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## PRESS RELEASE:

On Tuesday 9 October 2018, the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum presents the exhibition *Mother Tongue: The Influence of traditional Xhosa fashion on contemporary design* for view to the public. Guests are welcome from 17:30. The exhibition will close on 15 February 2019.

*Mother Tongue* celebrates local fashion and features the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum's important collection of traditional Southern Nguni beadwork and textiles alongside selected works by the internationally celebrated textile designer Laduma Ngxokolo.

New urban and global environments have radically changed traditional ways of life. In recent years there has been a revival in interest from younger generations in traditional customs and fashion. The youth are owning their heritage and history with new and innovative ways to be traditional in the 21 Century.

Laduma Ngxokolo is an example of the power of traditional design and one of the Eastern Cape's greatest exports. Laduma was inspired by the colours and designs of traditional Xhosa beadwork while doing research for his final year thesis in fashion and textile design at Nelson Mandela University. He encountered traditional beadwork from the 1940s to 1960s on exhibition at the NMM Art Museum. Through his own personal experience and interest in tradition design, and by using images of works from the NMM Art Museum collection, he developed his now world famous MaXhosa brand, "In a century from now, I want people to look back at Maxhosa and get an understanding of what Xhosa people were like in our time", Laduma Ngxokolo.

The title *Mother Tongue* reflects the importance of women as the custodians of traditional designs and aesthetics. Specialized patterns, colour selection and the cultural significance of beadwork were passed on from mother to daughter or aunt to niece or granny to granddaughter. In the same manner Laduma as a 21 century Xhosa man got his passion for traditional art forms and textile design from his mother.

"We want the historical garments and beadwork made by mothers, grandmothers, aunts, daughters, sisters to be shared with the younger generation and continue to inspire new editions of traditional wear. We are interested in new styles and fashions that reflects both the wisdom and aesthetic power of the past but transition traditional design into the future", Emma O'Brien, NMM Art Museum Director.

Other local designers will also be sharing their work on the exhibition. New and historical designs will be displayed alongside each other showing that sometimes you have to look back to look forward.

A preview of the exhibition will take place on 27 September 2018 at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum's inaugural Museum Gala and Fashion show organized by the Friends of the Art Museum with the assistance of Michelle Brown to raise funds for the NMM Art Museum to purchase local art for the collection. The NMM Art Museum has not had funding to purchase new works of art for the collection since 2010.

Tickets for this exclusive event have sold out with art lovers around the city showing their commitment to support local creative talent in the Bay. Naming sponsor, the Mantis Collection, has been crucial to the success of this initiative. Mantis' Adrian Gardiner's support of this event echoes his continued support of local art; the No 5 Boutique Hotel by Mantis Group only displays South African art on the walls.

Established fashion Designer, on both the local and global stage, Jenni Button, will present a collection at the Museum Gala fashion show. She will be supported by three of the city's innovative Designers: Ati Setipa, Braemor Lundall-Sauls and Kelly Dillon. Modeling the outfits are local ballet dancers.

The Museum Gala, Fashion show and the exhibition *Mother Tongue* all celebrate local fashion and design and would not be possible without the support of local business: Magnetic Storm will co-sponsor the A/V and Technical aspect of the Gala, whilst Mohair SA will host a workshop, the following morning, with Jenni Button sharing her extensive knowledge and experience with young Designers. Other sponsors who have supported the event are: Sure Maritime Travel, ELLE Magazine, Woolworths, and Michael Kors, Moroccan Hair Oil, Meridian Wines, Heinz Menswear and Execu-Specs.

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