

NICODIM

Moffat Takadiwa

Brutalized Language

Nicodim New York

January 27 – February 24, 2022



Moffat Takadiwa, *Re-Reading Korekore*, 2022

*You are a human animal
You are a very special breed
For you are the only animal
Who can think,
Who can reason,
Who can read!*
— Jiminy Cricket, 1955

Humanity has a brutal track record. When we're not warring with each other, we're warring with the planet, filling its oceans, air, and soil with plastics and toxins. The lands richest with natural bounty have

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had it the worst. Throughout her recent history, Zimbabwe has suffered from man's brutality as much as any: her people colonized and subjected by the British South Africa Company in 1890 and exploited for diamonds and labor, then, when she obtained self-governance, she was crippled by western sanctions and her leadership mind-poisoned by corrupt capitalists. Now, her native soil is constantly stripmined for rare-earth metals and covered with miles and miles of "recyclables" discarded by new and former colonizers.

Brutalized Language, Moffat Takadiwa's second solo exhibition with Nicodim, casts light on the violence inherent to globalization that remains largely invisible to the west. He dissects the language of western art history into the visual vocabulary and feel of his own people. What seem at first like quilted abstractions rely on well-known cornerstones of western figuration. Elements of Picasso's "Guernica" are broken down and reimagined within the two large-scale pieces that anchor the installation, the vocabulary of Picasso's anti-war masterpiece repurposed and recycled to depict the carnage of environmental massacres and cultural white washing in Zimbabwe. "Human Brutality" resembles the hanging carcass of one of Picasso's beasts, or perhaps the central figure Francis Bacon's "Three studies of a crucifixion," whose subject was used as impetus for most manifest destiny-type rationales for colonization. The ears and eyes of Guernica's bull are also evident within "Re-Reading Korekore," for which Takadiwa disassembled a dictionary of the Shona language into squares and affixed them to the top of English keyboard keys, reasserting the will of his people above those who have sought to erase and minimize it. Three "Reflections" pieces are crafted to resemble cheap Chinese novelty mirrors that often wind up in the dumps outside Harare, forcing the viewer to reflect on their own indemnity in all of the above.

Takadiwa has long sought to use his art as a community platform, building a sustainable microeconomy around the sourcing of materials and production of his labor-intensive tapestries, as well as providing studio space and instruction to local youth via his Mbare Art Project. Last year, during protests against the government, an angry mob attacked the studio. *Brutalized Language* is Takadiwa's meditation on human reason in the face of our more feral impulses. We are human animals, a very special breed.

Moffat Takadiwa (b. 1983, Karoi) lives and works in Harare, Zimbabwe. Part of the post-independence generation of artists in Zimbabwe, Takadiwa has exhibited extensively across major institutions in Zimbabwe as well as internationally. Takadiwa also was a founder of Mbare Art Space in Harare where he plays a part in mentoring the growing artist community. Recent exhibitions include *Witch Craft: Rethinking Power*, Craft Contemporary, Los Angeles (2021, solo); *This is Not Africa: Unlearn What You*

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Have Learned, ARoS Museum, Denmark (2021); *Mr. Foreman you have destroyed the farm*, Semiose, Paris, France (2021, solo); *INXS: Never Before Seen Major Works by Simphiwe Ndzube, Moffat Takadiwa, Zhou Yilun*, Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2020); *Son of the Soil*, Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2019, solo); *Thread.*, Long Beach Museum of Art, Long Beach, CA (2019); *Stormy Weather*, Museum Arnhem, Arnhem, The Netherlands (2019); *Second Hand: Selected Works from the Jameel Art Collection*, Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai, United Arab Emirates (2019); *Material Insanity*, Museum of African Contemporary Art Al Maaden, Marrakech, Morocco (2019); *The Eye Sees Not Itself*, Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles (2018); and *Chinafrika. under construction*, Museum for Contemporary Art Leipzig (2017).

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Moffat Takadiwa

° Born 1983, Karoi, Zimbabwe
Lives and works in Harare, Zimbabwe

Education

2008 BA Honors Fine Art, Harare Polytechnic College, Zimbabwe

Solo Exhibitions

- 2020 *Brutalized Language*, Nicodim Gallery, New York
2021 *Witch Craft: Re-Thinking Power*, Craft Contemporary, Los Angeles
Mr. Foreman you have destroyed the farm, Semiose, Paris, France
2019 *Son of the Soil*, Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles
2018 *Framed in Colonial Lenses*, Raw Spot Gallery, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa
2017 *Say Hello to English*, Tyburn Gallery, London, United Kingdom
2016 *Across Borders*, Whatiftheworld, Cape Town, South Africa
2015 *Foreign Objects*, Tyburn Gallery, London, United Kingdom
Local Foreign Products, Gallery Special Projects, FNB Joburg Art Fair, Johannesburg, South Africa
2012 *Africa Not Reachable!*, First Floor Gallery, Harare, Zimbabwe

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2021 *Crown of Thorns*, Phillips, New York
Old Growth - New Decay: Environmental Justice, Environmentalism and Sustainability, Guggenheim Gallery, Chapman University, Orange, California
Parcours Saint-Germain, Au fil de l'art, Phillips, Paris, France
This is Not Africa: Unlearn What You Have Learned, ARoS Aarhus Art Museum, Denmark
Disrupting the Canon, The Arts Club, London, United Kingdom
2020 *Constructing an Imaginary*, Badr El Jundi, Málaga, Spain
Recyclage/Surcyclage, Fondation Villa Datris, L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue, France
INXS: Never Before Seen Major Works by Simphiwe Ndzube, Moffat Takadiwa, Zhou Yilun, Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles, California
Pineal Eye Infection, curated by Aaron Moulton, Seasons, Los Angeles, California
Podium, 181 Fremont, San Francisco, California
2019 *Stormy Weather*, Museum Arnhem, Arnhem, The Netherlands

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- Second Hand: Selected Works from the Jameel Art Collection*, Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
- Thread.*, Long Beach Museum of Art, Long Beach, California
- KUBATANA*, Vestfossen Kunstlaboratorium, Oslo, Norway
- Ex Africa – storie e identità di un'arte universale*, Museo Civico Archeologico, Bologna, Italy
- The Extreme Present*, Jeffrey Deitch and Gagosian, The Moore Building, Miami, Florida
- Material Insanity*, Museum of African Contemporary Art Al Maaden, Marrakech, Morocco
- 2018 *The Eye Sees Not Itself*, Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles, California
- Defying the Narrative: Contemporary Art from West and Southern Africa*, Evergold Projects, San Francisco, California
- Language is the Only Homeland*, The Nest, The Hague, Netherlands
- Right at the Equator*, Depart Foundation, Malibu, California
- 2017 *Le jour qui vient*, curated by Marie-Ann Yemsi, Galerie des Galeries, Galeries Lafayette, Paris, France
- On being alone and unbearable loneliness*, Watou Art Festival, Belgium
- Chinafrika*, Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst Leipzig, Germany; Kunstfest Weimar, Germany
- De Nature en Sculpture*, Villa Datriis Foundation, L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue, France
- Collector's Stage*, curated by Enin Supriyanto, Art Stage Singapore, Singapore
- 2016 *Dear Europa...*, Whatiftheworld, Cape Town, South Africa
- When Tomorrow Comes*, Wits Art Museum, Johannesburg, South Africa; Michaelis Galleries, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2015 *Broken English*, Tyburn Gallery, London, United Kingdom
- Foreign Bodies*, Whatiftheworld, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2014 *Uncertain Terms*, Whatiftheworld Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- SCINTILLA: An Alchemy Show*, Commune 1, Cape Town, South Africa
- Project, 1:54* 2nd edition African Art Fair London, United Kingdom
- BATIK d'AFRIQUE*, Ethan Cohen Gallery, New York, New York
- Warp & Woof*, The Hole, New York, New York
- Meet the artist project*, Chinembiri studio, Harare, Zimbabwe
- 2013 *Project 1:54*, African Art Fair London, United Kingdom
- Good News exhibition*, New University, Lisbon, Portugal
- No Limits*, HIFA, Harare, Zimbabwe
- Chiso*, First Floor Gallery, Harare, Zimbabwe
- 2012 *Harare Haarare!*, First Floor Gallery, Harare, Zimbabwe
- Inexactly This*, Kunstvlaai Festival of Independence, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- Wars/Karas*, Octopus Projects, Riga, Latvia
- Jo'burg Fringe*, Johannesburg, South Africa
- A Tale of Two Cities*, National Gallery, Harare, Zimbabwe
- Family, Tradition and Religion*, Gallery Delta, Zimbabwe
- 2011 *Still Life Exhibition*, Delta Gallery, Zimbabwe
- Harare beyond Words*, Gallery H, Bangkok, Thailand

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- Mbare Kutapira*, First Floor Gallery, Chinembiri Studios, Harare, Zimbabwe
Harare Paris, Pavé d'Orsay, Paris, France
Harare International Festival of Art Exhibition, National Gallery, Zimbabwe
Rangu Izwi, First Floor Gallery, Harare, Zimbabwe
Austral < Affric, First Floor Gallery, The Basement, Harare, Zimbabwe
2010 *First Steps*, First Floor Gallery, Harare, Zimbabwe
Facet Zimbabwe Now, Delta Gallery, Zimbabwe
Avignon University, Avignon, France
Live and Direct, National Gallery, Harare, Zimbabwe
Young Artist Exhibition, Gallery Delta, Harare, Zimbabwe
2009 *Peace through Unity in Diversity*, Gallery Delta, Harare, Zimbabwe
Walls, Berlin Wall, Gallery Delta, Harare, Zimbabwe
2008 *Cottco*, National Gallery, Harare, Zimbabwe
Enriching Woman, Gallery Delta, Harare, Zimbabwe
2007 *Young Artist Exhibition*, Gallery Delta, Harare, Zimbabwe

Awards

- 2016 Award of Merit, Cottco Exhibition and Prize, National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe
2012 Award of Attendance, Zimbabwe Olympic Committee, Harare, Zimbabwe
2010 Award of Merit, Peace Through Unity Exhibition, Gallery Delta, Harare, Zimbabwe
Special Mention Prize, Facet Zimbabwe Now Exhibition, Delta Gallery, Zimbabwe
2009 2nd Prize Walls, Special Mentions, Peace Through Unity Exhibition Delta, Harare, Zimbabwe
2008 Special Prize, Enriching Woman, Gallery Delta, Harare, Zimbabwe

Selected Public and Private Collections

Art Jameel Collection, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Arsenal Contemporary, Toronto, Canada
Beth Rudin DeWoody Collection, Miami, Florida, United States
CC Foundation, Shanghai, China
Centre National d'Art Plastique, Paris, France
Foundation de 11 Lijnen, Oudenburg, Belgium
Museum of African Contemporary Art Al Maaden, Marrakesh, Morocco
Roc Nation Collection, Los Angeles, US
State Department of the United States, Art in Embassies, Harare, Zimbabwe
Villa Datriis Foundation, France

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Publications

2011 Hecker, Judith (ed.), *Impressions from South Africa, 1965 to Now: Prints from the Museum of Modern Art*, Museum Of Modern Art, NYC, 2011

Residencies

2017 The Gathering, Kenya

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