

“GOING BACK TO THE VILLAGE” : THE STORY OF A TAPESTRY



Source: the Helana Basali Craft Centre in the St Agnes Mission, Teyateyaneng, where you can see some of Africa's finest tapestries.

Description of “Going back to the Village”.

Mohair on cotton

Tapestry label: Helang Basali: craftsmanship & originality in weaving

Design: Tony Hudson (* 1937 – † 1989)

Biographical sketch: Tony Hudson was born in the West Midlands, although Cornwall became his home. He was widely travelled and enjoyed repeated visits to Africa, living in Lesotho in 1979/80. Africa provided the inspiration to display all his gentleness and depth of feeling through capturing the colour and beauty of a vast and wonderful land. Tony Hudson died in 1989 and was laid to rest in a grave of honour in Thaba Bosiu, Lesotho.

Weaver: Matefo

Bought - Place & Year: Teyateyaneng, Lesotho, 1998

Address: Helang Basali Crafts of Lesotho

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“Craftmanship and Originality in Weaving”

Helang Basali is a company of 11 women working at the St. Agnes Mission in Teya-teyaneng. We started this in 1990 as a cooperative. We are using raw mohair from local farmers.

The tapestries and rugs complement modern homes. Geometric rugs are African in origin in warm earthy colours. The floral rugs are rich and bright and match wooden furniture and antiques. Designs of bushmen paintings and recognized artists blend into most other interiors. Helang Basali will undertake commissions and match its designs to interiors, old rugs or upholstery fabrics.

We pay by piece rate because we want to produce more products. The process is long. First is from the carders to the spinners, then to washers to the dye house, then to the weavers.

We import carders from South Africa. Spinning wheels are made here in Lesotho in Lesotho’s capital city, Maseru. Frames for weavings are made here in TY with planks and nails.

We use scales in kilograms. Measuring tapes in cm. We are using hand winders for making skeins.

We wash the yarn with warm water and liquid or powdered soap together with mothproof.

We buy spinners’ warp locally and weavers’ warp and dyes outside the country, like in South Africa. We are weaving tapestries, rugs, wall hangings, placemats, cushions, runners and bags.

Reference (text and images) [http://www.africancrafts.com/artisan.php?sid=\\$&id=helang](http://www.africancrafts.com/artisan.php?sid=$&id=helang)

We sell both locally and export. We sell to individuals, retailers and wholesalers. We are using chemical dyes.

We are producing different designs like landscapes, village scenes, geometric rugs, Tony Hudson paintings, Litema, flowers, and San Bushmen rock paintings.

We are producing number one designs and clear colour combination.

We do according to the customers’ needs, ie enlarging the sizes or shortening them. We accept customers’ designs and their colors. The smallest piece we do here is 10cm by 11cm.

We have hired 6 women, which means that we are altogether 17 women working together.

Author: Siiri Morley, Aug. 2006
Elelloang Basali Weavers
Arts & Crafts in Teyateyaneng

References:

1. My life in Basuto Land: a Story of Missionary Enterprise in South Africa Author: Casalis, Eugène Arnaud (* 1812-1891) Publisher London Religious Tract Society 1889
2. “Craftmanship and Originality in Weaving” . Contemporary marketing publication.

R M Pelteret 27 March 2019