

MASIMBA HWATI

Instruments of Memory /
Simbi dzeNdangariro

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Masimba Hwati

Instruments of Memory / Simbi dzeNdangariro

Instruments of Memory / Simbi dzeNdangariro is Zimbabwean artist Masimba Hwati's first solo exhibition in South Africa and his first with SMAC Gallery. A multidisciplinary artist with a focus on sculpture, Hwati questions typical definitions and imagery associated with post-colonial societies, particularly on the African continent.

In *Instruments of Memory*, Masimba Hwati presents a unique collection of sculptural assemblages that intricately bind preconceived, often mistaken, ideas of 'African' and 'Western' imagery. Each artwork further investigates themes of 'cultural symbiosis' or the exchange between seemingly opposing cultures of stereotypical memetic traits. Hwati's astute combinations of symbols and objects that are considered representative of endemically African cultures and more colonial-originating cultivations initiate this exchange.

As the title of the exhibition indicates, this new body of work grapples with the human experience of 'memory' and 'energies'. Hwati draws on these seemingly abstract concepts through each of his found objects, many of which he considers culturally 'traditional' to his upbringing. Hwati physically alters and then re-imagines these objects by juxtaposing them and changing the socio-cultural space and context they occupy.

Masimba Hwati's practice is primarily comprised of an in-depth relationship with symbols of his life experiences. His use of objects that are of a personal and cultural significance is what makes each work a collage of subjective representation within a collection of idiosyncratic interpretation. Hwati is a treasure hunter and his treasures are used and discarded objects – seemingly without value. This assumed 'non-value' is one of the many concepts that Hwati unceremoniously turns on its head, with the same gentle, sardonic humour exhibited by the early 20th century Dadaists. Just as one hears whispers of the 'readymade' and reads of critics neatly boxing this artist and his practice into a prescribed 'Afro-Dada or -Futurist' category, Hwati thoroughly explains many of his personal associations with each component of his artwork. He makes clear that the objects before him are not just found objects, but artifacts.

Works in the *Rinamanyanga Hariputirwe* (2016) series are contextual combinations of specific thoughts and feelings. The English translation of this title; 'That which has horns cannot be wrapped' is a well-known Shona phrase that has an obvious literal association with the animal horns fixed to each artwork. However, perhaps less conspicuously, this title also alludes to the wheelbarrow handles attached to a festooned boxing bag filled with sand, communicating the experience of an attempt to move a load forward but being hindered by the load itself.

Antennas & Memes VI (2016), cradles a plastic, Taiwanese-made Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle toy, while simultaneously touting the horns of African buck and animal bones. The context of each of these elements is altered, either unexpectedly or quite predictably, by both its repositioning and its annexure.

Every object, item, medium or material in Hwati's sculptures has been "conceptually diagnosed" and deemed fit to form part of the artist's complex personal narrative, while simultaneously directing a collective experience. The Shona proverb; 'Zvikomo zvemutunhu umwe zvinotambidzana mhute', ties itself to Masimba Hwati's *Instruments of Memory*, both in its meaning and its entangled translation. Loosely translated, the meaning reads; "mountains of the same range give each other mist". Hwati interprets the meaning of this proverb as "influence is a result of proximity, and that all things are connected". His understanding of the proverb offers viewers a starting point with which to approach this exhibition.

In its entirety, *Instruments of Memory / Simbi dzeNdangariro* displays undertones of Hwati's experience and understanding of current socio-political circumstances in his home country as well as many other African countries. As opposed to a focus on particular issues, Hwati wrestles with the roots of feelings of unrest, support, disappointment and hope. Through what would appear to be an almost absurd conglomeration of unusual objects, Masimba Hwati is able to mine crucial meaning and a rare universal accessibility without shedding his individual and distinct heritage.

Masimba Hwati is a multidisciplinary artist with a focus on sculpture. His work questions prescribed definitions and imagery associated with various post-colonial societies, particularly on the African continent. Born in 1982 in Harare, Zimbabwe, he graduated from the Harare Polytechnic in 2003. Hwati presented his first solo exhibition; *Facsimiles of Energy* in 2011 at Gallery Delta – Foundation for Art and Humanities in Harare, Zimbabwe. Prior to that, his work formed part of the Harare Biennale at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe in 2005. Notable group exhibitions include; *Vibes, Pledges and Oracles* at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, in 2007; *Colour Africa: Zeitgenössische Kunst Aus Simbabwe* at the Kulturallmende in Munich, Germany and *Food for Thought* at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe, both in 2011. In 2012, Hwati received an award for Multi Media – Tradition, Family and Religion, sponsored by the European Union. He also participated in *Between the Sheets: 2012 Artists' Books Exhibition* at Gallery East in North Freemantle, Australia.

Following his solo exhibition *Quantumlogik* at Gallery Delta in Harare in 2014, Hwati was one of three artists selected for the Zimbabwean Pavilion exhibition; *Pixels Of Ubuntu/Unhu*, curated by Raphael Chikukwa, at the 56th Venice Biennale in 2015. Showing for the first time in South Africa, his work featured in the group exhibition *TREK: Following Journeys* at SMAC Gallery in Cape Town. Also in 2015, Hwati participated in the Zimbabwean Cultural Centre of Detroit (ZCCD) Artist Exchange programme in Detroit, USA and was an invited speaker at the Penny W. Stamps Distinguished Speaker Series at the Penny. W Stamps School of Art & Design at the University of Michigan, USA.

Masimba Hwati presented *don't worry, be happy*, an exhibition for this year's Cape Town Art Fair Special Projects Section *Tomorrows/Today*, curated by Ruth Simbao and Azu Nwagbogu. Hwati's presentation was subsequently selected as the winner for this section.

Masimba Hwati

Antennas & Memes I
2016
Mixed Media
239 x 12 x 6 cm

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Masimba Hwati

Antennas & Memes II
2016
Mixed Media
253 x 44 x 20 cm

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Masimba Hwati

Antennas & Memes III
2016
Mixed Media
219 x 17 x 10 cm

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Masimba Hwati

Antennas & Memes IV
2016
Mixed Media
158 x 50 x 20 cm

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Masimba Hwati

Antennas & Memes V
2016
Mixed Media
194 x 35 x 35 cm

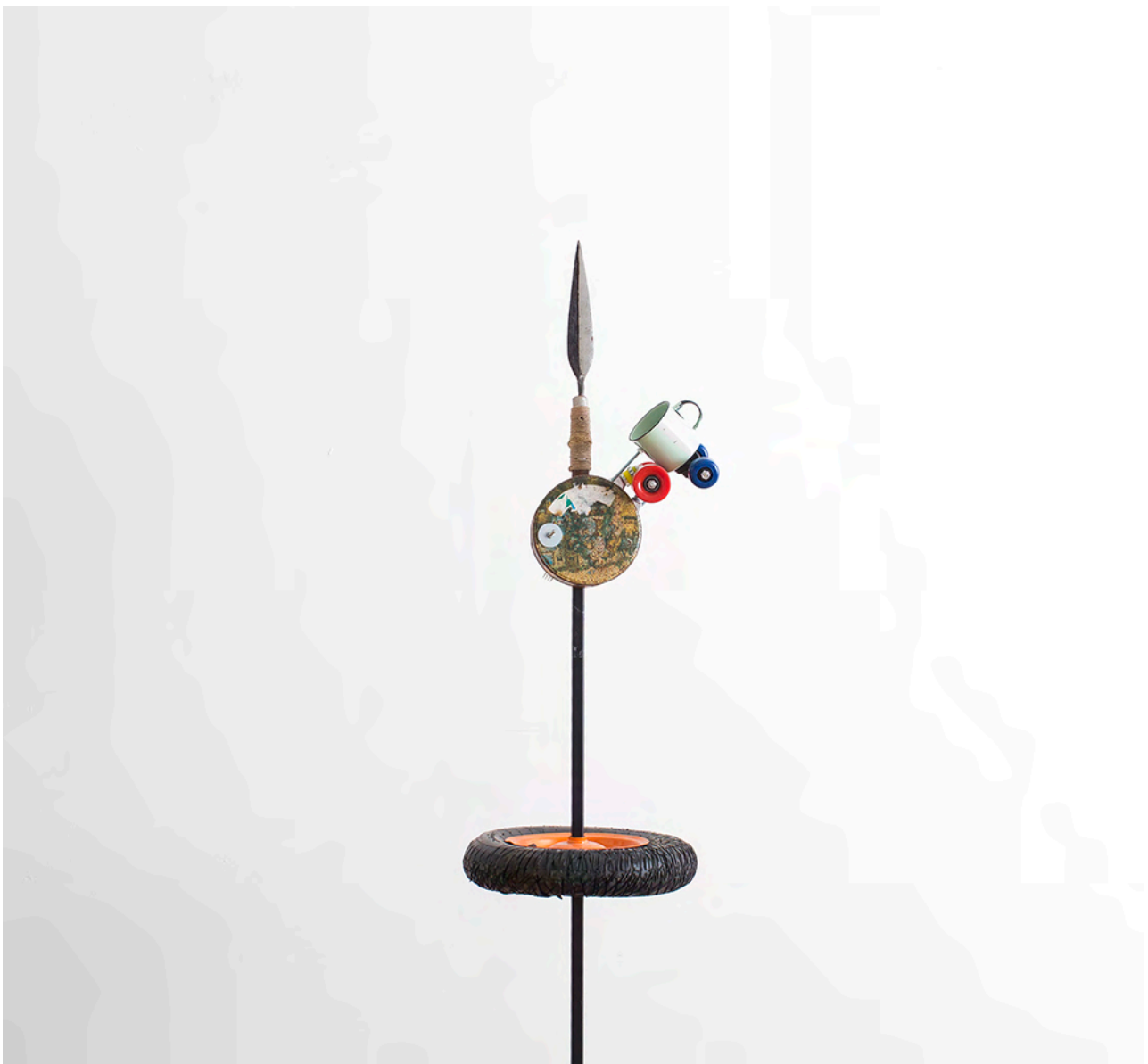
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Masimba Hwati

Antennas & Memes VI
2016
Mixed Media
265 x 42 x 33 cm

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Masimba Hwati

Antennas & Memes VII
2016
Mixed Media
268 x 100 x 100 cm

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Masimba Hwati

Antennas & Memes VIII
2016
Mixed Media
226 x 25 x 25 cm

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Masimba Hwati

Antennas & Memes IX
2016
Mixed Media
204 x 38 x 34 cm

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Masimba Hwati

Antennas & Memes X
2016
Mixed Media
248 x 46 x 22 cm

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Masimba Hwati

Antennas & Memes XI
2016
Mixed Media
235 x 23 x 17 cm

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Masimba Hwati

Antennas & Memes XII
2016
Mixed Media
227 27 x 6 cm

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Masimba Hwati

Antennas & Memes XIII

2016

Mixed Media

226 x 50 x 22 cm

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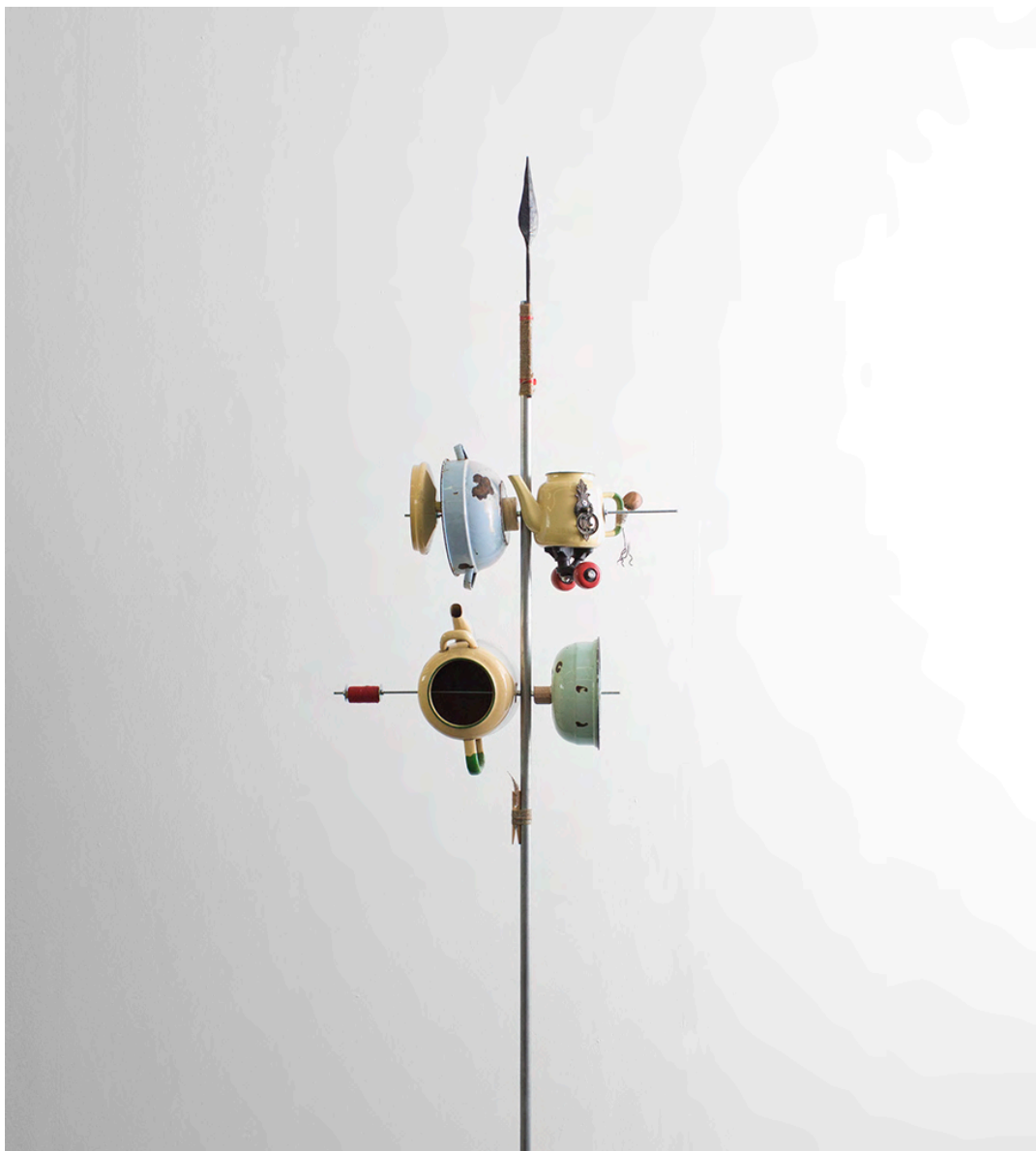
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Masimba Hwati

Antennas & Memes XIV
2016
Mixed Media
218 x 62 x 10 cm

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Masimba Hwati

Antennas & Memes XV
2016
Mixed Media
260 x 22 x 20 cm

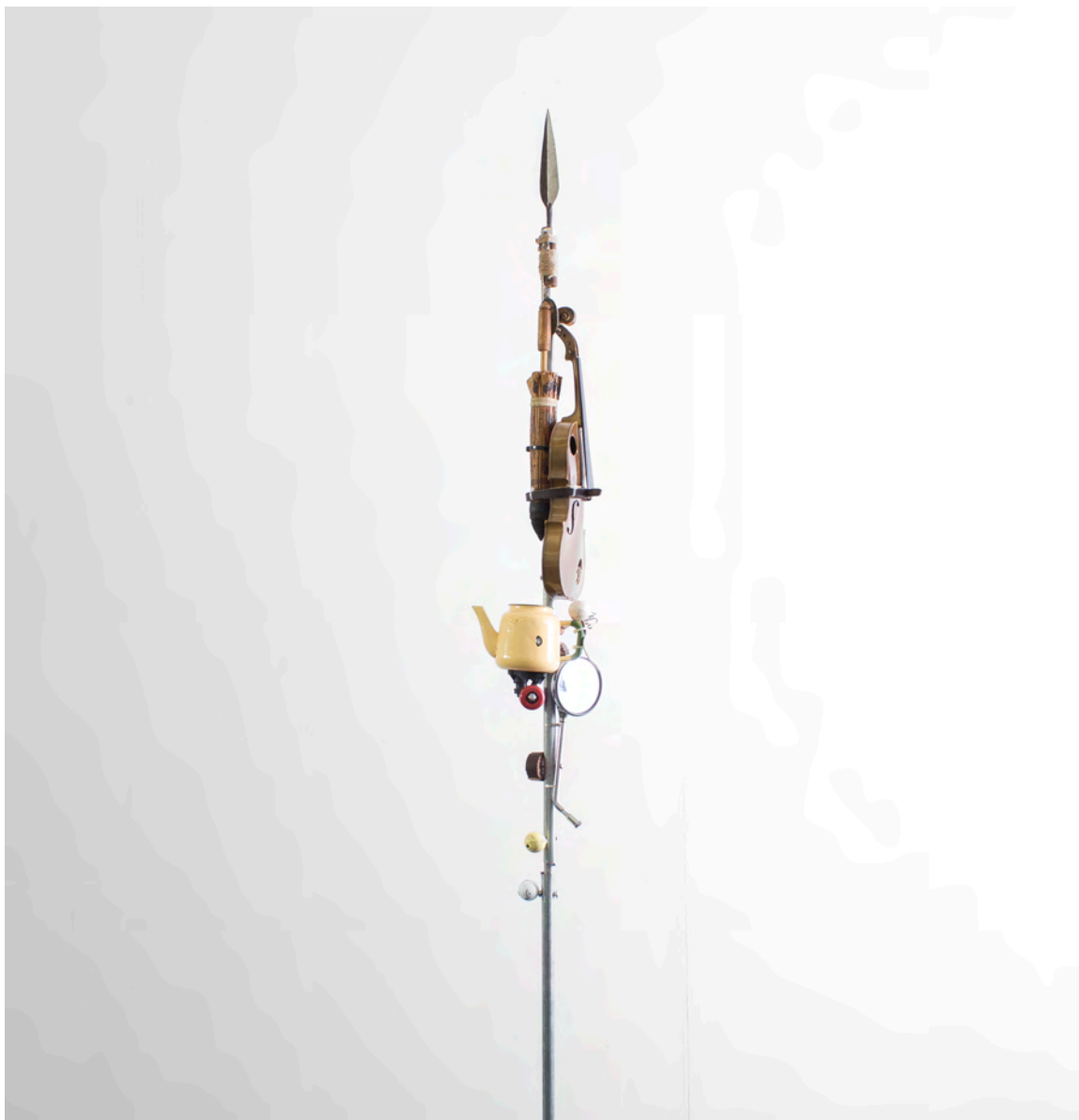
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Masimba Hwati

Antennas & Memes XVI
2016
Mixed Media
225 x 32 x 14 cm

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Masimba Hwati

Antennas & Memes XVII

2016

Mixed Media

244 x 52 x 43 cm

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Masimba Hwati

Rinamanyanga Hariputirwe I (That Which Has Horns Cannot Be Wrapped)

2016

Mixed Media

170 x 73 x 44 cm

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Masimba Hwati

Rinamanyanga Hariputirwe II (That Which Has Horns Cannot Be Wrapped)

2016

Mixed Media

133 x 100 x 72 cm

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Masimba Hwati

Rinamanyanga Hariputirwe III (That Which Has Horns Cannot Be Wrapped)

2016

Mixed Media

160 x 60 x 35 cm

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Masimba Hwati

Rinamanyanga Hariputirwe IV (That Which Has Horns Cannot Be Wrapped)

2016

Mixed Media

150 x 72 x 46 cm

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Masimba Hwati

Rinamanyanga Hariputirwe V (That Which Has Horns Cannot Be Wrapped)

2016

Mixed Media

158 x 55 x 50 cm

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Masimba Hwati

Rinamanyanga Hariputirwe VI (That Which Has Horns Cannot Be Wrapped)

2016

Mixed Media

168 x 90 x 45 cm

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Masimba Hwati

Putugadzike (Tea)

2016

Mixed Media

43 x 305 x 83 cm

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Masimba Hwati

Don't Worry be Happy

2016

Mixed Media

66 x 160 x 60 cm

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Masimba Hwati

Neo-tribal V
2016
Mixed Media
39 cm

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