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About the Black Paints

These carbon black colors come from Sharon's neighborhood, Anai Ober Ward, in Lira. It is a poor area filled with people who fled the war between the government and the Lord's Resistance Army.

020 Brewer's Charcoal Black

This black comes from the charcoal from the fires of local brewers in Sharon's neighborhood in Lira.

In the poorer neighborhoods of Lira, Uganda, local alcohol brewers play a significant role in the community's daily life. These brewers, often working out of small, makeshift setups, produce traditional alcoholic beverages like "ajon" or "waragi," which are popular among the locals. Brewing is usually done using basic ingredients like millet, cassava, or bananas, and the process is passed down through generations.



For many families, brewing is more than just a tradition—it's a vital source of income in an area where job opportunities are scarce. The brewers are often women who manage both the brewing and selling, creating a small but essential business that helps support their households.

However, this local industry operates in a bit of a gray area. The brewing is mostly informal, with little regulation, which means that the quality and safety of the alcohol can

vary. Despite this, these brewers are respected in their communities for their skill and for providing an affordable drink that brings people together in social settings. Whether it's a gathering at a local bar or a casual chat among neighbors, these traditional brews are a staple of life in Lira's poorer neighborhoods, reflecting both the resilience and the ingenuity of the people who make them.

021 Sharon's Neighborhood Cooking Pot Soot Black

Sharon was inspired to make a soot black after Sophie (a volunteer advisor) explained how to make it. Sharon started by collecting soot from her family's small, clay stove. Realizing she needed more soot, she went about visiting her neighbours, scraping the soot from their saucepans with a knife. One elderly neighbour asked her how much she was charging for the service. It's free, said Sharon.

The soot was traditionally used to heal umbilical cord cuts (and other wounds).



030 King James School Cooking Pot Soot Black

The King James school teaches nursing and midwifery, and they cook for their many students over charcoal fires. Sharon scrapes soot from their school cooking pots for this almost neutral black (it is slightly warm).

031 Atuk Soot Brown

"Atuk" is the word for the soot that collects in the thatched roof above the cooking fire used inside a traditional, African thatched-grass-roof hut. Sharon collects the soot from huts in her neighborhood in Lira City West Division. She gathers the soot-covered straw from the roof (just a little — it is someone's roof, after all!), then she scrapes the soot, washes and dries the pigment, and finally grinds and mulls it into a fine, black-brown paint that smells strongly of smoke.



Paint Ingredients

- Rain water
- Gum arabic (from Karamoja)
- Local organic honey
- Clove oil
- Soot (or charcoal)

Credit: Sharon was inspired to make her soot black paints by the wonderful Sophie Rodin (a volunteer advisor, <www.instagram.com/soph_rodin>).