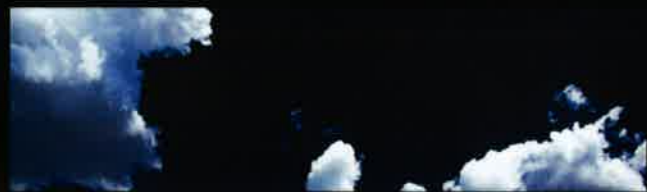


"If you can walk you can dance.
If you can talk you can sing."

Zimbabwean proverb



Traditional music is inspired by a cultural continuity and connection with the past. It is based on rhythms and melodies of mbira (finger piano), drums and singing and dancing.



The beautiful wide open clear blue skies of Zimbabwe, as in all of Africa provide a sense of clarity and freedom.



There are many species of Aloe thriving in both Africa and New Zealand. They typically are low maintenance and have low water demands.

Mankaleh Garden

In the culturally and linguistically diverse community of Christchurch

In conjunction with Healthy Christchurch, Canterbury District Health Board, The Christchurch City Council and the Zimbabwe Community of Christchurch

The African people have a more informal and relaxed way of living and speaking which manifest in singing, dancing, laughing, painting, and sculpturing.

Many Africans regard this happier style of living as unique and peculiar to Africa.

It is this reference to a certain way of living that makes Ubuntu life so different from life in other cultures. Ubuntu is one of several African approaches to a comprehensive understanding of the process of cultivating cohesion and positive human interaction with one another and with creation in daily life.

The African Ubuntu philosophy is that ancestors continue to exist amongst the living in the form of spirits and they are your connection to the Divine Spirit.

Individuals agree to respect the community's rules; they undergo initiation to establish formal ties with both the current community members and those that have passed on, and they ensure harmony by adhering to the Ubuntu principles in the course of life.

Sage philosophy as described by Kenyan philosopher H.Odera Oruka is basically communal and religious. African experience is spiritual in every aspect of life, everything in the universe is connected and interdependent with the human being at the centre. Yet humans are neither master or owner of all existence.

"The dominant ritualistic nature to the African community culture becomes a dimension that propogates the ideologies that creates and harbours the African mind". (Oruka)

Africa's traditional culture is inaccessible because most of it is oral rather than written, and lived rather than formally communicated in books or journals.



Merchers Chiwawa
Sculptor from Tengenenge,
Zimbabwe

Client brief
The design of the tranquility places is to provide a familiar and peaceful part of Christchurch for members of the culturally and linguistically diverse community. This site is for the use of all Christchurch individuals, with particular meaning to those from the African continent, by providing familiarity through connections with tranquil aspects of African life. The site is 500 square meters using dimensions of 35 meters long and 14 meters wide to maximise the available space. The intention is that the Mankaleh garden is to use an existing vacant area in Christchurch city, and later to be incorporated into a tranquility Ppark on the Avon river.

I asked my friend on her philosophy of life, she replied "I am proud to be black, proud to be Zimbabwean and proud to be African".

Tranquility is being at peace with yourself, nature, your community and others. Connections are strong and celebration of life and thanks can be expressed through social togetherness, games, quiet thought or loudly with music and dance.



Community gatherings and games are an age old means of educating generations.

Mankaleh game

"African traditional board games are as ancient as the continent itself and as varied as the cultural variation of its people". (Professor Johnson Ihyeh Agbinya, Computer board games of Africa, 2004 pg 18).

Mankaleh games are played throughout Africa by young and old alike. It is social and educational as it teaches counting numbers and face to face interaction to children. The child's version in Zimbabwe is known as Tsoro Yematatu and uses a triangle with a cross through it and the seven points where the lines intersect.

As the person matures so do their strategic skills, mathematical foresight and the rules of effect and consequence are developed.

The game can be played in holed out soil with beans, or on specifically carved boards of teak or mahogany, often with a dark warmth to the well handled wood.

Beans, pebbles or shells become the 'counters' and are used in a rhythmic way, and referred to as sowing seeds in the indentations which are all connected to each other.

Mankaleh is an intelligence game of competitive relaxation, known by most Africans in one of its many forms.

Birds are appreciated not only for their colour but their chorus. Aloes on site will help bring birds into the garden, though perhaps not as spectacular as the African sunbird species.



The game



There are many names and variations of the Mankaleh board game in Africa, reflective of the local names used in ethnic groups where the game is played, or originates from as sampled above.

Andre' Davies Design
LASC 215 May 2012
1084717

Mankaleh Garden



Mankaleh garden offers space for Christchurch to take time, to celebrate peacefulness by your own means. Possibilities for active movement, mental movement and social engagement are available in the space. Activity is determined by the users thus responding to the individual needs of community members. Activity may be social, or group celebration of voice, drum, rhythm and harmony. Or it could be a time of quiet reflection, or observation of others. It may be quietly competitive or raucous with laughter.

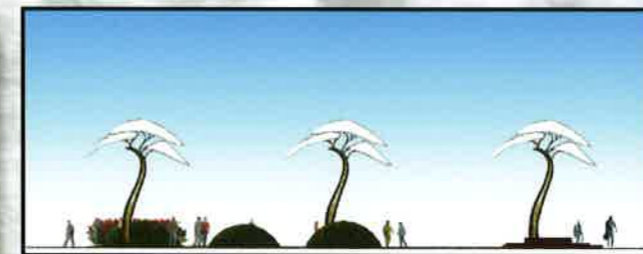
This space is reflective of human nature in that tranquility holds different meanings to individuals and communities at different stages in their day, year and lifetime.

Sustainability is the foundation of the design principals of new Christchurch as its rebuild takes shape. Mankaleh garden uses wood reclaimed from the buildings of the central city, now reduced to materials for us to reuse and reclaim on sites incorporating meaning. As this wood will be dark stained, the variety and assortment of reclaimed timbers is less of an obstacle in achieving visual harmony.

Plantings on site are from the Aloe family which thrives both in New Zealand and throughout Africa. Requiring minimal watering, reducing the sites demand for this precious resource. Aloe is also recognised for its healing qualities, planted to represent the healing a tranquil place can bring, to different members of the Christchurch community.



View within site looking to the river. Children seen playing Tsoro Yematatu.



Mankaleh garden is open as are African landscapes with the sky exposed. The sculptures represent the form of Acacia trees and number three reflecting the points of the childrens game. The possibility of eventual site placement in a lush Christchurch park would give the final tranquil touch.

