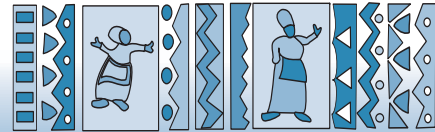


CULTURES...



A VISUAL JOURNEY

Compiled by JANINE DE VILLIERS

Promotions and Publications

National Heritage Day on 24 September, one of the official public holidays in South Africa in terms of national legislation, is drawing closer and this day calls for a special celebration in the tenth year of a truly democratic South Africa.

A significant date in the country's history, this day commemorates the death of King Shaka on 24 September 1828, when he fell victim to a coup orchestrated by his brothers Dingane and Mhlangana. They took advantage of a rare lapse in security to pounce on him as he received an envoy from the amaMpondo people, and stabbed him to death. Shaka was born in 1785 to Senzangakhona, heir to the throne of the then insignificant Zulu chiefdom, and Nandi, a member of the Langeni clan. Other cultures in southern Africa have also contributed to the cultural heritage of this sub-continent and should be featured in libraries to create an awareness of the fascinating cultural diversity this part of Africa has to offer.

A selection of interesting titles available from the Central Video Collection are highlighted.

lindawo zikathixo = In God's places / producers, Irene Staehelin and Richard Wicksteed; director, Richard Wicksteed.

The most visible remnants of Bushman culture in South Africa are the examples of rock art that survived in various parts of the country. Though once the Khoisan were the only inhabitants of vast stretches of land, European settlement and the southern migration of the Nguni people combined to make the mountains their last place of refuge. Today their descendants exist in isolated areas, subsisting as farm workers or, occasionally, as tourist attractions. Photographed in the foothills of the

Drakensberg, the north-eastern Cape, the former Transkei and Lesotho, this programme explores traces of their cultural legacy as it survives in African communities that intermarried with Bushmen of earlier generations. In particular, it focuses on music and dance, oral history and rainmaking rituals. While interviewing a number of individuals, it depicts their present way of life, recognising surviving aspects of the Khoisan's culture and traditions in those of others.

The long tears: an Ndebele story / producer and director, David Forbes.

Francina Ndimande and her family live at Mabhoko and are members of the Ndebele royal clan. She and her daughter, Angelina, are also internationally recognised mural artists, who continue to paint the walls of their houses in the traditional manner. This film, photographed over a number of years, presents a picture of traditional Ndebele culture through the eyes of the Ndimande family. It starts with Francina's youngest son, Gerald, embarking upon the initiation ceremonies that will take him into manhood, with the commentary explaining the various rites for boys as well as for girls. A number of elderly men talk about the treatment they received at the hands of local white farmers in the old days and there is some background information about the way the Ndebele became a conquered nation after the war with the Boer settlers, but the primary focus is on the people's traditions and the struggle to maintain their cultural identity. Though it is in danger of dying out, Francina Ndimande is shown passing on her knowledge to younger generations and the film ends with Gerald returning from his journey to the 'mountains of manhood'.

The two rivers / producer, Edwin Wes; director, Mark Newman.

Rashaka Ratshitanga is a Venda writer

and poet. After spending twenty years as a migrant worker in Johannesburg, he returned to the land of his ancestors and it is from this heartland of the country that he embarks on a journey chronicling the cultural and social history of his people. Beginning with his tribe's record of resistance against those who sought to take their land, he discusses its illustrious past and ancient traditions before explaining how the coming of the white man and his laws changed the course of events forever. He then travels to Johannesburg, to which many of his people were forced to move in order to survive, and illustrates how in Soweto the heart of a new African culture was formed, much of it centred on the struggle against apartheid. He expresses the hope that eventually the two rivers that epitomise the past and the present will combine to form a harmonious whole. This film received an award at the International Film Festival, Nyon.

Related titles

Being San

The great dance: a hunter's story

N!ai: the story of a !Kung woman

Ndebele women: the rituals of rebellion

People of the great sand face

Regopstaan's dream

Spirit of the eland people.

This fascinating insight into the rich cultural heritage of southern Africa will be very informative and interesting to your library patrons. Just imagine if librarians respond to this call en masse... remember, the promotion of national unity starts in your library!

Note: Reviews by Freddy Ogterop, Film/Video/DVD Selector of the Western Cape Provincial Library Service.