

FIRST FLOOR GALLERY HARARE

**TROY MAKAZA
DISPATCHES FROM ZAMBESIA**

Art Basel Miami Beach 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 Bhob at Zeitz MoCAA in Cape Town and Welcome Home at Museum of African Contemporary Art Al Maaden in Marrakech.



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, Kunstlaboratorium, Norway
- 2018: THE BLACK SPHINX II, Primo Marella Gallery, Milan, Italy
- 2018: Next Level, First Floor Gallery Harare, Harare, Zimbabwe Another Antipodes,
- 2018 'Five Bhob' – 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

Troy Makaza - Dispatches from Zambesia

Introduction

Troy Makaza is one of the most original Zimbabwean voices to emerge in the past decade. To merge his love of painting in sculpture he invented his own medium, creating seductively bright and tactile silicone infused with pigment surreal wall works. Bridging the visceral and philosophical, personal and political is in. A born free Zimbabwean but also a millennial Makaza sees his work as exploration and reconciliation of competing cultural, historical and political ideologies in Zimbabwe and globally. His works defy categorization, oscillating between weaving, sculpture and painting, physical and surreal, they compel visually and conceptually to shift our paradigm of engaging with the urgently contemporary in African art.

Dispatches from Zambesia

Dispatches from Zambesia, is a suite of brand new silicone-based wall works by Troy Makaza. These works form Chapter 5, the closing chapter, in Neverland, Makaza's evolving narrative articulating history and politics of Zimbabwe through colour-based coding reflecting the contemporary and traditional idioms of Zimbabweans. In his work, Makaza straddles the concept of critic and advocate, as a young locally based but globally engaged citizen, who is aware of the difference in the way local and international audiences engage with his work and staking a claim for an authentic and critical voice in contemporary art.

This project began in November 2017 with Chapter 1- Camo: Division of Labour, parts of which were exhibited at Zeitz MoCAA as part of 'Five Bhub' 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 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 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.

These are the ideas forming the matrix from which Chapter 5: Dispatches from Zambesia emerges. Zambesia was one of the early proposed names of Zimbabwe post Rhodesia. A name which was never to be used with ideas for a place, which equally does not exist and also could not exist. These works articulate the danger of mythologizing history or future, no matter how delightful it might be. Playing with ideas of mapping, geography, land use but transposing them into a mythical world which is not too far from 'tangerine trees and marmalade skies' of Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds – a dreaming which while local is also enmeshed with our shared humanity, which pushes us towards hope because and not in spite of cynicism all around.

The playful and fluid approach to delivering an ideologically passionate and focused narratives in his work, is a deliberate device, Makaza uses to give audiences their own space to engage with the work in ways which are not prescribed or proscribed. 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.

Dispatches from Zambesia is tour de force of energy which speaks to a consciousness of the need towards a holistic and compassionate reconciliation of human kind with its history and the environment but also passionate optimism for this possibility.

Valerie Kabov

Curator

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Permutations of what is obvious, 2021
Silicone infused with pigment
185 x 92cm



Land of Milk and Honey, 2021
Silicone infused with pigment
165 x 102cm



Myths of Zambesia, 2021
Silicone infused with paint with pigment
248 x 230cm



Opaque mirror for an aspiring emperor, 2021
Silicone infused with pigment
132 x 120cm



Last Chance Encore, 2021
Silicone infused with pigment
190 x 128cm



Legacy and Poetry, 2021
Silicone infused with pigment
160 x 110cm

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





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



Big Man Syndrome, Part 2, 2021
Silicone infused with paint
240 x 164cm



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



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