

smac

WALLEN MAPONDERA

Moving Target

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13.08.19



Moving Target

It is notoriously difficult to hit a moving target, for this device is, by its very nature, meant to challenge or even escape our reach. Whether it is understood as something that deliberately moves while someone is trying to hit it, or as an idea or situation that constantly changes while one is trying to make sense of it, a moving target defies easy access and full control. As the title to this exhibition of his most recent body of work, Mapondera is exploring his own experience of moving targets and the impact they have on the psyche of the Zimbabwean population. This is a critical return to a fraught socio-political environment, for Mapondera's work engages with his home country and the governmental turmoil and financial instability Zimbabwean citizens face on a daily basis.

As Mapondera explains, the period of hyperinflation and financial instability under former president Robert Mugabe, which reached its peak in 2008, left Zimbabweans reeling from the shock of losing most of their investments and savings. Prices of commodities would change several times a day, which made it difficult if not impossible to acquire certain products and services. Even after Mugabe was ousted during a military coup in 2017 and replaced with current president Emmerson Mnangagwa, Zimbabwe's economy remains extremely volatile. While Mnangagwa claims that the crisis-hit country is returning to normal, Mapondera's work offers a counter-argument – one that shows how he, and other Zimbabweans, continue to live in an era of severe unpredictability and precariousness. In this context, the title of Mapondera's exhibition activates an acute understanding of human aspirations towards stability and safety in times of uncertainty.

The distinctive materials that Mapondera uses in his work speak directly to these concerns: with pieces of cardboard meticulously sewn to one another, or onto sheets of canvas and tarpaulin, his work draws directly from the lives of the worker and the everyman. For these materials are the remainders of commerce – they come from and speak to the lives of street traders and market merchants. In their original form, these materials were meant to store, protect, shade and display the wares that were entrusted to them. But now, as the leftovers of trade, these scraps

and fragments become the very tools that Mapondera employs to represent human desire and the way that it is wrought by forces of capital and flows of economy.

With an eye for detail, Mapondera's work shows meticulous craftsmanship, which is carefully balanced with the conceptual undertones of the media that he uses. For example, much of the cardboard that he stitches together come from discarded food packaging. Of interest to Mapondera is the text that was originally printed on these packages and boxes (such as "100% Fruit Juice", or other claims as to the purity or wholesomeness of the product). As a marketing strategy, such text is deliberately used by companies to sell their wares. However, these claims are often not completely true and, as Mapondera argues, we have grown increasingly suspicious of the way that products are packaged and sold to us. This provides a crucial link for his political commentary on the Zimbabwean context: in much the same way that companies might market their goods and intentionally misrepresent the content of their wares, Mapondera argues, politicians do exactly the same. Be it commodities or politicians, it all comes down to packaging.

While such materials also bear the traces of a utilitarian life (of being used, handled and later discarded), Mapondera's reclamation of them requires a process of slowly stitching pieces together, layer by layer, row by row, until the desired form is achieved. The circular shapes that are created by the sewn cardboard strips reference the visual iconography of the target – of the round, flat surface that is marked with concentric circles to be aimed and fired at. But these targets seem to move in disruptive ways for, in his representation of them, Mapondera has them multiplied and conjoined, sliced in two, radiantly bursting open, or darting towards the outer edges of the canvas. The very nature of the material that he is working with (such as the distressed tarpaulin, unravelling red thread and scraps of cardboard) speaks directly to his own life experiences, as well as those of other Zimbabweans – of taking aim at something, of striving, working and crafting, whilst keeping some goal in mind. At the same time, it speaks of the difficulty to achieve such goals; of the way that they shift, are thwarted, or can be lost from sight.



Wallen Mapondera

Target Box

2019

Cardboard, Waxed Thread and Wax Paper on Canvas

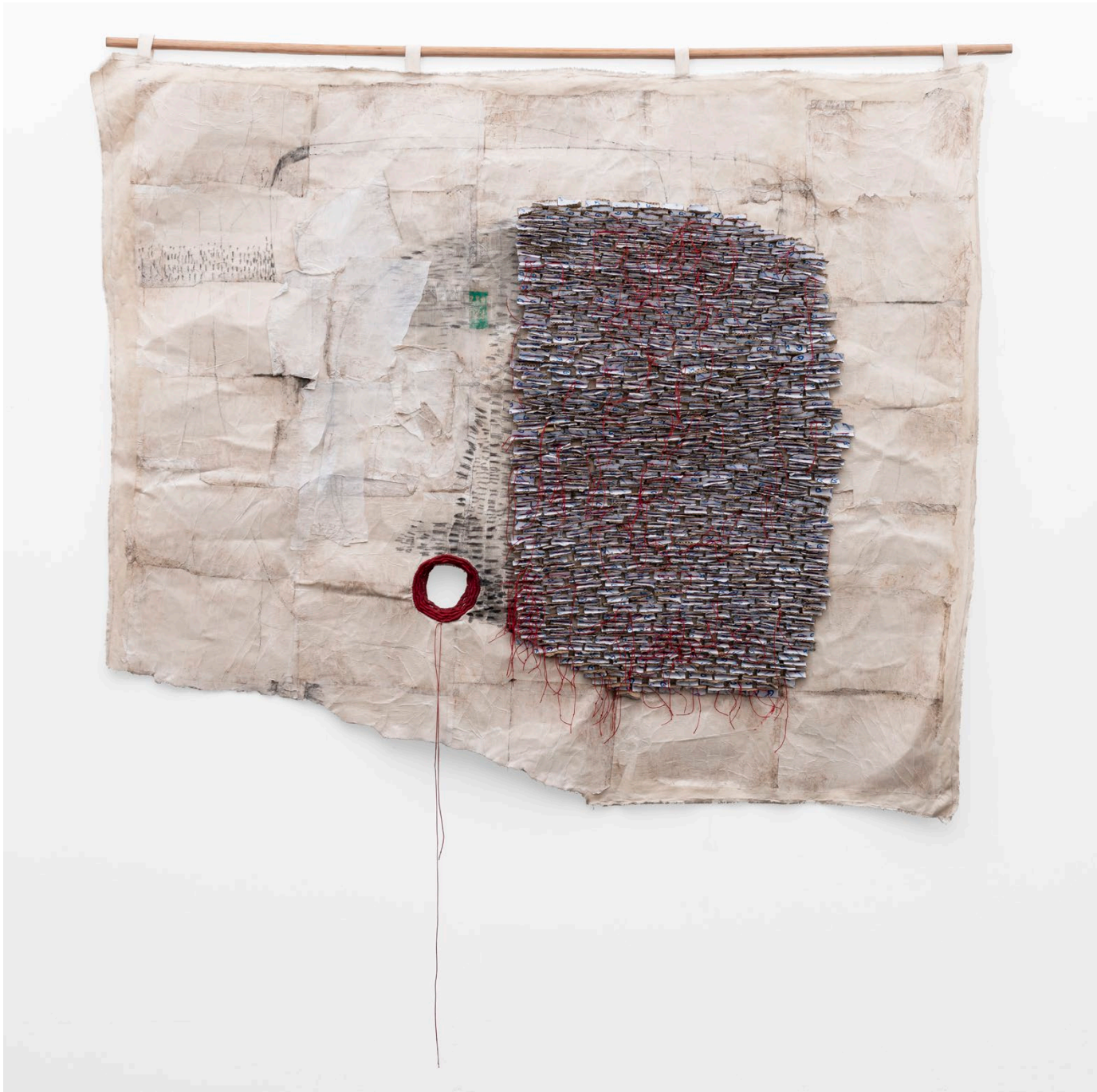
86 x 77 cm

Unique



Wallen Mpondera
Moving Target
2019

Cardboard, Waxed Thread and Wax Paper on Canvas
185 x 124 cm
Unique



Wallen Mapondera
Untitled
2019

Cardboard, Waxed Thread and Wax Paper on Canvas
159 x 181 cm
Unique



Wallen Mapondera

Gundamusaira

2019

Cardboard, Waxed Thread and Wax Paper on

Found Tarpaulin

216 x 156 cm

Unique



Wallen Mapondera
Gomba
2019
Cardboard, Laminated Hessian
190 x 176 cm
Unique

WALLEN MAPONDERA

b. 1985, Harare, Zimbabwe.

Lives and works in Grahamstown, South Africa.

Wallen Mapondera received formal art training from Zimbabwe's National Gallery School of Visual Arts and Design from 2005 to 2007. He was selected in 2007, for the National Gallery of Zimbabwe Artist-in-Residence Programme, hosted at the National Gallery School of Visual Arts and Design Studios in Mbare, Harare. The residency culminated in his first solo exhibition, titled *MAZUVA OSE (Everyday)*, held at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe in Harare in 2008. Mapondera has since held multiple solo shows and participated in various local and international art fairs and group exhibitions. 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 recognition of outstanding achievements in arts and culture.

Most recently, Mapondera's work was on exhibition as part of *Five Bhobh: Painting at the End of an Era* at Zeitz MOCAA in Cape Town, South Africa. The exhibition featured 29 Zimbabwean artists who have relevant socio-political commentary and are pushing the boundaries of contemporary painting. Mapondera was also recently awarded the Pro Helvetia Studio Residency in Switzerland for 2018, where he plans on exploring the presence of African food culture in Switzerland. Mapondera also exhibited work at *Untitled*, Miami with Tyburn Gallery at the end of 2018; as well as a solo exhibition, titled *Emergency Exit*, with Tyburn Gallery in May last year. In 2017 Mapondera featured as part of

SMAC Gallery's booth at the 1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair in London. During 2016, he was named as a winner of the AIR (Artist-In-Residency) Award Laureate, awarded by the African Centre, and he subsequently took up residency at the Kuona Trust in Nairobi, Kenya. The residency was concluded with his solo presentation, entitled *Paint My Tea Pot*, at Tafaria Castle in Kenya.

Additional selected solo exhibitions include: *Tsananguro/ Clarifications* at SMAC Gallery in Cape Town, South Africa in 2017; *Social Zoometry* at Gallery Delta in Harare, Zimbabwe in 2014; *Ani-Man (a human in an animal)* at the Association for Visual Arts Gallery (AVA) in Cape Town, South Africa in 2013; and *Turning Tables* at the Red Mill Gallery in Vermont Studio Center, Vermont, USA in 2012. Notable group exhibitions include: *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.



smac

WALLEN MAPONDERA

CURRICULUM VITAE

WALLEN MAPONDERA

CV

BIOGRAPHY

Born 1985, Harare, Zimbabwe.
Lives and works in Grahamstown, South Africa.

EDUCATION

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

2007 Certificate in Visual Arts Training, National Gallery School of Visual Arts Studio, Harare, Zimbabwe.

AWARDS & RESIDENCIES

2018 Artist in Residence, Pro Helvetia Studio, Zurich, Switzerland.

2016 Artist in Residence, in association with the Kuona Trust, Tafaria Castle, Nairobi & Tafaria, Kenya.

Artist in Residence, Guns & Rain, Johannesburg, South Africa.

2015 National Arts Merit Awards (NAMA) for Two-Dimensional Work, National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ), Harare, Zimbabwe.

Artist in Residence, National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe.

Artist-in-Residence (AiR) Award Laureate, the Africa Centre, Cape Town, South Africa.

2012 First Prize for Drawing and Graphics: Family, Tradition and Religion, Gallery Delta, Harare, Zimbabwe.

Artist in Residence, Vermont Studio Center, Burlington, Vermont, USA.

2010 First Prize for Drawing and Graphics: FACET – Zimbabwe Now, Gallery Delta, Harare, Zimbabwe.

Over-all Award for Drawing: Artists in Stream, Gallery Delta, Harare, Zimbabwe.

2009 Over-all Award: F.A.C.T., National Gallery of Zimbabwe in association with COTCO, Harare, Zimbabwe.

2008 Award of Merit: Enriching Woman, Gallery Delta, Harare, Zimbabwe.

Award of Merit: Post Election Selection, Gallery Delta, Harare, Zimbabwe.

2007 Artist in Residence, National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe.

2006 Award of Merit for Painting: Graduate Exhibition, National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe.

Award of Merit for Graphics: Graduate Exhibition, National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS & PRESENTATIONS

2019 Atelier Mondial, Münchenstein, Switzerland.
Moving Target, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

2018 *Emergency Exit*, Tyburn Gallery, London, UK.
Samusha weiri Dongo, SMAC Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa.

2017 *Tsananguro | Clarifications*, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

2016 *Paint My Tea Pot*, Tafaria Castle, Tafaria, Kenya.

2014 *SOCIAL ZOMETRY*, Gallery Delta, Harare, Zimbabwe.

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*, Truworths Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

2008 *MAZUVA OSE (Everyday)*, National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS & PRESENTATIONS

2019 Investec Cape Town Art Fair (SMAC Gallery), Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC), Cape Town, South Africa.

2018 *Five Bhohb: 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.
Tradition, Family & Religion, Gallery Delta, Harare, Zimbabwe.
- 2011** *Colour Africa*, Zeitgenössische Kunst Aus Simbabwe, Kulturallmende, Munich, Germany.
- 2010** *FACET – Zimbabwe Now*, Gallery Delta, Harare, Zimbabwe.
Live 'n' Direct, National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe.
African Expressions, The University of Avignon, Avignon, France.
Artists in Stream, Gallery Delta, Harare, Zimbabwe.
- 2009** *Unity*, Gallery Delta, Harare, Zimbabwe.
Ani-mal, VEO Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.
F.A.C.T COTCO, National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe.
- 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.
Africa University Annual Festival of Art and Culture: an exhibition of Paintings and Graphics, National Gallery of Zimbabwe in Mutare, Mutare, Zimbabwe.
Post Election Selection, Gallery Delta, Harare, 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.
Drawings and Graphics: An Overview, Gallery Delta, Harare, Zimbabwe.
"Edible Mapepa" An exhibition of art pieces from handmade paper, National Art Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, 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.
Rembrandt: An African Response, Gallery Delta, Harare, Zimbabwe.
Manicaland Visual Arts and Craft Association (MANISA), National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Mutare, Zimbabwe.
Final Year Exhibition, National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe.
- 1998** *Why Use Agro Chemicals?* University Of Zimbabwe, Mount Pleasant, Harare, Zimbabwe.
- PRESS HIGHLIGHTS**
- Moloi, N. 2018. 'Five Bobh' is a taxi to the end of an era. Mail & Guardian [online]. Available at: <https://mg.co.za/article/2018-11-23-00-five-bhobh-is-a-taxi-to-the-end-of-an-era>. 23 November 2018. [Accessed 22.01.19].
- Morris, C. 2018. Artists We Love: Wallen Mapondera. Visi [online]. Available at: <https://www.visi.co.za/artists-we-love-wallen-mapondera/>. 13 March 2018. [Accessed 03.03.2018].
- Garan'anga, S. 2016. Artists light up Gallery Delta. The Herald [online]. Available at: <https://www.herald.co.zw/artists-light-up-gallery-delta/>. 24 June 2016. [Accessed 22.01.2019].
- Happener. 2017. October 30 | Turner Contemporary Gets Bigger. Happening Magazine [online]. Available at: <https://www.happening.media/category/artdigest/en/articles/3071/october-30-turner-contemporary-gets-bigger>. 30 October 2017. [Accessed 22.01.2019].
- ArtAfrica. 2018. Right at the Equator. ArtAfrica Magazine [online]. Available at: <http://artafricamagazine.org/right-at-the-equator/>. 15 February 2018. [Accessed 22.01.2019].
- COLLECTIONS**
- The National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe.
Spier Art Collection, Stellenbosch, South Africa.
Tiroche Deleon Collection, Tel Aviv, Israel.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please contact SMAC Gallery for more information regarding the availability of the works included in this portfolio, or for any other queries.

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