

THE GUARDIAN AND THE BUILDER

Terrence Musekiwa, Justin Orvis Steimer

23 August — 3 December 2017

CTG Harare, Catinca Tabacaru Gallery's second brick and mortar space and a partnership with Dzimbanhete Arts & Culture Interactions, had its Inaugural Opening on August 23, 2017, at Plot 1, Stonehurst, Harare, ZIMBABWE.

Guests, which included the upper echelons of the Harare art world as well as the neighboring villagers arrived as the building's front wall was being plastered. "The whole thing feels surreal," says Rachel Monosov, Israeli roster artist and the principal mind behind the architectural design of the new gallery. "Experiencing this Opening while the construction is still happening and the visitors are sitting and watching the builders – it's like a performance. For the first hour nobody went inside. The gallery was the first artwork experienced."

On the other side of the building, Catinca Tabacaru, who designed the gallery with Monosov and managed its building on the ground, is fretting over how the likes of Doreen Sibanda, Director of the National Gallery of Zimbabwe, would take this unusual event.

"People like seeing the guts of things," said Admire Kamudzengerere, Zimbabwe-based roster artist currently representing his nation at the 57th Venice Biennale. "It is another proof of our work as a collective power. We built this from scratch, brick by brick. I moved around thousands of bricks!"

Chikonzero Chazunguza, one of the founders of Dzimbanhete Arts & Culture Interactions, the partner organization in CTG Harare, and a full participant in the building process, seems more than pleased with the outcome. "It's amazing to see it in physical form. Only a few weeks ago, Catinca was sending me the drawings. It's a very unusual building, especially with its circular window which is uncommon in architecture in this area, and we are very proud of what we've achieved in such a short period of time."

CTG Harare stands on farmland (newly pegged as cultural use for Dzimbanhete activities) 20-minutes outside of Harare and another 10-minutes down a fairly rough dirt road. It was important to Tabacaru to place the gallery in this pastoral setting, which forces a different art viewing experience.

"Seeing art in New York City can involve hundreds of works in one day. Although the offerings in Harare are more limited, the buzz of countless conversations, roaring cars and dozens of works are still vying for attention." CTG Harare offers time and space for contemplation. It is surrounded by bush and a far off horizon so one can find peace to process just a few works. Also, within a few minutes is the active Dzimbanhete Art Center frequented by cultural enthusiasts, young and established artists alike.

"One suggestion," quipped Alicia Moral Revilla, Ambassador of Spain, "you should tell people they need an SUV to get here."

“Your little car still made it,” smiled Catinca who is now more relaxed as the plastering has finished and her guests are full of awe and compliments about the gallery building and its inaugural exhibition *The Guardian and The Builder*, a two-artist show by Zimbabwean Terrence Musekiwa and American Justin Orvis Steimer.

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Opening reception: Wednesday, August 23, 2017 | 2-5PM

Exhibition dates: August 23 – October 29, 2017

The CTG Harare program has a specific vision. It presents exclusively two-artist exhibitions – always one Zimbabwe-based and one foreigner – mounts four exhibitions per year, and is managed collaboratively by local and international staff.

By creating an inter-continental platform, artists from abroad are invited to come into Zimbabwe to participate. During an annual month-long residency at Dzimbanhete Arts and Culture Interactions, the two artists live and work together making works in conversation, or collaborative work. Each exhibition features the result of this shared time.

Both Steimer and Musekiwa wanted to address the building of the gallery itself for this Inaugural Exhibition. The Guardian and The Builder is not as literal as it may sound. Each of the two works oscillates between a conversation with the physical and the divine.

In his artwork statement, painted on a piece of wood and nailed directly to the exposed brick walls of the gallery, Steimer muses: “The Guardian is a physical manifestation of the guardian spirit of the newly built CTG Harare. It is a beacon of love, light and creativity, which was born out of gratitude and respect for the land, its inhabitants and ancestors. It emits the message that creativity knows no boundaries or limitations and is the key to freedom.”

“He’s a spiritual builder,” comments Musekiwa whose work stands in emotive dialogue with Steimer’s floating totem; a hand reaches out, somewhere between giving, taking and expressing.