



TROY MAKAZA

BIG MAN SYNDROME

Art | Basel

SOLO PROJECT ART BASEL PORTALS JUNE 2021

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Troy Makaza

Born in 1994, Harare, Zimbabwe

Lives and works in Harare, Zimbabwe



Having specialized in painting in art school but always interested in form and texture, Makaza decided to develop his own hybrid medium which would enable him to unite his artistic goals. After experimenting with various materials, Makaza arrived at silicone a material which can be cast, painted with as well as woven and tied. Over the past six years Makaza's works progressively developed as an opportunity to speak both viscerally and philosophically to the issues Makaza finds compelling as a young Zimbabwean concerned with both politics and their impact on daily lives of ordinary people as well as a globally engaged millennial. Resonating with traditional modes like weaving and tapestry but unequivocally contemporary, Makaza's works articulate the conversation of what African and uniquely Zimbabwean contemporary can be – a paradigm internationally engaging and locally compelling. At only 26, Makaza's works have already received critical and collector acclaim, winning the Tomorrows/Today prize at the Investec Cape Town Art Fair in 2019 and with participation in institutional exhibitions such as Five Bhab at Zeitz MoCAA in Cape Town and Welcome Home at Museum of African Contemporary Art Al Maaden in Marrakech.

Big Man Syndrome

In his new woven and painted silicone wall-hangings Makaza focuses on the damaging impact of hyper-individualism and machismo, amplified by social media on social progress and connects this to legacy of cultural colonialism on Zimbabwe.

Education

- 2015: National Certificate in Fine Art - National Gallery of Zimbabwe Visual Arts Studios
- 2014: Green Shoots (NGZ Visual Art Certificate Graduate exhibition), National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe
- 2014: Young Artists, National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe

Selected Collections

Fondazione Fiera Milano, Museum of African Contemporary Art Al Maaden, Tiroche De Leon Collection, Jorge Perez Collectiona

Selected Exhibitions:

Solo

- 2021 Age of Displacement (May-June)– First Floor Gallery Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe
- 2019 Tomorrows/Today (art fair prize winner) Cape Town Art Fair, First Floor Gallery Harare, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2018: Forever Neverland Solo, First Floor Gallery Harare, Harare
- 2016: Bound Together solo, First Floor Gallery Harare, Harare, Zimbabwe

Group

- 2021: Travels with Herodotus (Domenico de Chirico curator), Galleria Bianconi, Milan, Italy
- 2021: Mirror Mirror! - South South Veza, First Floor Gallery Harare, Harare, Zimbabwe
- 2020 Level Mosi-oa-Tunya, First Floor Gallery, Victoria Falls
- 2020: ARCOLisboa Online, First Floor Gallery Harare
- 2019: Welcome Home, Museum of Modern African Art al Maaden, Macaal, Marrakesh, Morocco
- 2019: Kubatana – Contemporary African Art Survey, Kunstmuseum, Norway
- 2018: THE BLACK SPHINX II, Primo Marella Gallery, Milan, Italy
- 2018: Next Level, First Floor Gallery Harare, Harare, Zimbabwe Another Antipodes,
- 2018 'Five Bhab' – Zeitz MoCAA, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2017: Another Antipodes/urban axis, PS Art Space, Fremantle, Australia
- 2017: Young Now, Hazard Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2017: Collaging The City, First Floor Gallery Harare, Harare, Zimbabwe
- 2017: London Art Fair, First Floor Gallery Harare, London
- 2016: 'I am because you are', First Floor Gallery Harare, Harare, Zimbabwe
- 2015: But He's Got No Clothes On, Commune 1 Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2015: Harare No Limits, Harare International Festival of the Arts, 2015, Harare, Zimbabwe
- 2015: Kuyaruka – Age of Accountability, First Floor Gallery Harare, Harare, Zimbabwe



Steak For Dessert, Part 1, 2021
Silicone infused with paint
168 x 145cm



Steak for Dessert, Part 2, 2021
Silicone infused with paint
150 x 102cm



The Access to Excess, 2021
Silicone infused with paint
178 x 140cm

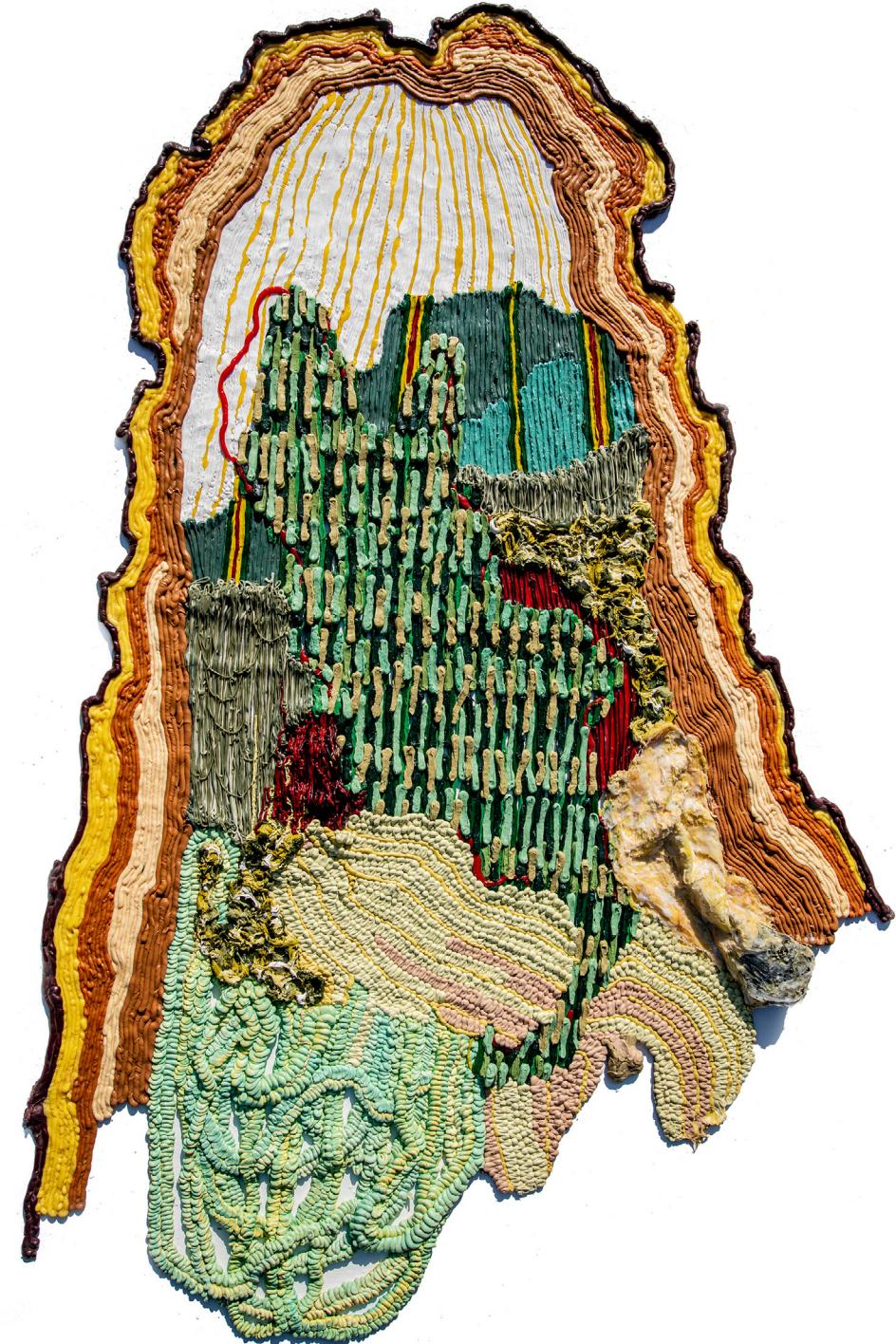


Player Country Played, 2021
Silicone infused with paint
200 x 115cm

Big Man Syndrome, 2021
Silicone infused with paint
230 x 150cm



Big Man Syndrome, Part 2, 2021
silicone infused with paint
40 x 164cm





Camo Division of Principles, 2021
Silicone infused with paint
158 x 65cm



Division of Labour(Red Line). 2021
Silicone infused with paint
318cm x 95cm

Big Man Syndrome

Project background and overview

Makaza's practice is all about the co-existence of contradictions and making connections between phenomena – historical and social which on the surface may not appear to be related. His materials and execution epitomise this discourse. Industrial silicone infused with pigments, woven painted, cast, and shaped – is almost aggressively public-facing and masculine, at the same time the shaping of the work is fluid, malleable, tactile, and beckons for an intimate engagement in a way that echoes traditionally feminine practices of weaving and tapestry and even ceramics. This dynamic paradigm is a true born-free voice in gender and social politics of contemporary Zimbabwe and a challenge to the older generation not just from the perspective of patriarchy but also as a critique of the matrix of traditional patriarchy, colonial religious and social domination in the crucible of the post-independence Zimbabwe where the tension between revolutionary and decolonial is

Since 2017 Makaza successive bodies of work have followed a trajectory of analysing the matrix of history, politics, and social relations taking on macro perspectives of historical and contemporary issues around land, ownership, and politics to the micro perspective of diet and food as a reflection of social status, colonial history, and cultural globalization.

This project began in November 2017 with Chapter 1- Camo: Division of Labour, parts of which were exhibited at Zeitz MoCAA as part of the 'Five Bhab' exhibition in 2018. In Camo the terse combination of the colours of the military and the civil normally separated by politics, responding poetically and optimistically to the events of November 2017, when in a dramatic turn of events, the army and the people came together as a united force to achieve the removal of Robert Mugabe from power after 37 years.

Chapter 2: Forever Neverland, Makaza's 2018 solo exhibition with First Floor Gallery Harare looking at chance, illusion, and aspirations creating a powerful and emotionally charged mix in the life of young Zimbabweans today.

Chapter 3: Visceral Politics, was presented as a solo exhibition at Primo Marella Gallery in Milan and dealt with food production and consumption in Zimbabwe as a metaphor for the interplay between power, land, and class in a country where land is both a source of political power and legitimacy as well the core means of survival. The trip to Italy for Visceral politics became a catalyst for a nuanced reflection on the history and legacy of colonialism. Visiting Venice, just as the historic aqua alta was coming in, impressions of drowning beauty and opulence, turned to how history will remember us and our civilisation and led to the development of Chapter 4: Remembering Byzantium series as a rumination on the past but also the current precipice we are facing on a global scale. They also introduce St Tura the fictional Zimbabwean saint 'you' as a Westerner do not know about even though you are used to knowing everything. In the 'Big Man Complex' being developed specifically in response to the Art Basel OVR curatorial premise, Makaza takes a small detour, to reflect on some issues emerging in the context of the pandemic lockdowns in Zimbabwe. Side-stepping pandemic pandemonium clichés, Makaza looks at aberrant phenomena which became amplified by social media during the lockdown and in the absence of white noise of daily lives. In particular, the veneration of extravagant and deeply immoral Zimbabwean men, showcasing their decadent lives in the middle of a global as well as country-wide crisis and in a country

with extreme income inequality.

A touchstone for this rumination, was the death of notorious nightclub owner and self-proclaimed millionaire, Genius (Ginimbi) Kadungure, in November 2021 in a drunk-driving and speeding accident, in which Ginimbi's Rolls Royce exploded into flames killing him and several others. Despite the criminal recklessness Ginimbi's death became a citywide mourning event in Harare, with incredible public processions and partying to celebrate his life. November 2021 was also the month when Makaza became the father to a baby girl. Makaza picks up this event as a symptom of conflicted values of contemporary Zimbabweans, sold on the dream of wealth with no work, a celebrity with no achievement while facing the dearth of prospects and opportunities for the large proportion of the population and neglecting traditional values of collaboration and togetherness in favour of rampant and callous hyper-individualism. While Ginimbi emerged as an urban cultural phenomenon. it is also a story of male exploitative privilege and complicity between wealth, capitalism, patriarchy.

As a young man and new father of a daughter Makaza reflects and critiques the destructive culture his contemporaries are seduced by and position it in a broader historical context as an allegory of rampant greed and acquisitiveness of the political classes in Zimbabwe, which in many ways only replaced colonial rulers despite the revolutionary ideals. Ginimbi is also an easily recognisable analogy to the global income inequality, which has reached the levels of desperation driving social protest and social progress movements around the world.

However stark the message, Makaza's deliberated infuses playfulness and fluidity. He borrows widely yet subtly both from popular visual culture, traditional symbolism and art history as a source of his synthesised agglomerations, where colours and forms become the prime actors in the works, giving audiences their own space to engage with the work in ways which are not prescribed or proscribed.

Makaza's 'Big Man Syndrome' is an intellectually robust and aesthetically poignant reflection on this moment in contemporary history from unique perspective.



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