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The *Uhadi* and *Malunga* Bow: Curatorial Implications

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a formal study of how museums in South Africa preserve, display and engage musical bows. I analyse the interesting ways Museum Africa has collected, stored and researched the Xhosa *uhadi* bow in their collection, from a curatorial perspective. To extend and substantiate this research, I examine the Siddis: African-Indians from which the *malunga* bow originates; which has correlating characteristics to the *uhadi* bow. This study is prompted by the initiative to restore a neglected and forgotten area of musical bows, particularly those that document and encapsulate disappearing traditions and cultural practices. The focus of this thesis is on museum curatorial practice in Gauteng and current female bow performers in Gauteng. There is personal interaction with museum informants as well as personal and electronic interaction with bow performers whose views are presented separately in this study. The practicality of this study is to learn to understand my own surroundings i.e. traditions, beliefs of South African cultures, while learning those of unfamiliar countries. This is done in order to understand similarities that stem from cross-cultural and cross-continental influences and differences that make us who we are because of the way we have lived in different societies.