



ZIMBABWE PAVILION AT 57TH INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA

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Harare, 8 February 2017—The National Gallery of Zimbabwe and the Commissioner for the Zimbabwe Pavilion, in collaboration with the Ministry of Rural Development, Promotion and Preservation of National Culture and Heritage, present Charles Bhebe, Admire Kamudzengerere, Sylvester Mubayi and Dana Whabira as the representatives for the Zimbabwe Pavilion at the 57th International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia. The four will create new artworks and multimedia installations that will transform the entirety of Santa Maria della Pieta into an authentic Zimbabwean environment.

The Zimbabwe Pavilion, curated by Raphael Chikukwa the Chief Curator and Deputy Director of The National Gallery of Zimbabwe and commissioned by Mrs. Doreen Sibanda the National Gallery of Zimbabwe’s Executive Director, will be an exceptional moment in the National Gallery’s endeavor to promote Zimbabwean art and culture internationally.

The four artists will conceive new works, incorporating sculpture, prints, drawings, objects, paintings and sound for the six galleries of the Zimbabwe Pavilion. The artists and their experiences in the ever changing world are the source of inspiration for the Zimbabwean Pavilion at Venice and this year’s theme ***Deconstructing Boundaries: Exploring Ideas of Belonging*** continues the interrogatory nature of the Zimbabwe Pavilion at the 57th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia.

In the face of relentless globalisation, physical boundaries are getting blurred and challenged. The Zimbabwe Pavilion Exhibition seeks to provide another perspective on the themes of humanity, allegory, identities, migration, patriotism and belonging. The ideas of here and there, seeing and being seen, legal and illegal have remained subjects for debate and this exhibition seeks to provide some answers to these issues.

The National Gallery of Zimbabwe is renowned for presenting groundbreaking contemporary art exhibitions in and outside Zimbabwe and has always served as a creative laboratory where artists are free to experiment. This is a position that has been affirmed by the institution having initiated and acted as the commissioning institution for the Zimbabwe Pavilion’s past three editions *Seeing Ourselves* in 2011, *Dudziro* in 2013 and *Pixels of Ubuntu/Unhu* in 2015.

Sylvester Mubayi is a renowned master sculptor. He is an icon; one of the surviving first generation Zimbabwean stone sculptors and a recipient of the 1969 Oppenheimer Award for sculpture early on in his career. Mubayi creates sculptures of great beauty, often with a traditional meaning that explore beliefs and dispositions as ontological phenomenon as well as human relationships and harmony between humans and the animal kingdom.

Charles Bhebe is completely captivated by people, absorbed by figurative works. He enjoys telling stories of urban people with references to everyday people living on the edges of society. He uses expressive strokes on black canvases as a way to bring out those characters to light. His preferred medium is acrylics on canvases. He likes the instant effect and the layering process that gives depth in each piece without a need for drying time. His paintings tell a story at a given time, more like a moment in time which is mostly a reflection of the times we live in.

Dana Whabira Whabira's work is a snapshot of all media, including experimental assemblages, installation, spatial intervention, sculptural painting, and photography, which incorporate performance as process. Her work often takes a story or event as a point of departure, drawing on current affairs, literature, philosophy, and theatre for inspiration, and employs language as a metaphorical device.

Admire Kamudzengerere is known for his lively, raw and often dark allegorical depictions of life in Zimbabwe. Kamudzengerere was one of 15 successful artists selected from over 2000 applicants worldwide, and the second Zimbabwean artist ever, to be awarded a residency at the Rijksakademie, Amsterdam, in 2012 – 2014. His male portraits, intense but at the same time undefinable, speak not only to personal struggle, self-definition and father-son relationships but more broadly to the theme of contemporary masculinity.

For more information go to www.nationalgallery.co.zw.