



Mapungubwe Revisited

ANCIENT MEETS CONTEMPORARY



800 years ago, at the Late Iron Age archaeological site of Mapungubwe, a member of the royal family was laid to rest, and within the grave was placed a little rhino, 15cm long and made of pure gold.

This compelling artwork speaks through time, and 800 years later, wildlife artist Noel Ashton revisits the Mapungubwe gold rhino and explores its significance in context of the modern world. And during the silent process of sculpting *Mapungubwe Revisited*, he reflects on the invisible thread that binds us to the earth, and realises that this little rhino is much more than a priceless cultural artifact, for, as it wasn't a piece of horn or body part but a complete rhino, it therefore embodies a deeper connection with and reverence for this magnificent animal of Africa.

Mapungubwe Revisited encourages consideration of many distinct narratives, including the rich cultural legacy of Africa as represented in the little gold rhino; the urgent need to speak of the disregard for the sanctity of life and brutality being brought upon this magnificent animal of Africa in our present day; as well as the deeper symbolism that this particular species has embodied throughout the ages. It asks us to consider our changing relationship with the earth, and affords us an opportunity to pause and reconsider the deeper relevance that nature has in our lives. It also offers hope by offering a window of reflection, encouraging us to embrace our fuller potential as individuals in a world so deeply in need of caring, compassion and consideration.

We must not forget that, as we walk the trail of life, the rhino walks beside us, each of us an integral part of an inter-connected world. Noel Ashton

Noel and Belinda Ashton's *Mapungubwe Revisited* is a brilliant initiative to honour the rhino. The reverence of the ancient people for this wonderful animal is a sharp reminder to so-called civilized man to ensure that the species survives in our modern world. Dr Ian Player

