HAIR DESIGNS OF TRADITIONAL WOMEN IN ZIMBABWE

Issued 17th December 2013

(Extracted from Philatelic Bureau Bulletin No 3 of 2013)[2]

30c: Tonga – Musila

Trade goods such as cowrie shells were sewn by the Tonga into rings in the 1950s. The hair was treated using musila and decorated using cowry shells.



Musila: Red Ochre stone is pounded to powder. The powder is mixed with castor seed oil and boiled after which it is left to cool. It is then applied evenly over the hair. If the hair is hard, then it will coil into dread locks. If the hair is soft, it becomes pop-corn. As a way of further ornamentation/beautification, the hair could be decorated using cowrie shells.

75c: Shona-Bumhu

The haircut leaves hair on the crown of head only. Bumhu refers to tuft of hair left on shaven head. The tuft is usually on the crown and becomes more pronounced towards the forehead. The hair is locked and tinted.



85c: Ndebele - Isicholo

Ndebele men and women both loved to adorn their heads, necks, waists, arms and legs with a variety of ornaments. Hair was generally made by interweaving and coating with gum, charcoal and oil.



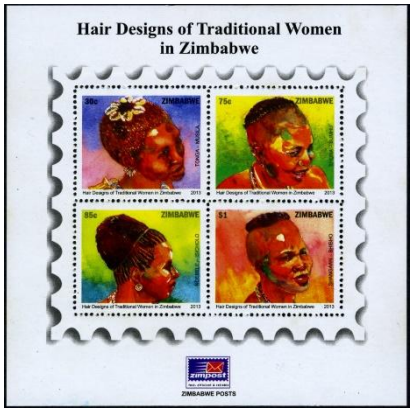
The isicholo style is one of the most popular among the Ndebele women. It is a form of braiding in which the hair runs from the forehead to towards the back or forms a rump on top of the head. From the central or top part of the head, the hair is left as afro-African style that would have been relaxed and stretched upwards standing on its own without support.

$1: Shangaan - Bhibho

The Shangaan people (Vachangana) traditionally and culturally have a strong passion for embroidery, colour, decoration, fashion and imagery. General treatment of hair started with ash being boiled together with animal fat, and when it is hot/warm it is spread evenly and densely over the hair which is then covered with a veil/dhuku overnight. Then the ash is cleaned using warm water. The hair is combed using what are referred to as afro-combs.



The Bhibho which was common among Shangaan was a product of the combination of stretching and relaxing the hair using oil and a heated stone. Most of the hair would be cut very short while leaving the hair at the centre of the head taller. However, the positioning of the Bhibho could vary with individual preferences.



(Reduced to 50% of size)

Catalogue listings

SG	ZSC[1]	Value	Description
1358	761	30c	Tonga - Musila
1359	762	75c	Shona - Bumhu
1360	763	85c	Ndebele - Isicholo
1361	764	$1	Shangaan – Bhibho
MS1362	MS32		Miniature sheet with four stamps in se-tenant block

Technical details

Stamp size: Sheet stamps: 35 x 30 mm
Miniature sheet: 105 x 105 mm

Sheet Size: 50 stamps (10 rows of 5 stamps), two panes per printed sheet

Artist: Leslie Johnson

Paper: ZSC paper type J: paper described by Zimpost as "Chancellor Litho PVA Gummed Postage Stamp Paper". This paper is produced by Tullis Russell Coaters of Glenrothes, Fife, Scotland. Under UV there is no fluorescence either front or back, the stamp appears to be very dark

Print colours: Cyan, magenta, yellow & black

Perforations: SG 14½ x 14; ZSC 14¼ x 14
Sheet stamps:
Top margin: Perforated through
Other margins: Imperforate

Miniature sheet: Imperforate margins

Printer:	NatPrint, Harare, Zimbabwe
Printer's Imprint:	Sheet stamps only: Bottom Margin, below Row 10 Column 3. Imprint printed in black
Cylinder numbers:	Sheet stamps only: Top margin above R1/1. Colours from left – cyan, magenta, yellow, black
Colour register:	Sheet stamps only: Type TL 4– round boxed – left margin opposite R1/1. Colours reading down – cyan, magenta, yellow, black
Sheet Value:	Sheet stamps only: Top margin, above R1/5, printed in black
Sheet Number:	Type SN 7 with printed 'ZIMPOST' prefix, right margin opposite R1/5 reading down
Print numbers:	30c 100,000 75c 10,000 85c 10,000 $1 10,000 Miniature sheet: 1,500
Issue date:	17th December, 2013

Listed Varieties

No listed varieties have been reported.

Unlisted Varieties

Numerous small dots and specks in the printing of these stamps were noted in the examination of the sheets with missing black printing.



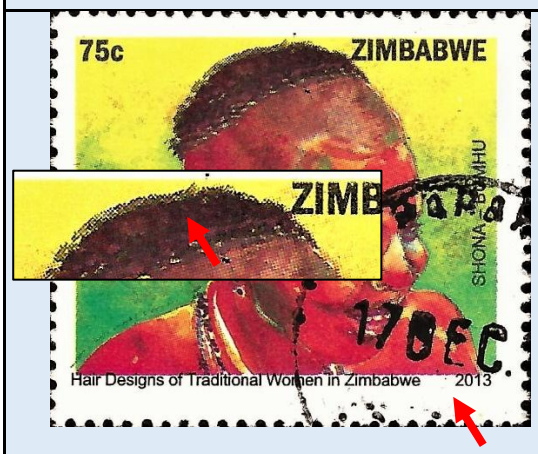
30c: Black mark to left of head and below value
(Courtesy of Narendhra Morar)



30c: Printer's waste should signifciant plate movement, and possible offset to left margin
(Source eBay July 2022)



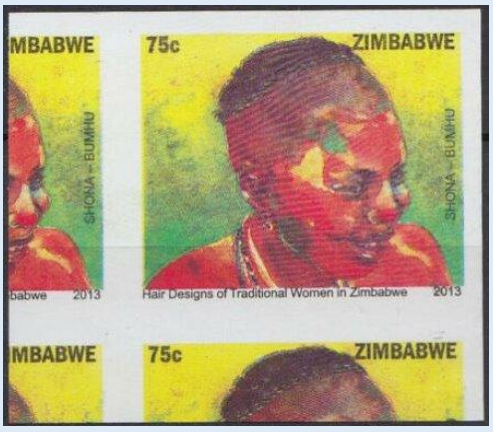
30c: Movement of perforations down, at angle
(Source eBay October 2025)



75c: Movement of black plate upwards, bottom text into design, and shadow above head.
(Courtesy of Narendhra Morar)



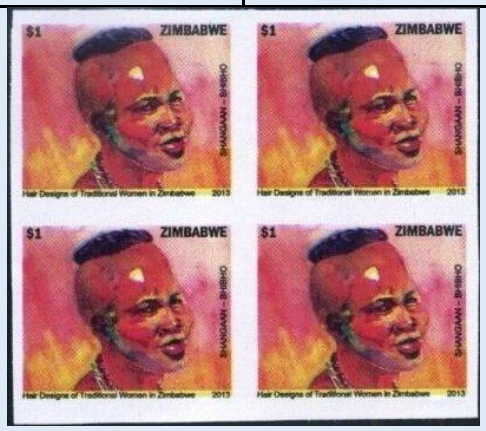
75c: Cyan mark above 'e' of Zimbabwe
(Courtsesy of Narendhra Morar)



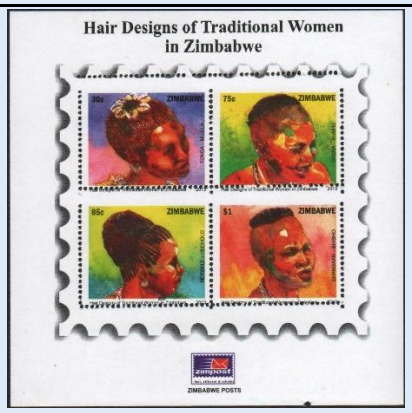
75c: Imperforate and miscut, probably proof material
(Source eBay February 2022)



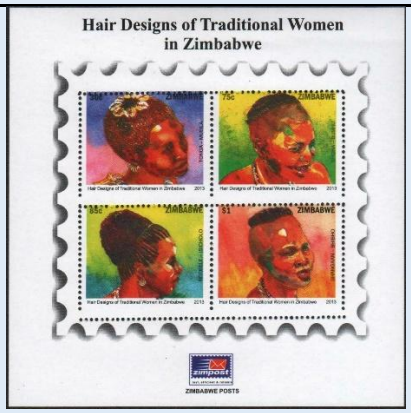
$1: Magenta spot right of chin and cyan spot to left margin
(Courtesy of Narendhra Morar)



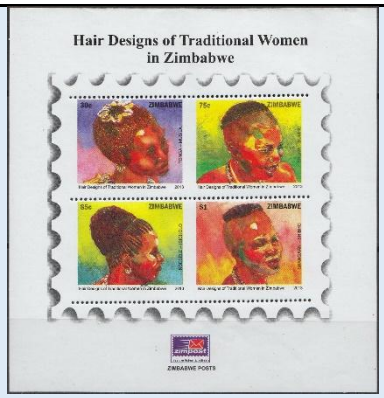
$1: Imperforate block of 4, probably proof material
(Source eBay July 2022)



Miniature sheet: Horizontal perforation movement upwards into base of design
(Courtesy of Jefferson Ritson)



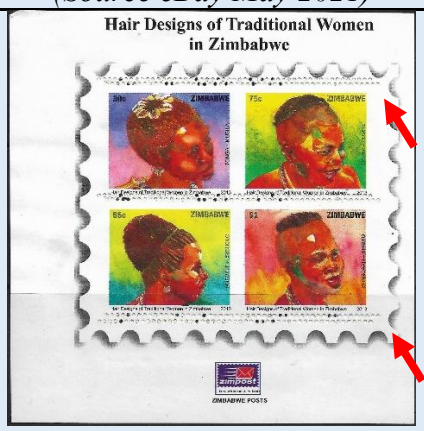
Miniature sheet: Horizontal perforation movement upwards into top of design
(Courtesy of Jefferson Ritson)



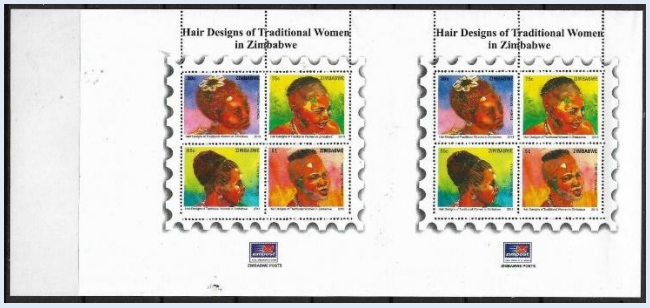
Miniature sheet: Imperforate to vertical sides of all stamps, slight movement of horizontal perfs down.
(Source eBay May 2021)



Minature sheet: Horizontal perforation only with significant downward movement
(Source eBay May 2022)

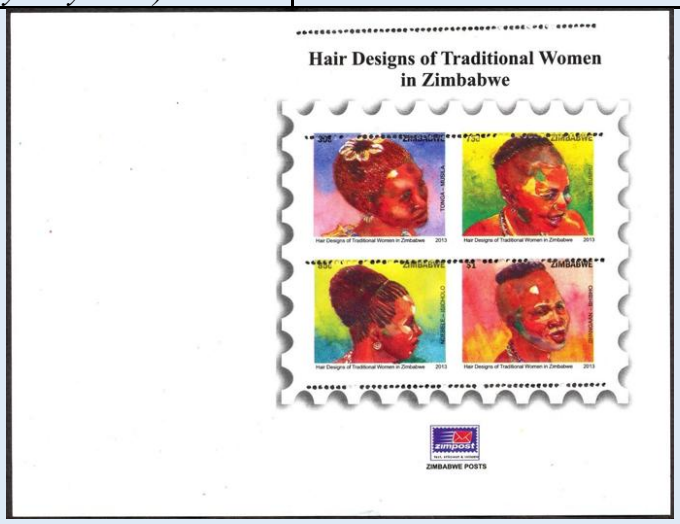


Miniature sheet: Doubling of horizontal aperforations, no vertical perefs.
(Source eBay May 2022)



MS: Uncut miniature sheets from left of printing sheet, with additional perforations to top margin

(Source eBay November 2021)



MS: bottom left corner of proof sheet, withmisplaced horizontal perfs only

(Source eBay July 2025)

First Day Cover

No first day covers were made available by the Philatelic Bureau, covers can, however be found with the Harare First Day of Issue canceller on plain covers and Bureau manila stationery.

Bibliography:

1. "The Zimbabwean Concise Postage Stamp Catalogue", published by Harare Stamp Company, edited by Ken Allanson, Mike Amos and Geoff Brakspear. The catalogue continues to be updated and expanded by Geoff Brakspear, and is now published on the Rhodesian Study Circle website.
2. Zimbabwe Post, Philatelic Bureau Bulletin No 3 of 2013

Additions/Changes since December 2020	
8/2021	Miniature sheet with imperforate vertical sides
12/2021	Miniature sheet uncut double
3/2022	75c imperforate and miscut
8/2022	30c – printer's waste with significant plate movement
	Miniature sheet with horizontal perfs down, no vertical perfs
	Miniature sheet with doubling of horizontal perfs, no vertical perfs
8/2025	MS – part of proof sheet with misplaced perfs
12/2025	30c – downward perforation movement