



## Shona culture

Africa Trading purchases artefacts mainly from the Shona tribe. They are Zimbabwe's largest indigenous group. Primarily peaceful farmers, they have struggled with political oppression, armed invaders, disease and drought. In order to cope with these challenges, the Shona have developed intricate social customs and beliefs that support their desire to live together and thrive.

The Shona believe that everything on Earth contains a spirit, including the rock indigenous to their country. They believe that this spirit in the stone speaks to the artist, who then listens, and works to set the spirit free.

The Shona are mostly self-taught artists who carve their work with brilliant verdite and rich serpentines in reds, greens, maroons, greys, yellows and orange. The most popular carving material is serpentine, but verdite, also known as Africa's "Green Gold", is particularly prized by some artists for its rich deep emerald colour, swirling striations and hardness rivalling that of rubies.

Shona artists rarely carve with a pre-conceived idea; instead, they let the stone dictate what form is held within it. The art is primarily based on animal, mythical and spiritual themes intrinsic in Shona life and mythology. The art of stone sculpting continues to evolve, depicting the richness of folklore and cultural heritage of the Shona people.

