

HARARE, ZIMBABWE  
NATIONAL GALLERY OF ZIMBABWE  
MAY 24<sup>TH</sup> - JULY 2<sup>ND</sup> 2012

SUNDAY, JUNE 3, 2012

18

# Art exhibition steals limelight

Margaret Chinowaita  
ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

**A**N EXCITING and informative travelling exhibition called "Visionary Africa: Art at Work" is currently hung at the National Art Gallery of Zimbabwe (Nagz) and it has generated interest among the general populace of Zimbabwe.

The exhibition has a local component aptly named, *Mifananidzo yeZimbabwe Ndiyo Nhorowondo Yedu*: Images of Zimbabwe are our narratives.

Raphael Chikukwa, Nagz curator is the custodian of Zimbabwe's exhibition.

Chikukwa said in the past the Zimbabwean story went untold or misrepresented due to lack of local artists that communicated it. "In the past we had the Zimbabwean and African story in general being told by other people, thus *Mifananidzo yeZimbabwe Ndiyo Nhorowondo Yedu* will attempt to negotiate this position of self by framing the idea of Zimbabwe differently," said Raphael Chikukwa.

The local exhibition is showcasing images by Zimbabwean photographers that include Annie Mpumbe, Nancy Mteki, Believe Nyakudya, Tsvangirayi Mukwazhi, Bethule Nkwane, Hilary Maradzika and Aaron Mfumelli.

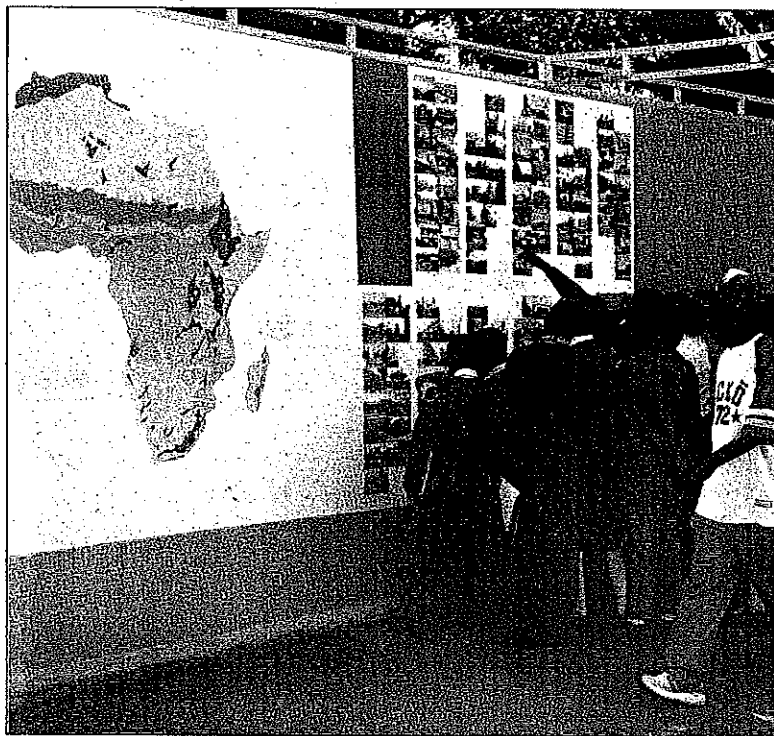
Nagz director Doreen Sibanda said the exhibition is important to the gallery's young audiences as it enhances knowledge of African cultures. A number of people have passed through the gallery and viewed the exhibitions. The local exhibition is set in a pavilion in the Harare Gardens outside the gallery.

Aldo Dell'Arciccia, the European Union ambassador to Zimbabwe views the ongoing exhibition as a platform to help mend the Zimbabwe-European Union relations. Dell'Arciccia said culture is at the heart of the African-European dialogue.

The young Zimbabwean artists taking part in the exhibition are involved in a critical role for Zimbabwe. As Dell'Arciccia outlined, "It is also part of our effort to advocate for an image of Zimbabwe which is more positive than what is often presented in international media."

The Nagz supplied the *Daily News* with profiles of the local photographers and their brief statements on the art world, photography and the country:

(Annie Mpumbe) Annie, one of the photographers is practising with the *Daily News*. She graduated from the Market Photo Workshop in South Africa before joining the company. Working, as a photojournalist does not stop her from exploring art pho-



The exhibition aims at telling the Story of Africa and Zimbabwe from a native perspective.

tography and through conversations with Calvin Dondo, she has seen her work growing day-by-day. Annie has exhibited her work mainly in Gwanza: A month of photography at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe.

Artist Statement: I am a documentary photojournalist who is interested in documenting social and political life in my home country Zimbabwe. After graduating from the Market Photo Workshop in 2007 I have taken keen interest in many issues that affect mainly women and children. My passion is to be able to tell the African story from an African perspective.

(Aaron Mfumelli) Born in Zimbabwe Aaron Mfumelli works, and practice in his home country like many Zimbabwean photographers. He is a self-taught photographer and now working as a photojournalist with a local newspaper. He saw his work exhibited at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe through Gwanza month of photography. Since then Aaron's work has been growing from strength to strength.

Artist Statement: As a self-taught photographer I have a big interest in people and their lives. Most of my work looks at people and in this exhibition the body of work in this show looks at how disadvantaged people live from day to day. Today in Zimbabwe we are one of the poorest countries in Africa but despite all

this, young people still have hope. The piece in this show entitled "High Jump", says a lot about not giving up on life.

(Believe Nyakudya) Believe Nyakudya is a photojournalist and documentary photographer, currently working as the Chief Photographer for a weekly broadsheet.

He is a graduate of photojournalism from the Market Photo Workshop in South Africa. Nyakudya has exhibited at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe and in South Africa.

Artist Statement: As a photojournalist I am interested in art photography and I am currently working on migration, identity and religious themes. In this particular exhibition my work explores migration issues, which are affecting many people who end up in unknown territories. In the past decade we saw many Zimbabweans seeking refuge in other countries but currently a number of people are seeking refuge in Zimbabwe.

(Bethule Nkwane) Bethule work and practice in Zimbabwe as one of the emerging photographers in the country. He currently works as a photojournalist with the *Daily News*.

Bethule was trained at Market Photo Workshop in South Africa. On his return to Zimbabwe Bethule held a solo exhibition at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe. He has exhibited

at a number of Gwanza exhibitions at the Gallery.

Artists Statement: I am more interested in people and tapping into the unknown stories. My work is more of documentary and as a young photographer I am still exploring many issues concerning people. This particular area of work looks at the football fans who sometimes try to get in stadiums for free.

(Hilary Maradzika) Hilary Maradzika was born on May 29, 1971 in Zimbabwe where he works and practices. He started photography in 1991 as a Black and White printer and moved to painting and later taking pictures. Hilary has participated in Gwanza exhibitions from 2008 to 2009 and won the Gwanza first prize award in 2009.

He attended world press workshops from 2008 to 2010 and is currently working as a photojournalist for a local print media. Previously he worked as a freelance photographer for news agencies including AP, AFP and Zimonline.

Artist Statement: After participating in many photo exhibitions during Gwanza I have developed a passion in art photography. In my work I deal with so many themes, human rights abuses, and child labour especially in illegal gold and diamond mines in Zimbabwe.

The Makorokoza series looks at how these people survive and at the

same time ruining the environment.

The Zimbabwean narrative cannot be complete without Makorokoza because they are part of our community.

(Nancy Mteki) Nancy Mteki was born in Harare, Zimbabwe in 1989. She started photography in 2008 at a South African local workshop called Iliso Labantu (The Eye of the People) founded by Alistair Berg and Sue Johnson.

She first exhibited with Iliso Labantu at the 4th Cape Town Month of Photography 2009 and 2011 at the National Art Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare. Mteki worked for a local newspaper in Harare and won the Devron Art Prize at the Dak'Art 2012, Senegal.

Artist Statement: I am an art photographer who is passionate about people and their social life. My work looks at how women are perceived by their male counterparts. In this particular work I explored a Kamba as an urban landscape in African cities. The moment the woman gets into a kombi she is addressed through the derogative language used by tourists.

So this body of work is a commentary to their behavior which remains questionable to the Zimbabwean society.

(Tsvangirayi Mukwazhi) Tsvangirayi is a renowned photographer whose works have been exhibited in Mali, Netherlands, Germany and several countries in Europe Asia and Africa. Mukwazhi a Photo Editor of the *Daily News* has won the CNN African Photographer award 2002, World Press Photo Joop Swart Master class 2002, 2006 Gender and Media Photojournalist of the year for Southern Africa and got highly commended for the 2003 Commonwealth Photographic Award and was recently awarded the CNN Mo-hamid Amin Photographic Award, 2007 Mukwazhi has had his works published in several international publications among them *Newsweek*, *Time Magazine*, and *The New York Times*. Mukwazhi 35, holds a Diploma in Mass Communication and Journalism (Coosa) 2000 and a Diploma in Photography from the African United Colleges (SA). Currently he lives in Zimbabwe and travels extensively in Africa freelancing for the *Associated Press* and several other International publications.

Artist Statement: My body of work interrogates the Zimbabwe Refuse Collection team whose work is always looked down upon. These men work from morning, getting shouted at but at the end of the day they still smile. These men amaze me and I bring these works to the viewers to make up their minds about the Zimbabwe refuse collection team. Like them, hate them but they still smile.