



Art of Africa

Learning Objective:

To learn about the work of Esther Mahlangu and Ndebele designs.

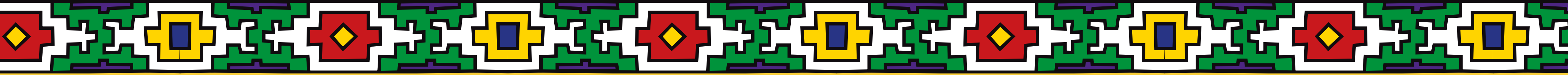


This is a building belonging to one of the Ndebele (Uhn-duh-beh-leh) tribe in South Africa.

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**Look at the building
and finish these
sentences by
yourself or with a
partner...**

I wonder why...

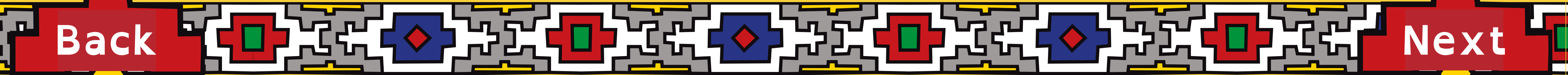
I wonder how...

I wonder if...

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The Ndebele tribe live in South Africa. The tradition of house painting comes from the women of a family. A well-painted house shows that a successful family lives there and the women take pride in decorating using these bright, geometric patterns.

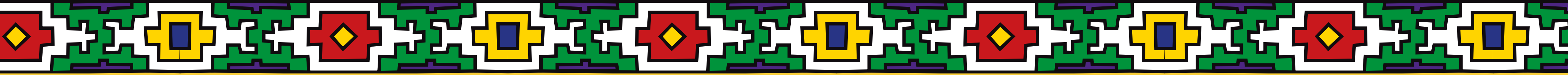
The paints were originally different types of soil mixed with cow dung to thicken the mixture. They used chicken feathers as paintbrushes.



This is South African artist Dr Esther Mahlangu. Her work includes and celebrates her culture within the Ndebele tribe. She is proud to carry on the traditions of house painting and pattern design which began in Ndebele culture but she has also transferred her work to canvases and other objects.

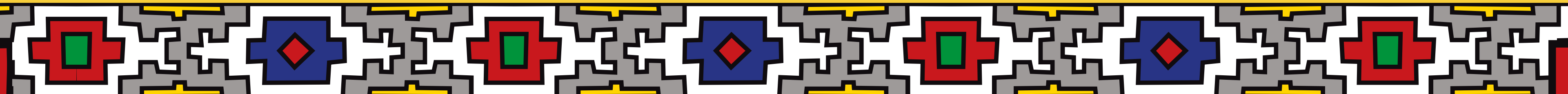


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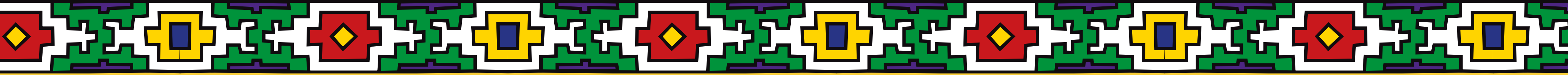
All the lines in her designs are hand drawn. She doesn't use a ruler to help her.

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Mahlangu's work made her an international artist. In 1991 she was commissioned to add her designs to a BMW car (as artists such as Andy Warhol had done before her). Her designs have been exhibited in Washington DC and have decorated the tail fins of British Airways planes.

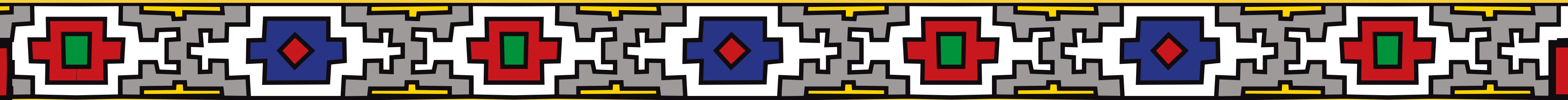


What do you think are some key features of Ndebele artwork and patterns?



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Did you think of any of these?



- Thick bold lines
- White space
- Symmetry
- Bright colours
- Geometric features



Plenary



Why do you think Esther Mahlangu's work has become so popular internationally?

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