

South Africa's new subcultures

	1. Pantsula	2. The Smarteez	3. Gqom
Description			
Origin			
Form of art			
Inspiration			



Pantsula dancers outside the Thusong Youth Centre in Alexandra

Pantsula is South Africa's predominant township subculture. From its roots in the Sophiatown jazz culture of the 1950s, it developed in the 1970s to become the main expression of youth culture in the townships.

It is both a mindset and lifestyle, expressed through language, music, dress code, and a narrative dance form: Pantsula.[...]

Historically, traditional South African cultures have told stories through song and dance – stories of the land and the ancestors, or, in the case of Pantsula, stories of the living conditions in the cities.

The dance form itself is a storytelling platform that relates to and reflects historical and present-day situations.



Young designers in Soweto

The Smarteez are part of a young generation of South Africans who were born after the struggles against apartheid. They admit to being different from the preceding generation; they are less committed to political issues and instead struggle against blandness and conformity by fighting for self-expression and challenging stereotypes.

In their refusal to be defined by roots or race, the Smarteez take control of their identity, repositioning themselves as bold, original and creative in their approach to fashion and style, the makers of a whole new fashion scene in the country.



Bhejane Gqom music producer

Gqom, a new generation of House Music from South Africa's townships.

Gqom, which originally came out of the townships of Durban and made popular by the city's taxi drivers blasting it out of their cars when taking clients to parties – just might be the most exciting type of South African house yet. [...] Gqom gets its name from the Zulu word for hit or noise. [...]

The sound of gqom becomes all the more interesting when you look at the inspiration behind it and the social setting in which it was born.

Inspired by the feelings of anger about the lack of opportunities for young people and their exclusion from the country's development, these musicians turned to the Internet to rebel and get their sound heard by the world.