



# *Gladys Mgudlandlu* (1925 – 1979)

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THE ORDER OF IKHAMANGA IN SILVER (POSTHUMOUS)

AWARDED TO  
GLADYS MGUDLANDLU  
FOR PIONEERING  
CONTRIBUTION TO THE  
VISUAL ARTS IN  
SOUTH AFRICA

Gladys Mgudlandlu was born in 1925 in the district of Peddie in the Eastern Cape. She went to school in Port Elizabeth and in 1940 obtained a Teachers Diploma at the Lovedale College near Alice. In 1944, she moved to the Cape Town township of Gugulethu where she taught.

Mgudlandlu was a self-taught artist with a natural talent for painting. Under very difficult conditions Mgudlandlu practised her art uncompromisingly to become one of the first black women artists to exhibit their work in public. She held several professional exhibitions in Cape Town and Port Elizabeth and received the *Arts SA Today Exhibition Award* in 1963. She also wrote her own stories and folktales, which she illustrated herself.

Fellow artist and mentor Gregoire Boonzaier was moved to describe Mgudlandlu as 'The Black Irma Stern of South Africa'.

Gladys Mgudlandlu is regarded as a pioneer professional black woman artist in South Africa.