SMAC Gallery is pleased to present Chirema Chine Mazano Chinotamba Chakazendama Madziro Part 2, a solo exhibition by Wallen Mapondera.

Chirema Chine Mazano Chinotamba Chakazendama Madziro is a Shona phrase referring to the various ways the subaltern navigate hardships (Ureke and Washaya, 2016) using creative solutions as survival tactics. Through this exhibition Mapondera looks to packaging as a tool for survival in an economically depressed country. He acknowledges his country of birth and home, Zimbabwe, as a place associated with—and often simplified to—hyperinflation, unemployment and poverty. He traces the use of found objects in art making as an immediate reaction to one’s environment, following a shift away from conventional materials.

Already crippled by a collapsed currency, the economic crisis of the year 2000 saw a rise in the continued depletion of the workforce, with a mass migration of people seeking a better life elsewhere. This left informal vending as one of the only options for those who did not have the option of relocation. It was one of the few ways forward—people began buying and reselling goods as a means of survival. Although there were legitimate spaces such as Mupedzanhamo, a market area in Mbare, Harare, there was not enough room to accommodate everyone. This, in conjunction with the high cost of shop rentals, led to vendors setting up pop-up markets on the city center pavements, marking the beginning of constant conflict between vendors and police.

The country continued to deteriorate rapidly, and from 2002 onwards, sanctions were imposed. The climax of the meltdown came in 2004, bringing food shortages and a lack of medication in hospitals. In 2005, a mass of informal spaces arose, including homes and businesses, which took over open swamp land that had been kept clear of construction by the municipality. Sewer systems gave up due to the overload from the growing cities, and a lack of maintenance. The absence of routine refuse collection resulted in outbreaks of cholera. When the point of no food or fuel in the country arrived, art-making or any activity not involving basic needs was considered a luxury.

Mapondera’s use of found objects was prompted by a clean-up campaign launched as a response to this disarray. ‘Operation Murambatsvina’ or ‘Operation Restore Order’ was carried out by the government as a response to the disorganised settlement in urban areas. Muramba translates in English to “one who rejects” and tsvina to “filth”. It involved the removal of illegal structures, leaving many homeless and without a source of income. What tipped the scale, was the demolition graders with armed riot police in tow—for ‘protection’. Ironically, Operation Murambatsvina impacted the already fragile economy, revealing that the informal sector had formed the most part of the remaining economy (Musoni, 2010).

In 2019, Operation Murambatsvina occurred again. Sifting through the wreckage, Mapondera found an eleven meter piece of tent, which forms the basis for the artwork Kudzoka Kumba. According to the artist, the condition
of the tent reflects that of the country—although ragged, it is still somewhat intact. In sections, he has mended the tent, stitching patches over holes. The mending is a symbolic gesture to the gentle nurturing and rebuilding that is taking place in his country, like moss slowly growing over jagged rocks—softening them while creating a place for rest and recovery. Perhaps it is also a continuation of what came before—a survival tactic of nurture, mending and reshaping. *Kudzoka Kumba* translates in English to ‘returning home’, referring to how Zimbabweans in the diaspora always find a reason to go back home.

"Home can have multiple meanings and at times I stammer to respond when I am asked ‘how is home?’ Although I always respond ‘home is fine’, it makes me question the word ‘home’. Where is home? What is it that makes it a home? Beyond where one stays, eats and sleeps, at times I feel like home is who you are." (Mapondera, 2019)

He continues,

"Having all these thoughts of what defines a home, I came to the conclusion that home does not mean the same thing to all people, it is a place and a multifaceted idea." (Mapondera, 2019)

For Mapondera, a sense of home is dependent on freedom of movement within a country. He describes it as being able to move freely without being asked for identification particulars. This freedom of movement, and sense of home comes through strongly in the materiality of his works. Emphasis is placed on the importance of his relationship to the materials used. If there is no relationship, he feels he is merely creating representations of things—devoid of deeper meaning. In many ways, Mapondera excavates meaning from found objects, staging a return to home by unearthing their history.

This text is an adaptation from the artist’s notes on the exhibition Chirema Chine Mazano Chinotamba Chakazendama Madziro Part 1.

REFERENCES


Wallen Mapondera
Tuck Shop 2
2019
Egg Crates
60 x 112 x 4.5 cm
Wallen Mapondera
Tuck Shop 4
2019
Carboard and Found Food Packaging
195 x 97 x 17 cm
Wallen Mapondera
Huchi neMukaka
2019
Cardboard, Waxed Paper and Thread on Canvas
226 x 143 x 27 cm
Wallen Mapondera
Kange Mbeu Kurima Kwandikona
2019
Papier-mâché and Fishing Line
Dimensions Variable
Wallen Mapondera
Pahasha
2019
Papier-mâché, Waxed Paper and Thread on Found Tarpaulin Tent
337 x 163 x 7 cm
Wallen Mapondera
Nhereka Nhereka
2019
Metal Bed Base, Wood and Cardboard
239 x 115 x 71 cm
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Wallen Mapondera received formal art training from Zimbabwe’s National Gallery School of Visual Arts and Design from 2005 to 2007. Mapondera recently completed his Masters degree in Fine Art from Rhodes University in Makhanda, South Africa in 2019. In 2015, he was the recipient of Zimbabwe’s prestigious National Arts Merit Award – in the Visual Arts Two-Dimensional Work category – given by the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe.

In 2007 Mapondera was selected for the National Gallery of Zimbabwe Artist-in-Residence Programme hosted at the National Gallery School of Visual Arts and Design Studios in Harare, Zimbabwe. Mapondera has since been a resident at the Vermont Studio Center, Burlington in Vermont, USA in 2012; and Pro Helvetia Studio in Zurich, Switzerland in 2018. In 2020 he will take part in the Art Dubai Artist-in-Residence Programme culminating in a solo presentation with SMAC Gallery at Art Dubai in Dubai, UAE.

Mapondera’s Masters Exhibition Chirema Chine Mazano Chinotamba Chakazendama Madziro recently opened at Rhodes University in Makhanda, South Africa in 2019. Earlier solo presentations include Moving Target at SMAC Gallery in Cape Town, South Africa as well as a solo presentation with Tyburn Gallery at Atelier Mondial in Basel, Switzerland. Earlier solo shows include Emergency Exit at Tyburn Gallery in London, UK and Samusha weni Donga at SMAC Gallery in Johannesburg, South Africa both in 2018 and Tsonanguro | Clarifications at SMAC Gallery in Cape Town, South Africa in 2017.

Recent Art Fairs include Artissima in Turin, Italy; 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair London in Somerset House, London, UK; FNB Art Joburg at the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg, South Africa and the Investec Cape Town Art Fair at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) in Cape Town, South Africa all in 2019 and UNTITLED, Art at Miami Beach in Miami, USA in 2018.

Mapondera’s work will be included in SMAC Gallery’s presentation at the 2020 Art Brussels at Tour & Taxi in Brussels, Belgium.

Notable group exhibitions include: Five Bhobh: Painting at the End of an Era at Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCAA) in Cape Town, South Africa in 2018; Familiar Histories: An Unstoppable Force in Contemporary Art Discourse, curated by Raphael Chikukwa, at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe, in Harare, Zimbabwe in 2017; X: Part III and Nothing Personal both at SMAC Gallery in Stellenbosch, South Africa, in 2017 and 2016 respectively; Suddenly A Dissident (by Guns and Rain) at the Point of Order Gallery in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2016; Between the Sheets at Gallery East in Fremantle, Australia in 2012; Colour Africa, Zeitgenössische Kunst Aus Simbabwe at Kulturallmende gUG in Munich, Germany in 2011; as well as African Expressions at the University of Avignon in Avignon, France in 2010. Mapondera has also participated in multiple group exhibitions in Zimbabwe since 2006.

Selected collections include The National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe; Spier Art Collection, Stellenbosch, South Africa and the Tiroche Deleon Collection, Tel Aviv, Israel.

In 2020, his work will form part of Matereality, a group exhibition at Iziko South African National Gallery in Cape Town, South Africa.
BIOGRAPHY
Lives and works in Grahamstown, South Africa.

EDUCATION
2019 Masters of Fine Art Degree (MA), Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa.

AWARDS & RESIDENCIES
2020 [upcoming] Art Dubai Artist-in-Residence Programme, Dubai, UAE.
2018 Artist in Residence, Pro Helvetia Studio, Zurich, Switzerland.
2016 Artist in Residence, in association with the Kuona Trust, Tafaria Castle, Nairobi & Tafaria, Kenya.
2015 Artist in Residence, Guns & Rain, Johannesburg, South Africa.
2013 ANI-MAN (a human in an animal), Association for Visual Arts Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.
2012 Turning Tables, Red Mill Gallery, Vermont Studio Center, Vermont, USA.
2009 X MARKS THE SPOT, Trueworths Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.
2008 MAZUVA OSE (Everyday), National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe.
2006 Award of Merit for Painting: Graduate Exhibition, National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS & PRESENTATIONS
2019 Chirema Chine Mazano, Rhodes University, Makhanda, South Africa.
2016 Paint My Tea Pot, Tafaria Castle, Tafaria, Kenya.
2013 ANI-MAN (a human in an animal), Association for Visual Arts Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.
2012 Turning Tables, Red Mill Gallery, Vermont Studio Center, Vermont, USA.
2009 X MARKS THE SPOT, Trueworths Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.
2008 MAZUVA OSE (Everyday), National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe.
2006 Award of Merit for Painting: Graduate Exhibition, National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS & PRESENTATIONS
2020 [upcoming] Art Dubai (SMAC Gallery), Madinat Jumeirah, Dubai, UAE.
2019 Chirema Chine Mazano, Rhodes University, Makhanda, South Africa.
2017 Tsananguro | Clarifications, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.
2016 Paint My Tea Pot, Tafaria Castle, Tafaria, Kenya.
2015 National Arts Merit Awards (NAMA) for Two-Dimensional Work, National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ), Harare, Zimbabwe.
2008 Award of Merit for Graphics: Graduate Exhibition, National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe.

CV

WALLEN MAPONDERA
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CV

2018
Five Bobh: Painting at the End of an Era, Zietz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (MOCAA), Cape Town, South Africa.
UNTITLED, Art (Tyburn Gallery), Miami Beach, Miami, USA.
Back to the Future III – Abstract Art In South Africa: Past and Present, SMAC Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa.

2017
1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair (SMAC Gallery), London, UK.
FNB Joburg Art Fair (SMAC Gallery), Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa.

2016
Turbine Art Fair (TAF), Johannesburg, South Africa.
Nothing Personal, SMAC Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa.
Suddenly A Dissident (Two Man Show), Point of Order Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa.

2015
Turbine Art Fair (TAF), Johannesburg, South Africa.
1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair, London, UK.

2012
Thupelo Workshop Exhibition, Greatmore Studios, Cape Town, South Africa.
Between the Sheets, Gallery East, North Fremantle, Western Australia.

2011
Colour Africa, Zeitgenössische Kunst Aus Simbabwe, Kulturallmende, Munich, Germany.

2010
African Expressions, The University of Avignon, Avignon, France.

2009
Unity, Gallery Delta, Harare, Zimbabwe.
Ani-mol, VEO Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

2008
COTCO, National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare.
The Young artist Exhibition, Gallery Delta, Harare.
Salon 91 Art Exhibition, Salon 91, Cape Town, South Africa.
Miniature Exhibition 2008, VEO Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.
Enriching Women, The International Women’s Film Festival, Gallery Delta, Harare.
Onai (Do You See When You Look), National Gallery of Zimbabwe in Mutare, Mutare, Zimbabwe.

2007
The Young Artist Exhibition, Gallery Delta, Harare, Zimbabwe.
Peace Through Unity and Diversity, Gallery Delta, Harare, Zimbabwe.
The Sixth Sense, National Gallery of Zimbabwe in Mutare, Zimbabwe.
Alliance Francaise Annual Exhibition, Maputo, Mozambique.
Zimbabwean change, St Bavo Church, Haarlem, Netherlands.

2006
HIFA (Hand in Hand), National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe.
Our Thoughts, National Gallery of Zimbabwe in Mutare, Mutare, Zimbabwe.
Manicaland Visual Arts and Craft Association (MANISA), National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Mutare, Zimbabwe.
Final Year Exhibition, National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe.

1998

PRESS HIGHLIGHTS
COLLECTIONS
The National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe.
Spier Art Collection, Stellenbosch, South Africa.
Tiroche Deleon Collection, Tel Aviv, Israel.
Please contact SMAC Gallery for more information regarding the availability of the works included in this portfolio, or for any other queries.