



COVER DESIGN
Taylor Nkomo
National Gallery of Zimbabwe

ZIMBABWE ART

An introductory exhibition of art and craft of Zimbabwe
organised by
The National Gallery & National Arts Foundation of Zimbabwe
in conjunction with
Mrs. K. O-Lan Style and the Africa Centre
with the assistance of
The Visiting Arts Unit of Great Britain

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is gratefully acknowledged



NATIONAL ARTS FOUNDATION OF ZIMBABWE

THE AFRICA CENTRE, LONDON
APRIL 7 – MAY 6 1981





TRADITIONAL ARTEFACTS
Collection National Gallery of Zimbabwe

Photograph: National Gallery of Zimbabwe

FOREWORD

Influences from ancient and modern civilizations, both African and Western, have fused to create a growing contemporary expression, drawing from all experiences of the land Zimbabwe. The art of the peoples of this country covers a broad spectrum of creative activity from traditional artefacts to contemporary sculpture, from wire toys to etching and painting.

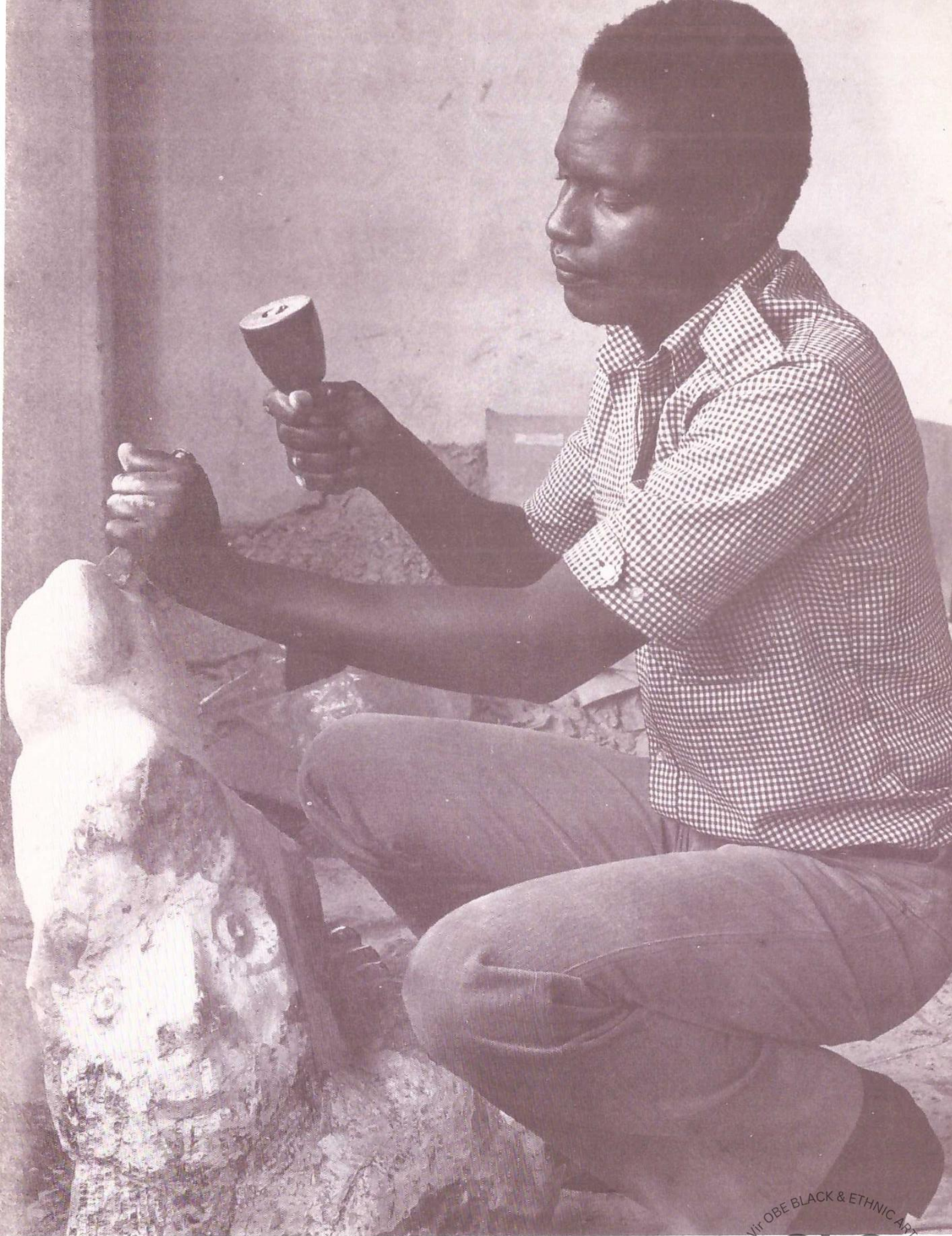
This small exhibition, organised as an adjunct to the exhibition of Zimbabwean book titles originally conceived by Mrs. O-Lane Style, is a glimpse at this diversity and heritage but does not seek to present itself as representative. Rather, it is an introductory insight into the material culture which is part of the evolution from the Kingdom of Monomatapa to Zimbabwe.

Drums, rattles, beadwork, ceremonial knives, headrests and other artefacts have in many instances remained in individual families for many years, passing from father to son, carrying with them the history of the people and forming the earliest artistic expression of the Zimbabwean people. The 'stone houses' of Great Zimbabwe remain as evidence of the expansive Kingdom of Monomatapa, and the carved soapstone birds found at this site have created speculation and interest. The emergence within two decades of a contemporary art of stone sculpture echoes these finds and has grown into a forceful example of modern African art.

As facilities and materials are made more easily available, new departures into the exploration of painting and graphic works are being made by younger artists who identify with and are part of the continent of Africa and the country of Zimbabwe. Intriguing experiments by children using wire have resulted in toys of ingeniously imaginative design and construction.

The small nature of this exhibition has dictated the exclusion of the work of many artists as well as examples of contemporary crafts, but these will hopefully be included in a more comprehensive exhibition in the future. This exhibit is seen as only the beginning of a wider exposure of the art of the newest independent country of Africa.

C.M. Till, M.F.A.
Director
National Gallery of Zimbabwe
April 1981



TAYLOR NKOMO in the National Gallery of Zimbabwe

Photograph: Nick Nocchi

CONTEMPORARY ART

The art of Zimbabwe is still comparatively young but the country possesses a small group of talented people who have forged the basis of a Zimbabwean movement on which to build. By virtue of the dearth of opportunity and active stimulation, they are the first generation of professional artists who have worked concertedly to form this platform.

Zimbabwean Stone Sculpture

The birthplace of Zimbabwean stone sculpture in its present form, or "Shona Sculpture" as it is generally termed, was the Workshop School of the National Gallery of Zimbabwe. A loose association of aspiring artists rather than a formal institution, the Workshop School provided facilities and materials as well as the vital encouragement and stimulating environment so necessary for the development of the new art. The mission schools had provided the initial impetus towards African self-expression which the National Gallery, under the directorship of Frank McEwen, was able to build upon, resulting in the emergence of a significant art movement unparalleled in modern Africa.

The Workshop School came into being in 1957 along with its parent body, the National Gallery, although for some time it existed more as a cherished idea than as a fully functional entity. Throughout the early days however, when formal quarters were not yet provided, the all-important ingredients of encouragement, enthusiasm and critical advice were readily available, along with material assistance. Initially the chosen medium was paint but gradually, during the formative period of 1957-61, the African bias towards three-dimensional expression became dominant and the artists progressed from wood and soft stone to granite and serpentine. In this short while the unique and exciting forms of Shona sculpture were evolved, and word of this great awakening spread so that a stream of rural artists, who had begun to sculpt in earnest, started to bring their work to the Gallery for appraisal. Foremost among these were the artists of the Inyanga area whose early work, brought to the Gallery by Pat Pearce, had been a contributory factor in the movement away from paint to stone.

Encouraged by these developments, other communities began to grow up in various parts of the country. One of these was the community of Tengenenge Farm near Sipolilo. Here Tom Blomefield gave a home to numerous would-be sculptors, stone being supplied from a large deposit of serpentine on the farm. From a community which at one time numbered some 300 members, Tengenenge produced a dozen artists of note who continue to work today, although the security situation caused an exodus from farm to city. After a close association with the Gallery, Blomefield opened the Tengenenge Gallery in Salisbury as an outlet for the work of artists from his group.

A second community of note is that of Vukutu, established in 1968 at Sanyatwi near Inyanga by the McEwens, to serve as a rural centre for artists associated with the Workshop School who preferred to work within the environment of the countryside. Like Tengenenge, the activities of Vukutu were curtailed by a deteriorating security situation, but it is hoped that the long awaited advent of peace will now restore both these centres to their former flourishing state of activity.

The images in Shona Sculpture are inextricably bound up with the age-old spiritual beliefs of tribal myth and legend. Whilst this remains true even today, over the years the work has evolved from an obvious to a more subtle imagery. The sculptures depict such symbols of myth and legend as the all-seeing Cyclopean eye through which the thoughts and actions of man are observed by unseen powers; the trees image of the sacred Muchacha tree; the Tsuru spirit shown as a hybrid creature; the baboon; and the Chapungu bird, the divine messenger of the Shona.

John Takawira, Sylvester Mubayi, Moses Masaya and Joseph Ndandarika, amongst other early sculptors, are acutely spiritual and this is reflected in the mythical themes of their works, which bear titles such as 'Skeletal Baboon', 'Skeletal Bird Man', 'The Great Insect God', 'Ancestor Head' and 'Zuzu Spirit'. The artists have developed their individual styles, and their imagery and association of ideas have progressed towards an aesthetically more integrated form. John Takawira's skeletal beings and one-eyed figures have given way to a more representational incarnation of baboons, lions and bulls, perceived with a direct observation and simplicity which captures the essence and spirit of the subject. In like manner Takawira's own shaven, shining head and his large expressive eyes are echoed in his series of highly polished sculptured heads. The exclusion of eyes in later work increases the silent vigilance of these pieces. His 'unborn animal' series exhibits a feeling of latent energy, of life waiting to emerge from the stone.

Nicholas Mukomberanwa's angular stylized figures reflect his early associations as a pupil at Serima Mission. His work draws little from mythological symbolism, but has overtones of what could possibly be termed African Christian art. Mother and Child figures, with hands clasped in prayer, have often been subjects for his sculpture. His piece 'Sleeping Family' is simply that – a mother, father and children under the blankets, an unexpected subject, childlike in its directness of statement. His most recent work has developed an aesthetic sophistication eerily reminiscent of Cubism.

Thomas Mukarobgwa, one of the most spiritual sculptors, has an instinctive feeling for the stone, which he says talks to him. Thomas speaks of the ancient past of his people and attempts to show that past and

its oral tradition. His hybrid man/animal mythical figures evoke the mystery of the African spirits and reveal a tantalising glimpse of this fertile imaginative world. His works ripple with energy and caged tension and bear titles such as 'Listening to my Friend', the friend being a totem animal, the python, which controls destiny; or 'Medium Possessed with Spirit', in which the features are distorted as the spirit presence speaks. Thomas is a prolific worker and his experience is continually shown in new associations of ideas and forms which are rendered with the assurance of a sculptor who has mastered his medium and uses it to give substance to his world.

Henry Maengerere, known simply as Henry, of the Téngenenge School, remains close to an aesthetic of art for art's sake. His work has a highly individual stylised stamp and is readily appreciated and understood by a western aesthetically orientated public. His starkly simplified heads bear titles such as 'Mango Head', 'Shovel Head', 'Sunflower Head' and so on, titles which describe each of the sculptural forms. His association of ideas is often inspired and intriguingly original. 'Birds in a Tree', a sculpture of a stylised Euphorbia tree with two birds incised on its crown, is strikingly simple in its conception, yet unique.

The close relationship remains between the sculptures and the spiritual beliefs of the Shona, the myth and memory of ancient times, although its expression has moved from the awakening and formative years to become a bold statement of the mature artist. Traditional imagery, themes and subjects reflect the understanding these people have of the natural world. The sculptor draws from this knowledge and from what one might call the collective unconscious of his tribal background and culture.

There have been large numbers of sculptors involved with the Workshop School and Zimbabwean stone sculpture who have contributed to its development. The political climate in Zimbabwe over the past few years has drastically reduced the number of artists but tempered the few who now form the hard core. John Takawira, Mukomberanwa, Mukarobgwa and Henry are but four of this group who have established a new artistic tradition. Many other sculptors of note — Paul Gwichiri, Isaac Manyadza, Nicholas Samhokore, Makiwa Chimoyo, Bernard Takawira, Sylvester Mubayi and Joseph Ndandarika among others, continue to produce characteristic work of quality and originality, thereby ensuring the growth and continuation of this unique art form.

Painting and Graphic Work

Contemporary painting and graphic work is represented by a relatively small group of established and up-coming artists and goes back to early European explorers and travellers such as Thomas Baines and Alice Balfour. The early years of this century saw the formation of art societies which provided the stimulus for artists. The introduction of painting and sculpture to the African peoples was made by the mission schools, with two in particular playing a large part. These were the Serima Mission founded in 1948 in the Serima Tribal Trust Land in central Mashonaland, and the Cryene Mission near Bulawayo, established in 1938 by Canon Paterson.

The Annual Exhibition of the National Gallery which was inaugurated in 1957, the year of the Gallery's opening, was established to foster and encourage local art. The standard of work has steadily improved with successive exhibitions and the foundation of an indigenous contemporary art established. This has been dominated by, but is not exclusive to, white artists trained in the Western art school tradition. However, the Workshop School has produced painters of note whose bold, expressionistic works have drawn attention and display the same vitality and idea association as their sculptural counterparts. Thomas Mukarobgwa, also a leading sculptor, paints his childhood memories and his involvement with the spiritual world of his beliefs, which were those of his ancestors. His vibrant colour juxtaposition gives his work the instinctive, untutored boldness and uncluttered sensibility of the child artist. The work of Kingsely Sambo ripples with the energy and rhythms of his people, presented with a broken brushstroke impression. John Hlatywayo, art school trained, presents more representational but highly personal renditions of the land and its people. The paint application is more tutored but the content is starkly and simply presented. Joseph Ndandarika and Charles Fernando at one time formed part of this painting school but are no longer active. Taylor Nkomo, Philip Nondo and Vote Thebe are among the younger artists actively making a contribution to the art of Zimbabwe.

The roots of the work produced by many Zimbabwean painters are found largely in European and American trends, although inspiration is drawn from a wide variety of influences and the painters display an individual character. The war has played little overt part in influencing Zimbabwean painters with its horrifying nature; Helen Lieros has touched its perimeter with an iconography of mythological figures. However, in its aftermath, many of the younger painters, such as Steve Williams, are beginning to reflect the upheavals of the last years.

Sculpture

Contemporary sculpture other than stone sculpture remains very much in the minority, with artists like Arthur Azevedo, David Chudy, Joseph Muli and Gillian Kaufman having traditionally occupied the centre stage. Arthur Azevedo uses welded metal to capture the essence of the animals he portrays. Gillian Kaufman has had many works commissioned which can be seen incorporated in the buildings of Bulawayo and Salisbury. Joseph Muli uses wood as his medium and has formulated his expression of African figures through many styles to arrive at tall, elongated Masai-like people of his native Kenya, and more recently composite pieces of figures and animals.

Very little sculpture in Zimbabwe is of wood. Sam Songo, Lazarus Khumalo and Job Kekana are sculptors who have moved in and out of the sphere of art for many years. Moses Gudza works in various materials including stone, wood and metal.

Fabrics

An exciting field currently being explored by three women artists in Zimbabwe is that of fabric design. Babette Fitzgerald and June Levy are working on colourful wall hangings and dress lengths: Fitzgerald using natural paste resists and plant dyes in muted earth shades, her designs reflecting the influence of traditional patterns; Levy using stitch-and-dye, printing and resists techniques in representational designs which have a strong local content. The use of natural materials where possible, and the indigenous character of the designs, give to their fabrics an unmistakably Zimbabwean flavour. The third artist, June Davies, designs and weaves strikingly individual wall-hangings. Using a variety of raw fibres and natural pigments, she forms textured and layered handwoven hangings of abstract design, the quality of which has made her work eagerly sought after by collectors.

CRAFTWORK

Traditional

The traditional crafts of Zimbabwe provided the usual range of utensils and household articles required by a primitive society, such as handbuilt earthenware pots, plaited grass baskets and mats, carved wooden furnishings and ceremonial weaponry. Common to most of the craft articles produced was the rich geometric patterning of the decorative work. Of special note in this respect are the fine wooden headrests with their particularly satisfying carved patterns of spirals, diamonds or squares on the supporting section below the curved neck piece. The combination of geometric motifs was constantly varied, so that, despite a superficial similarity, the pattern of each decorated headrest was unique, an indication perhaps of the personal nature of the article. Equally satisfying are the intricate patterns of coiled and plaited wire used in the decoration of the handles, shafts and sheaths of ceremonial weaponry. Occasionally this wire ornamentation was used together with rows of geometric designs carved into the wooden sections of the weapon, thus forming a highly effective decorative combination.

Examples of traditional basketry show a similar concern with geometric decoration, the patterns being formed by variations in the direction of the weave rather than by the utilization of colour contrasts. In some cases, thin wooden strips with typical carved geometric designs were incorporated into the side structure of the basket. On the whole, traditional basketry decoration was discreet and rather austere. Similar restraint was evident in the production of gudza or bark mats, in which stripes of muted earth colours in harmonious proportions formed the only design. The colours were obtained from natural mineral or plant pigments and the gentle gradations of shades determined the restful character of the mats.

Contemporary

While many of the traditional craft techniques have been lost or their quality of workmanship diminished by commercialism, Zimbabwe can speak proudly of the diverse range of fine craftwork which is produced country-wide today. A strong relationship to the crafts of old is maintained through the continued use of traditional designs, colours and forms, and in many instances the original techniques themselves are employed. This is the case with gudza mats which have changed very little over the years, although gudza is now utilized for a wider variety of articles such as hats and bags. The handbuilding of traditional pots has also been continued by a few individuals over the years.

A relatively new and flourishing craft in Zimbabwe is the hand-weaving of rugs and cloth. The pure wool rugs and the dress and curtain fabrics are coloured with natural dyes and their design is based on traditional

patterns. Craft centres which are noted for the fine quality of such items are the Harare Weaving Centre, Chivimbo and Larkhill Weavers.

African Wire Toys

A recent development on the craft scene in Zimbabwe is the unique form of expression evidenced in the wire toy creations of African children. Assembled from bits and pieces of wire, bottle caps, plastic and other waste, the toys are ingenious models of buses, helicopters, motor cars, sewing machines and other observed elements of the everyday world, many complete with moving parts.



Catalogue No. 9

Enid Bolze 'Symbolic Collar'

CATALOGUE

PAINTING

- | | | |
|--|---------|--------|
| 1. FERNANDO, C.
'Jazzified Painting' | Oil | \$ 68 |
| LINDSELL-STEWART, A. | | |
| 2. 'Raising the Flag' | Oil | \$ 250 |
| 3. 'The Meeting' | Oil | £ 275 |
| MUKAROBGWA, T. | | |
| 4. 'Strange Dancing of Human
& Animal Spirit' | Oil | £ 168 |
| THEBE, V. | | |
| 5. 'Spiritual Alphabet Soup' | Oil | £ 135 |
| THOMPSON, H. | | |
| 6. 'High Land' | Acrylic | £ 200 |
| WILLIAMS, S. | | |
| 7. 'Rhodesian Landscape III' | Oil | £ 68 |

GRAPHICS

BOLZE, E.		
8. 'Symbolic Sun'	Ink/Glue Resist	£ 35
9. 'Symbolic Collar'	Ink/Glue Resist	£ 35
CRIPPS, L.		
10. 'In the Balance'	Graphite	£ 35
HLATYWAYO, J.		
11. 'Figures'	Oil on Paper	£ 68
LIEROS, H.		
12. 'Zimbabwean Metamorphosis'	Oil on Paper	£ 100
13. 'Shadows of Africa'	Mixed Media/Graphite	£ 68
MUKONBERANWA, N.		
14. 'People Singing'	Stone Print	£ 30
MUSHAMBI, L.		
15. 'Royal Treasure'	Pen and Ink	£ 140
MTZIRA NONDO, P.		
16. 'Birth'	Screen Print	£ 35
17. 'Marriage'	Screen Print	£ 35
NKOMO, T.		
18. 'Harvesting'	Screen Print	£ 68
19. 'Threshing & Winnowing Sorghum'	Screen Print	£ 68

SAUNDERS, D.			
20.	'Tombstones IV'	Coloured Etching	£ 65
21.	'War Heroes I'	Coloured Etching	£ 65
THEBE, V.			
22.	'Tomorrow will be Better'	Wax Crayon	£ 54



Catalogue No. 17

P. Mtzira Nondo 'Marriage'

SCULPTURE

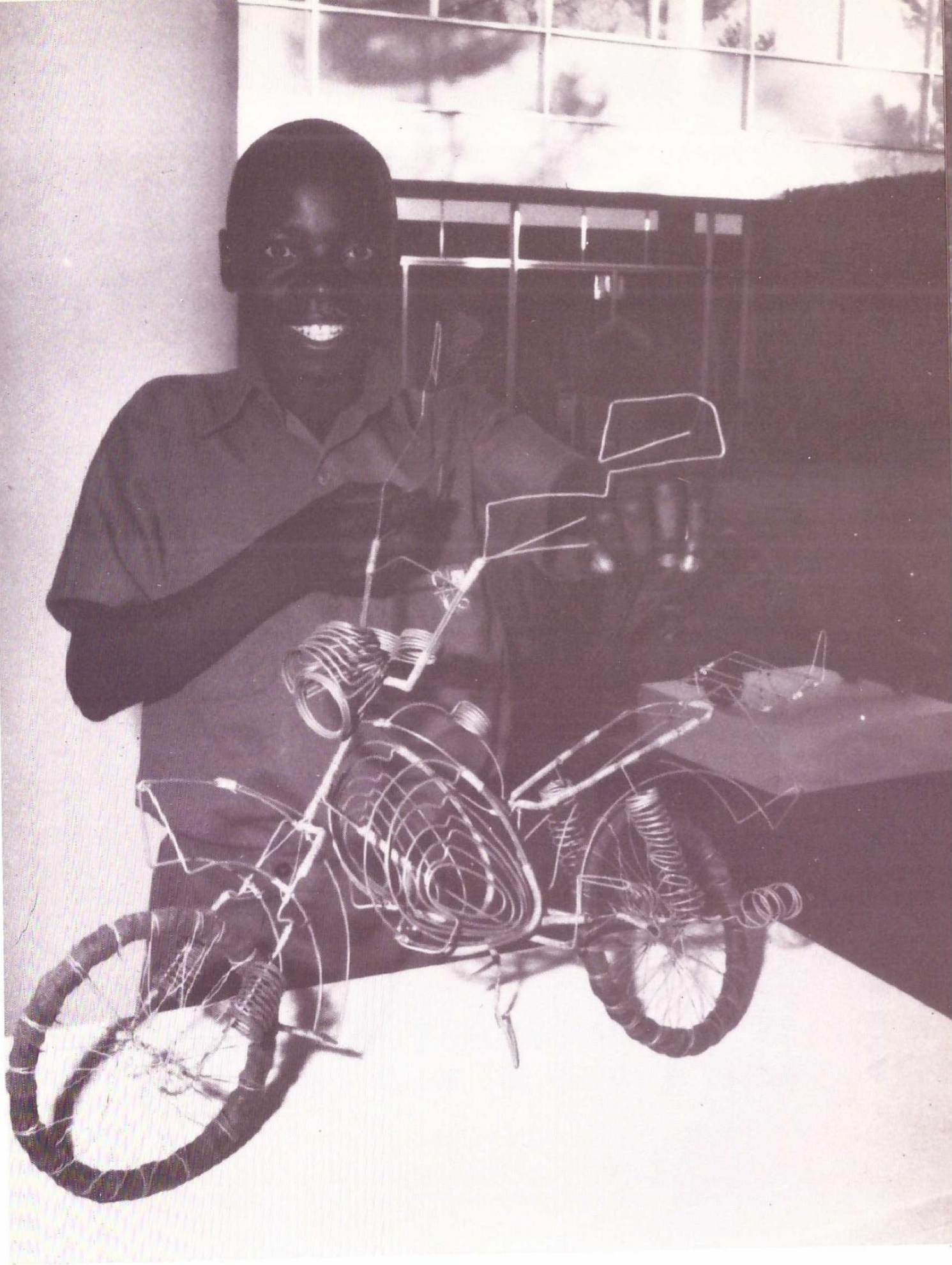
23.	AZEVEDO, A. 'Young Goat'	Welded Metal	£ 538
24.	MULI, J. 'World of today'	Ebony	£2 350
25.	'Zimbabwe War Victims'	Ebony	£3 360
26.	MUKAROBGWA, T. 'Mouse Ready to Run Away'	Serpentine	£ 215
27.	MUNZWANDI, C. 'Receiving the Ancient Spirit'	Serpentine	£ 200
28.	TAKAWIRA, B. 'Praying for Peace'	Verdite	£ 400
29.	TAKAWIRA, J. 'Wise Owl'	Serpentine	£ 385
30.	MAENGERERE, (HENRY) 'Head'	Serpentine	£ 235
31.	GUDZA, M. 'The Tracks of My Tears'	Wood	£ 200
32.	NDANDARIKA, J. 'Thinking Man'	Serpentine	£ 300
33.	MUBAYI, S. 'Birdman Spirit'	Serpentine	£ 235
34.	MUKONBERANWA, N. 'Talking to the Spirits'	Serpentine	£ 225

TEXTILES & WEAVING

CALABASH TEXTILES		
35. 'Destined'	Hand Painted/Natural Dyed Cloth	£ 55
36. 'Tangled Deception'	Hand Painted/Natural Dyed Cloth	£ 55
DAVIES, J.		
37. '1980'	Wool/Karakul/Mohair on Wool Warp	£ 245
FITZGERALD, B.		
38. 'Sand'	Resist Print	N.F.S.
(On loan from Miss C. Hamlich)		
NOLAND, M.		
39. 'Script'	Print Cloth	£ 35
TAWENGA, I. (Larkhill Weavers)		
40. Untitled	Woollen Rug	£ 95
TRADITIONAL		
41. Gudza Mat (G)	Bark Fibre	£ 40
TRADITIONAL		
42. Gudza Mat (H)	Bark Fibre	£ 37
TRADITIONAL		
43. Gudza Mat (I)	Bark Fibre	£ 34

TRADITIONAL ARTEFACTS

44. MUFUKA (8389)	Batonka Pipe. Binga District. These pipes are smoked exclusively by the women.	£ 15
45. MUFUKA (8392)	Batonka Pipe. Binga District	£ 15
46. MUFUKA (8657)	Batonka Pipe. Binga District.	£ 15
47. MUFUKA (8617)	Batonka Pipe. Binga District.	£ 15
48. CHIBULA (8355)	Batonka Stool. Binga District.	£ 20
49. CHIBULA (8615)	Batonka Stool. Binga District	£ 20
50. DENDE (6868)	Calabash. Bumi Hills. Used for carrying milk, water or beer.	£ 10
51. HAKATA (8347)	'Throwing Bones'. Used by the Nganga (Witch doctor) for the purpose of divination. Bumi Hills.	£ 24
52. HAKATA (8578)	'Throwing Bones'. Binga District.	£ 30
53. MUKOMBE (905)	Drinking Cup. Mudzi District.	£ 6
54. DURI (6989)	Pestle and Mortar for pounding Meal. Mtoko District.	£ 10
55. NGOMA (9999)	Drum. Used during ceremonial dances. Binga District.	£ 34



WIRE TOY EXHIBITION

National Gallery of Zimbabwe

TRADITIONAL ARTEFACTS (CONT.)

56. MAGAVHU (8427)	Rattles tied to the legs during ceremonial dances. Binga District.	£ 15
57. MAGAVHU (7972)	Leg Rattles. Mudzi District.	£ 10
58. MAGAVHU (7974)	Leg Rattles. Mudzi District	£ 10
59. ZENGA (8888)	Mortar for grinding tobacco. Mudzi District.	£ 15
60. CHUMA (8442)	Necklace. Mrewa District.	£ 15
61. NDARIRA (7427)	Bracelet. Copper Bangle with seed pods. Mudzi District.	£ 23
62. NDARIRA (7286)	Bracelet. Copper Bangle with seed pods. Pfungwe District.	£ 23
63. MURUMIKO (56)	Container made from horn. The practise of blood-letting is used as a remedy for certain illnesses, blood being stored in this container.	£ 6
64. NHEKWE (777)	Horn Snuff Box. Mudzi District	£ 10
65. NHEKWE (666)	Calabash Snuff Box. Mudzi District	£ 10
66. HARI (8414)	Pot for storing beer. Binga District.	£ 10
67. MUSWE (8134)	Nganga's (Witchdoctor's) Fly whisk. Binga District.	£ 10

TRADITIONAL ARTEFACTS (CONT.)

68. BAKATWA (7803)	Ceremonial Knife (without sheath). Has significance in religious ceremonies, and is kept in the house as a talisman against bad spirits. Mudzi District.	£ 15
69. BATONKA DOOR (8576)	Carved/Painted wooden door to the entrance of a hut. Binga District.	£ 50
70. CHIBULA (1000)	Batonka Stool. Binga District	£ 24
71. ITOWO (8616)	Shield. Used in ceremonial dances. Binga District.	£ 24
72. HAKATA (8578)	'Throwing Bones'. Binga District.	£ 30
73. MBIRA	Musical Instrument, still in popular use. Of the type 'Dza Vadzimu' (mbira of the spirits)	£ 35

Following items on loan from Queen Victoria Museum, Salisbury.

74. DUNDU (ET 6242)	Basket. Used for keeping ornaments such as necklets, armbands, etc. Also used by the Nganga (Witch doctor) for keeping divining items.	N.F.S.
75. MBIRA (ET 4095)	Musical instrument of the type 'Sansa'. With tin & shell resonator.	N.F.S.
76. CHIPENDANI (ET 4136)	Musical Bow and Gourd resonator. Plays soft music for individual entertainment.	N.F.S.
77. BOSVO (ET 2527)	Horn Trumpet. Used for passing messages.	N.F.S.
78. PEMBE (ET 2623)	Flute. Played for entertainment, usually by young men herding cattle.	N.F.S.

TRADITIONAL ARTEFACTS (CONT.)

Following items on loan from National Gallery of Zimbabwe.

79. BAKATWA	Ceremonial Knife. Binga District.	N.F.S.
80. CHUMA (J)	Necklace. Binga District.	N.F.S.
81. CHUMA (K)	Necklace. Binga District.	N.F.S.

WIRE TOYS (MADE BY AFRICAN CHILDREN)

82. 'Motorbike' (A)	£ 35
83. 'Car' (B)	£ 35
84. 'Car' (C)	£ 35
85. 'Racing Bike' (D)	£ 20
86. 'Delivery Bike' (E)	£ 16
87. 'Penny Farthing' (F)	£ 15

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.