cross-hatching filled in.

3. **DAG 743.** Spherical vessel (ukhamba). 1993.

Signed on base-"Nesta Nala 3-9-93". Height = 25.5cm.

Burnished, carbonized surface.

Incised and impressed outlines, raised cord, raised pellets with hatching and cross-hatching filled in.

4. **DAG 744.** Spherical vessel (ukhamba). 1993.

Signed on base-"Nesta Nala 6-9-1993". Height = 24.2cm.

Burnished, carbonized surface. Incised and impressed outlines with cross-hatching and raised pellets filled in.

5. **DAG 745.** Spherical vessel (ukhamba). 1993.
Signed on base-"Nesta Nala 7-9-1993". Height = 24.4cm.
Burnished, carbonized surface. Incised outlines, raised cords and raised pellets.

6. **DAG 746.** Spherical vessel (ukhamba). 1993.
Signed on base-"Nesta Nala 27-9-1993". Height = 28.7cm.
Burnished, carbonized surface. Incised and impressed outlines with cross-hatching filled in.

7. **DAG 747.** Spherical vessel (ukhamba). 1993.
Signed on base-"Nesta Nala 29-9-1993". Height = 27.8cm.
Burnished, carbonized surface. Incised outlines with cross-hatching filled in.

8. **DAG 748.** Necked vessel (uphiso). 1993.
Signed on base-"Nesta nala 5-9-1993". Height = 32.6cm.
Burnished, carbonized surface. Incised and impressed outlines, raised cords with cross-hatching filled in.

9. **DAG 749.** Necked vessel (uphiso). 1993.
Signed on base-"Nesta Nala 21-9-1993". Height = 27.5cm.
Burnished, carbonized surface.
Incised, impressed outline, raised cord and raised pellets with cross-hatching filled in.

10. **DAG 750.** Necked vessel (uphiso). 1993.
Signed on base-"Nesta Nala 17-9-1993". Height = 27.9cm.
Burnished, carbonized surface. Incised and impressed outlines and raised cord with cross-hatching filled in.

11. **DAG 751.** Necked vessel (uphiso). 1993.
Signed on base-"Nesta Nala 13-9-1993". Height = 20.6cm.
Burnished, carbonized surface. Incised and impressed outlines with raised pellets.
12. **DAG 752.** Necked vessel (uphiso). 1993.
Signed on base-"Nesta Nala 29-9-93". Height = 22.6cm.
Burnished, carbonized surface. Incised and impressed outlines, raised cord and raised pellets.
13. **DAG 753.** Necked vessel (uphiso). 1993
Signed on base-"Nesta Nala 5-9-1993". Height = 22.3cm.
Burnished, carbonized surface. Raised cords with cross-hatching filled in.
14. **DAG 754.** Spherical vessel (ukhamba\umancishane). 1993.
Signed on base-"Nesta Nala 7-9-1993". Height = 17cm.
Burnished, carbonized surface. Raised cord and incised outlines with incised lines filled in.
15. **DAG 755.** Spherical vessel (umancishane). 1993.
Signed but illegible. Height = 15cm.
Incised and impressed outline and raised pellets with hatching filled in.
16. **DAG 756.** Spherical vessel (umancishane). 1993.
Signed on base-"Nesta Nala 20-9-1993". Height = 16.3cm.
Burnished, carbonized surface. Incised and impressed outlines with cross-hatching filled in.
17. **DAG 757.** Spherical vessel (umancishane). 1993.
Signed on base-"Nesta Nala 2-9-1993". Height = 16cm.
Burnished, carbonized surface. Raised cord, incised and impressed lines with hatching filled in.

18. **DAG 758.** Spherical vessel (umancishane). 1993.
Signed on base-"Nesta Nala 15-9-1993". Height = 15.1cm.
Burnished, carbonized surface. Incised and impressed outline, raised cord with hatching filled in.

19. **DAG 759.** Spherical vessel (umancishane). 1993.
Signed on base-"Nesta Nala 6-9-1993". Height = 14.6cm.
Burnished, carbonized surface.
Incised and impressed outline and raised cord with cross-hatching filled in.

20. **DAG 763.** Spherical vessel (umancishane). 1993.
Signed on base-"Nesta Nala 2-9-1993". Height = 12.7cm.
Burnished, carbonized surface. Incised outline, raised cords with hatching filled in.

21. **DAG 764.** Spherical vessel (umancishane). 1993.
Signed on base-"Nesta Nala 2-9-1993". Height 10.9cm.
Burnished, carbonized surface. Raised cord with hatching filled in.

22. **DAG 765.** Spherical vessel (umancishane). 1993.
Signed on base-"Nesta Nala 3-9-1993". Height = 11cm.
Burnished, carbonized surface. Incised and impressed outline and raised cord with hatching filled in.

23. **DAG 766.** Spherical vessel (umancishane). 1993.
Signed on base-"Nesta Nala 3-9-1993". Height = 10.9cm.
Burnished, carbonized surface. Raised cord and raised pellets.

24. **DAG 767.** Spherical vessel (umancishane). 1993.
Signed on base-"Nesta Nala 7-9-1993". Height = 10.9cm.
Burnished, carbonized surface. Incised and impressed outlines, raised cord and raised pellets.
25. **DAG 768.** Necked (bottle-shaped) vessel. 1993.
Signed on base-"Nesta Nala 2-9-1993". Height = 12.6cm.
Burnished, carbonized surface. Incised, impressed outline and raised pellets with hatching filled in.
26. **DAG 769.** Spherical vessel (umancishane). 1993.
Signed on base-"Nesta Nala 8-9-1993". Height = 8.5cm.
Burnished, carbonized surface. Incised and impressed outline with hatching and cross-hatching filled in.
27. **DAG 770.** Spherical vessel (umancishane). 1993.
Signed on base-"Nesta Nala 17-9-1993". Height = 8cm.
Burnished, carbonized surface. Raised cord.
28. **DAG 771.** Spherical vessel (umancishane). 1993.
Signed on base-"Nesta Nala 16-9-1993". Height = 8.1cm.
Burnished, carbonized surface. Raised cords.
29. **DAG 899.** Lidded vessel. 1995.
Signed on base-"Nesta Nala 20-5-1995". Height = 26.1cm.
Burnished, carbonized surface.
Incised and impressed outlines, raised cords, raised pellets, hatching and scratched textures.

30. **DAG 900.** Spherical vessel (ukhamba). 1995.

Signed on base-"Nesta Natal 18-5-1995". Height = 25.2cm.

Burnished, carbonized surface.

Incised and impressed outlines, raised cords, raised pellets with cross-hatching filled in.

31. **DAG 3338.** Necked vessel (uphiso). 1995.

Signed on base-"21-5-1995". Height = 33cm.

Burnished, carbonized surface. Incised outline, raised cord, raised pellets and rouletting.