



## BEADED NDEBELE INITIATION DOLL

**\$228**

c. 1950 • Cotton, Bead, Mixed Materials, Fabric • Collection #CFC555A

W: 6.5" D: 3.5" H: 16.5"

A rare imported commodity, glass beads have been a symbol of wealth and importance in south African cultures for centuries, and were exclusively distributed by the region's oba (king). As beads became gradually more accessible throughout the 19th century, they began to displace the organic materials used in traditional art and attire.

This colorful example of African beadwork is an initiation doll of the Ndebele people of South Africa. These dolls are made with tall wooden bodies, wrapped in cotton and highly decorated with various fabrics, metal rings and dense beadwork. Continued...



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The doll is dressed in a traditional apron used to signify a married woman's status as a parent. Traditional dolls like these are believed to be protective objects for women who are expecting children. Mounted on wooden blocks, the colorful doll now lives on as a storied work of sculpture.

From the collection of Frances and Gary Comer.

