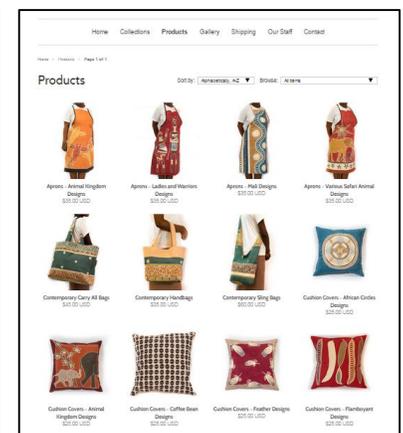


The Tribal Drum



August 2015

The last few months have been busy ones at Tribal Textiles! In June, after nearly a year of research, development and hard work, we launched our online shop. We had our first order within 24 hours and are now busy fulfilling orders all over the world. Whilst as a company we have been exporting to our global network of stockists for many years, there have always been a few places where it has been impossible to purchase Tribal Textiles. It's great to finally be able to say that no matter where you are in the world if you want a piece of Tribal in your home it's now possible to achieve this!

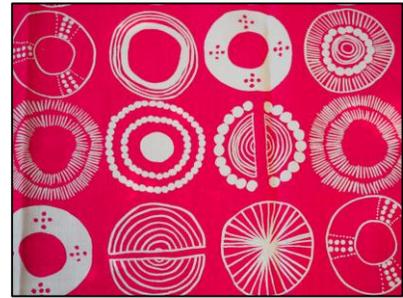


With the opening of our online shop we decided to start giving more back to the community, so a percentage of all our online shop sales now go towards buying food and other essentials for an Mfuwe based orphanage called Hanada. This is a small orphanage and school founded and run by Mrs Hilda Mukuta Hampondo who opened it ten years ago to help vulnerable children in the community. She noticed that many young orphans in surrounding villages were being looked after by their grandparents and other relatives who could not afford to send them to school. She knew that young children needed to go to school and be monitored more carefully so she registered herself as an orphanage and began taking in orphans from families who could no longer support them. In the ten years since opening she has helped 35 orphans, three quarters of whom were AIDS orphans.



At the moment she has 10 orphans living on site who are between the ages of 4 and 7 years. They sleep in a small dormitory and are looked after by a woman who they call 'Aunty'. The plan is that the children live at the orphanage until they are 17 years of age and can support themselves

On top of launching our online shop we have also just introduced our new screen print range. This was developed by owner Gillie Lightfoot and a former Tribal Textiles production manager Abi James. They took inspiration from Tribal's rich heritage, gave it a modern, colourful twist and designed a funky, vibrant collection of textiles with an unmistakably African feel to them. Some of the designs are based on actual African artwork, like Mbuti stick and Mbuti line, while others draw from current Tribal designs like Indo-Swahilli swirl. With a brand new selection of colours to complement the designs, the screen print range is adding a new dimension to Tribal Textiles' offering which we hope will appeal to a worldwide audience. This new range is, of course, available to buy in our online shop!



Our first range of screen print products was designed here in Zambia but produced in South Africa. It is our aim to bring the entire process in-house and launch a new arm of Tribal Textiles' business. We are busy training selected members of staff in this new technique in order to fulfil this ambition. As usual our production team are learning fast, and some of the printers have become so good at 'repeating' the designs they can do it just by eye. It is very rewarding to see our staff learning new skills and adding another string to their bow. Obviously we will continue to produce our beautiful starch-batik hand-painted textiles, but it's important as a creative company to keep expanding our horizons and moving forward.





With all the new screen-printing that is taking place our two paint-mixers are having to work extra hard to develop the new colour ranges needed for the designs. Our head of mixing is Richard who is 42 years old and joined Tribal Textiles in 1998. He has risen through the company to lead his department, and it is his responsibility to mix all of our paint colours. Richard starts with our water-based emulsion, to which he adds paint pigments, before mixing with giant wooden spoons to create a rainbow of vibrant colours. This is one of the most skilled jobs at Tribal Textiles because colours are all matched by eye and there are no set 'recipes' to follow. Richard was trained by colleagues Benjamin and Kennedy and it took him three years to develop the skill he now has. He tells us that he enjoys the physicality of mixing and it is certainly a good workout! However there can be stressful times, especially when there are lots of orders going through production and Richard may have as many as 60 individual colours to

mix. Even when things are busy, Richard still has to mix with precision and care to achieve the desired colours.

As you can see it is a very exciting time for Tribal Textiles, with our online shop and screen print range both being launched within weeks of each other. Who knows what is next? Just watch this space.....

For now we will leave you with photos of a design that captures the essence of the home of Tribal Textiles, '**Luangwa Valley**'.

