



About Us

The idea for uSisi (which means “sisters” in Zulu) Designs originated during the 1980s in the ethnic “homelands” of the old South Africa – the South Africa of apartheid and forced resettlement areas. The group’s founder, Stella Pretorius, worked with children suffering from disabilities, but found that most were also experiencing severe malnutrition, as their parents could not provide for them. Leaving the healthcare field, she decided to launch a series of income generating activities for these parents; in 2004, uSisi was the latest such project aimed at giving disadvantaged South Africans a means to support themselves and their families.

Since that time, more than one hundred women have worked with the project, earning enough money to put their children through school, build houses and keep food on the table. Currently 40 women from different cultural backgrounds work together to craft the groups’ innovative products. The artisans come into the workshop once or twice a week where they receive their raw materials and instructions. To perform the craft work, they return to their homes, where they can look after their children and households and save money by not traveling every day.

We are a group of women who are keen on building family and developing strong moral and Christian foundations to enable us all to be functional on all levels of life.



Materials

Materials that inspire us:

SCOOBIE WIRE

Scoobie wire is the main component of the jewelry we make at uSisi Designs. Because scoobie is a soft and pliable wire, we are able to wrap, weave and manipulate it in various ways to create uniquely contemporary African jewelry.

Scoobie wire or "plastic coated wire", which is commonly known as telephone wire, is an integral part of the Southern African craft scene. The miners who emigrated from the rural areas to the urban areas, could all do grass weaving and plating. They started transferring these skills to materials that they could find around the mines, which were electrical wires and later telephone wires. This is a skill that is owned by the South African People, in almost every community there are men and women who can work with Scoobie wire. At uSisi Designs, we get this scoobie wire from a local manufacturer of the wire, who provides it to us in about 100 different colors. The scoobie has been tested for, nickel, lead and cadmium, and is safe.

RECYCLED MATERIAL:

Why recycle?

King Solomon said: "A wise man leaves an inheritance for his children's children..."

It is easy to leave an inheritance for your children; you just have to die, but to leave an inheritance for your children's children you have to be a visionary. A visionary looks beyond his or her own generation; lays foundations and implements systems that will impact their great grand children's children, making their ceiling the floor of those who follow.

At uSisi Designs we want to leave behind a cleaner world, and a passion to keep it that way for the future generations, by recycling, redesigning, educating and inspiring people to do the same. What are you leaving behind?