



When the Wicked rule the People groan

Call for Price



Lemaoana's Kanga Textiles series critically examines the relationship between mass media and the public in South Africa. He uses his signature cynical approach to repurpose existing media sources, like political slogans or song lyrics, by embroidering them onto kanga fabric. This fabric, with its rich history, becomes another layer of his critique.

His fascination with kangas stems from the media coverage of Zuma's rape trial. The alleged victim, Khwezi, wore a kanga. Zuma twisted this detail, claiming that "in Zulu culture" it signified consent, and he had no option but to oblige. Resulting in his acquittal in 2006. This incident sparked Lemaoana's exploration of the kanga's deep history in East and Southern Africa.

In East Africa, kangas serve as a social commentary, reflecting the wearer's experiences across various aspects of life. They are significant not only for ceremonial occasions but also for everyday wear. In Southern Africa, traditional healers commonly wear kangas, often in red, black, and white – colors that, Lemaoana noted, mirrored the dominant color schemes of major South African publications like Daily Sun, The Star, and Mail & Guardian. This shared colour palette intrigued him, hinting at a deeper connection between media and cultural symbols.

When the Wicked rule the People groan, a specific piece within the "Kanga Textiles" series, exemplifies Lemaoana's approach. The appropriated phrase itself is a commentary on South Africa's political landscape. By emblazoning it on a kanga, Lemaoana merges social critique with a potent symbol of cultural identity.

Frame	None
Medium	Cotton Embroideries on Kanga Textile
Location	Johannesburg, South Africa
Height	155.00 cm
Width	115.00 cm
Artist	Lawrence Lemaoana
Year	2018

