



LECHWE TRUST
a Charitable Trust for the Visual Arts in Zambia

2nd LECHWE TRUST ART COLLECTION DISPLAY IN THE AMERICAN EMBASSY - LUSAKA

Curated by
William B. Miko



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Andrew Mulenga



Front Cover Image :
309. Zenzele Kenneth Chulu,
'Day Break Melody', 2015.
Oil on Canvas, 74 x 96cm



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FOREWORD

Lechwe Trust is a charitable trust formed in Zambia in 1986. Its founding members were Cynthia Zukas MBE, the late Bente Lorenz and the late Henry Tayali.

The Lechwe Trust is a charitable Trust for the Visual Arts in Zambia which includes the following aims: to provide scholarships to promising artists; to purchase or commission works of art for public display to support organizations working for the promotion of the visual arts in Zambia; to encourage and promote the preservation of Zambia's Cultural Heritage; to support and encourage Art Education in Zambia; and to promote exhibitions in Zambia. Some of the organizations we have supported include: Mpapa Gallery, Zintu Arts and Crafts Foundation, Evelyn Hone College of Applied Arts and Commerce, Zambian Open University, Zambia National Visual Arts Council, Choma Museum, Lusaka National Museum, Copperbelt National Museum, Mbile and Insaka International Artists Workshops.

Today, the Lechwe Trust owns one of the most comprehensive collections of contemporary Zambian art. The collection was started in 1987 to secure exceptional art pieces from leaving the country and now holds close to 400 paintings, drawings, prints, ceramics, wood and stone sculptures. It is a fine example of the development of art year by year from before independence right up to today.

As a non-for-profit organisation focused on visual art development, we have also so far sponsored four talented artists who graduated with Fine Art degrees from abroad universities. And in turn, these artists have come back home, made major contributions to the development of the Visual Arts, which is very rewarding for Lechwe Trust and for Zambia as a whole. We still continue to sponsor more students at local tertiary institutions.

Furthermore, we have awarded short-term grants for artists to attend workshops and residencies within Zambia. We have also supported upcoming artists by supplying art materials and helping them with framing costs for exhibitions.

Subsequently, ever since Lechwe Trust began, it has always been our dream that there should be a university established and offering a degree course in Fine Arts here in Zambia. So, we are delighted, to be sponsoring students studying art at such local tertiary institutions as the Evelyn Hone College, and we are also committed to awarding of annual Lechwe Trust prizes to the best graduate student of Fine Arts locally educated at the Zambian Open University. We are also further pleased to learn that more colleges in Zambia are introducing and or upgrading their Diploma courses to a Degree level in Art.

We continue to look for outstanding quality art works to add to the Lechwe collection which now number well over 400 artworks. We have managed to save significant works created during the 1960s and 70s, and we continue to encourage artists to produce works of quality worthy of collection.

We have been fortunate to receive some fine donations from individual and institutional art lovers and also from artists and workshops that have been sponsored by Lechwe Trust. We can truly say that the Lechwe collection is the most comprehensive in Zambia.



From September, 2015, seventy-six artworks from the collection were on display in the Atrium of the new American Embassy in Lusaka for close to two years period. We are witnessing, as represented in this brochure, yet again, a second round of close to twenty-five artworks currently on display as change-over exhibits in the US Embassy Atrium. This kind of cooperation and collaboration with the USA Embassy is well cherished by the Trust.

Currently, Lechwe Trust is building an art gallery to house the Collection and carry out more public art activities at the Aylmer May Cemetery in Rhodes Park, Lusaka. This project has been realised with courtesy of the Aylmer May Cemetery Restoration Trust and the property developer Rhodes Park Development Limited pro bono, and the gallery will be headed and run by a professional curatorial team. It is with this vision in mind that the Lechwe Trust will continue to appeal to well-wishers for their continued kind material and financial support to run this public gallery.

Finally, thirty years of existence is not a long time in the cultural life of a nation, but we in Lechwe Trust are proud of our contribution to the lively contemporary art scene and will continue to support the growth of Visual Arts in Zambia.

By

Mrs Cynthia S. Zukas MBE.

Chairperson, Lechwe Trust Committee & Founding Member.



Part of the 1st Lechwe Trust Art Collection display in the Atrium of the US Embassy - Lusaka, 2015 - 2017.



In the photo (L. to R.) Lechwe Trust Vice Chairperson Mr William B. Miko pointing up inside the ceiling board of the new gallery under construction at 'Rhodes Park Gallery Park'. Looking on are Lechwe Chairperson Mrs Cynthia S. Zukas MBE, Mr Paul Golson, Chairman - Aylmer May Cemetery Restoration Trust and Mr William Saunders, CEO & property developer- Rhodes Park Development Limited and Jay Patel, another Lechwe Trust Committee Member.

Lechwe Trust & Tripartite Committee Members inspecting progress of the new gallery facility under construction at the Aylmer May Cemetery in Rhodes Park of Lusaka City: In the photo (L. to R.) Lechwe member Mrs Shenda Zukas, Lechwe member Mr Mulenga Chafilwa, Lechwe Chairperson Mrs Cynthia S. Zukas MBE, Mr William Saunders, CEO & property developer- Rhodes Park Development Limited and Jay Patel, Lechwe Trust Committee Member, and another Lechwe Trust member Patrick Mumba (out of the image).



Torrey 04

CURATOR'S STATEMENT

The first time I was invited to see art displayed in the newly opened US Embassy – Lusaka, I was fascinated by the sheer colossal size of the Atrium space.

Astonishing as it was, I stood in the middle of the Atrium space, spanned my eyes around, remained standing in one spot, highly stunned. It was at this point that Prof Robert T. Soppelsa, then Curator of Art in Embassies program who was here in Lusaka and who had actually invited me to assist him acquire some local art to adorn the Embassy spaces with both American and some Zambian artists' works, said to me, 'William, this is a great space, you should be using it to display Zambian art if the subsequent Ambassadors and their staff are willing to allow for that art and cultural exchange projects to take place in the Atrium'.



Yombwe, Lawrence, "Ukushikula" 2004,
Acrylic on hessian, 76 x 103cm.
Donated by Kelley Toole



In no time, the Embassy Security wing organized a joint public talk presentation for art lovers and invited guests on promoting art, copyright security, money laundering. The talk presentation focused on exploring Zambia's advantages and benefits on promoting art and tourism on a global scale owing to its central geographic positioning and the enjoyed peaceful political history in the SADC region.

On the same joint platform, through slide images, I also presented on the aspect of the history of contemporary Zambian art practice and its imagery.

This event took place around the beginning of the dialogue between the Embassy and the Lechwe Trust to map out strategies for future engagements on the possibilities of art display in collaboration with the US Embassy.

Simpasa, Akwila, "Christiana happy face"
1972, Pastel on paper, 75 x 50 cm.
Donated by Eleanor Armstrong Kennedy

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Soon after, the US Embassy generously invited the Lechwe Trust Committee to feature on a live video tele-conference dialogue with museum and gallery experts in Washington DC on matters of art display and management in the new Lechwe Trust project gallery facility that was underway.

In keeping with its vision to promote higher art education in Zambia, the Lechwe Trust included on its panel three Zambian Open University fine arts undergraduate students to take part in this event.

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*Nkhoma, McDonald, "Street kids" 2009, Acrylic, cardboard material, 125 x 132cm
Donated by the Royal Netherlands Embassy*



Another encounter with the Atrium space was during one of the Black History Month celebrations when a travelling photographic exhibition was well laid out for that occasion. This display was an exhibit of a series of photos of the legendary jazzy musician Louis Armstrong's jazz band, which included images on his tour of Africa dubbed 'Cape to Cairo'. The exhibit was curated by Prof. Deborah Willis, a prominent artist and photographer academic in the US. I remember writing an email shortly after the Black History Month informing her of how great the exhibit resonated in the US Embassy Atrium space. She quickly wrote back to inform me on how very highly thrilled she was to learn that the Louis Armstrong photography show was in Lusaka - Zambia.



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Njobvu, Dabson, "Women washing in the stream"
1995, Oil on Canvas, 120 x 200cm

However, contrary to the first display of more than seventy six art works from the Lechwe Trust collection that filled the Atrium space from ceiling to bottom, the current smaller display of less than twenty five artworks was inspired by the American Embassy's wish to have a reduced number of art pieces. It follows then that from the curatorial point of view the works that were selected were informed by their aesthetic value and visual impact within a gigantic and voluminous space that the Atrium is. At the same time, there was need to consider, this time around, a selection of works from the Lechwe Trust Collection that had never been exhibited in this beautiful display space.

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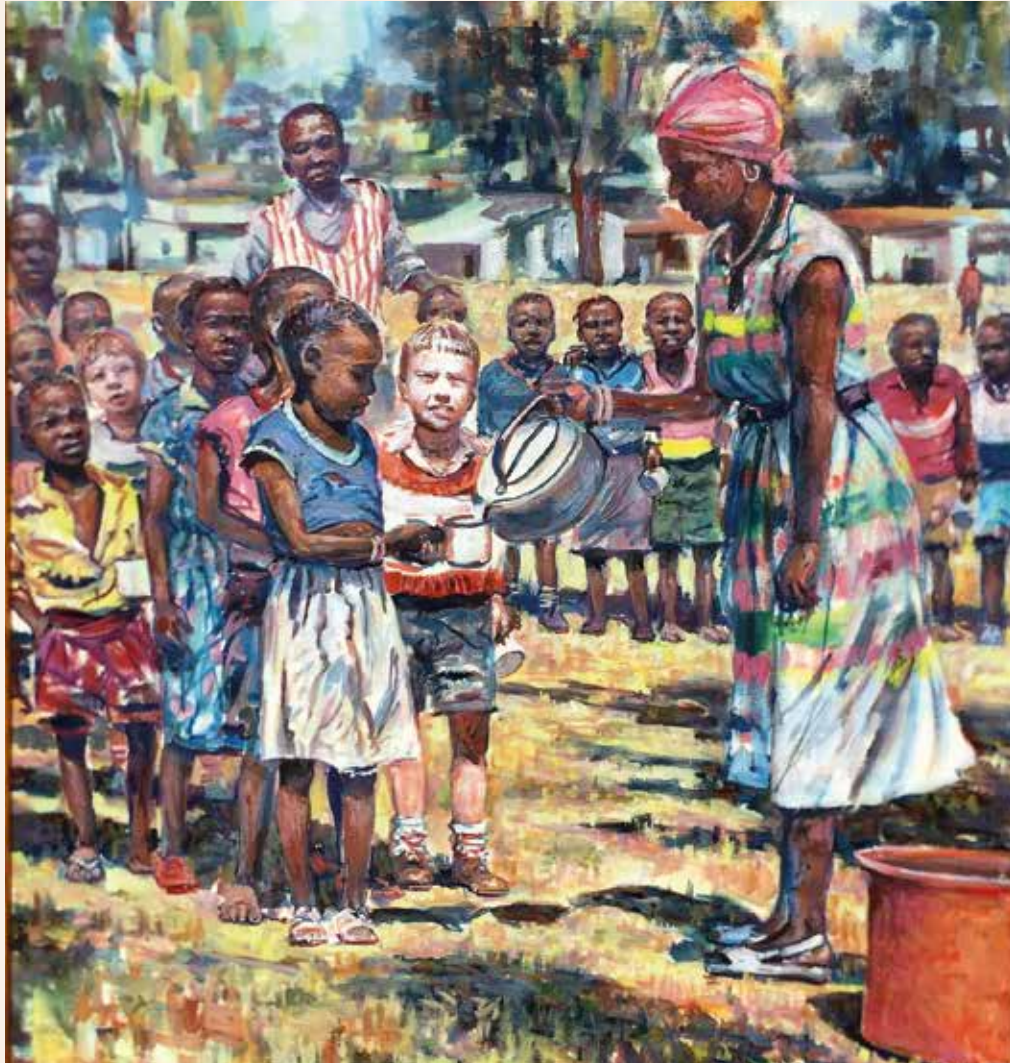
Makromallis, Andrew, "Untitled" 1998,
Acrylic & Pastel on paper, 54 x 55cm.
Donated by Royal Norwegian Embassy

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Furthermore, just like on the first occasion of the display cocktail preview day, it was the wish and desire of the US Embassy – Lusaka that there be an accompanying auction of limited artworks from artists as a further token of promotion opportunity of contemporary Zambian art to the invited members of the community. As such, these few artworks be offered for purchase by the invited guests during this occasion too. To this end, the Zambia National Visual Arts Council and its Henry Tayali gallery was again rightly asked to provide this service.



From these contemporary epic art related activities in the US Embassy and exhibitions in the Atrium, it is clear that the offer to use this space has continued to live beyond its envisaged purpose. It is now a proven confluence of a unique blend of art transcendence, where an assortment of visual art display, is a cross-cultural dialogue and an international diplomatic means of language which requires no translation

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Nsabashi, Dean P. K., "Feeding the community"
1994, Oil, Acrylic on canvas, 103 x 90.5cm.
Donated by Royal Norwegian Embassy

Indeed, ever since the new Embassy building was opened in Lusaka, the former Ambassador Mark Storella and the incumbent Ambassador Eric Schultz have so far proved their willingness to promote art beyond a call of duty by ensuring that Zambian art is showcased in the Embassy building. The Lechwe Trust is now showcasing the second exhibition of the contemporary Zambian art from its unique collection of thirty years now.

By William Bwalya Miko, MA, BA, Dip. Fine Art.
Curator & Fine Arts Lecturer
– Zambian Open University.

**Norheim, Meta, “Untitled” 1991,
Oil on canvas, 123.5 x 94cm.
Donated by Royal Norwegian Embassy**



A RECURRENTLY FRESH ZAMBIAN NARRATIVE

The Lechwe Trust's collection acquisition strategy seems more relevant today than ever before, seeing that global demand for Modern and Contemporary African art is on the rise as indicated in sales at exhibitions such as 1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair in London and New York, or premier auction houses like Sotheby's and Bonham's in the United Kingdom.

This interest for contemporary African art is further underscored on the continent itself, with projects such as the opening of the Zeits MOCCA – this month -- a museum of contemporary art by Jochen Zeitz, former CEO of the German multinational footwear giant Puma.

One can only relish the fact that collections such as Lechwe with artworks that actively express contemporary reality in an African context remain on Zambian soil for the enjoyment of many generations to come and have not found themselves holed up in private collections across the globe. The collection in its entirety has always been a combination of budding Zambian geniuses alongside seasoned visual arts stalwarts and the works continue to express recurrently fresh narrative that speaks to the country's post-colonial turn of the 1960s, the nationalism of the 1970s, the wide-ranging, uncertainty of the 1980s, the cultural exchange movements of the 1990s, and the global turn of the present. All these aspects are visible in the 25 works showing in this current exhibition that is a replenishing of previously 76 works hung from the collection on loan for close to two years pro-bono at the American Embassy in Lusaka.



Bente Lorenz's (b1922-d.2011), "Wallpaper design (ducks)" Watercolour on paper shows a mastery of draughtsmanship and elaborate design as does Meta Norheim's "Untitled". The latter lived in Zambia for a short while and the former spent most of her life here. Nonetheless, the essences of hues familiar to Zambia's natural environment is evident in their works.

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*Lorenz, Bente, "Wallpaper design (ducks)"
19..., Watercolour on paper, 97 x 63cm.
Gift from Lorenz family*

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Mulenga J. Mulenga's (b.1987) "Disguised (IV)", address her on going project that provokes the "natural hair" question, where African women are subjected to particular standards of beauty that are based on the premise that straightened and synthetic hair provide the most desirable look. Is she, as an artist questioning the prevailant use of Brazilian and or Indian hair extentions – a multi million dollar industry reliant on draining African women's resources!

Similarly, "Beauty Contest" by Lawrence Yombwe (b.1956) ponders on notions of beauty questioning perhaps the relevance of pageants as it depicts an abstraction of models being paraded so as their 'beauty' can be judged. Ever the traditionalist, Yombwe's "Ukushikula", a Bemba traditional custom which involves the families of the betrothed introducing their members to one another. This kind of artworks highlight his efforts to try and bring out the intricacies of tradition to the fore.

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Mulenga, Mulenga J., "Disguised (IV)" 2016,
Acrylic & Charcoal on canvas, 110 x 80cm.



Dabson Njobvu (b.1958), well known for his picturesque landscapes and village scenes that celebrate rustiq life depicted in rich oils has three works in the exhibtion “Women washing in the stream” 1995, “Mother & child breastfeeding” and “The burning” hut show a consistency in style spanning over a 20 year period although the latter work has a deeper theme that raises questions of safety in a village homestead as it portrays two panicking women resquing a child and utensils from a burning hut as the title suggests.

Some urban commentaries are provided in paintings such as “Township scene” by Petson Lombe that documents the slow but steady pace of urbanization in the 1980s, “Feeding the community” by Dean Nsabashi (b.1951) which shows an act of community service and “Street Kids” by Macdonald Nkhoma which draws attention to the issue of homelessness in urban areas. William B. Miko’s (b.1961) “Market Place” shows the hustle and bustle of an urban market, the crowd of women can be made out through the squint of an eye owing to the artist’s clever mark-making technique that has become his signature. “Chatting” by Style Kunda (b.1953) is a luminous commentary on social gatherings that depicts a group of people seated at a table, rendered in psychedelic tones.



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Njobvu, Dabson, “Mother & child breastfeeding”
1993, Oil on canvas, 137 x 107cm.
Donated by Royal Norwegian Embassy



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Njobvu, Dabson, “The burning hut” 2014, Oil on canvas, 90 x 123cm.



Vincentio Phiri's (b.1956) "Power of love", "Back yard" and "Wandengeya road" provide a calm element to the show with their moody abstract expressionist characteristics. "A letter from my children" is a playful abstract piece by Patrick Mumba (b.1961), a reference to the bonding between a parent and his children. His "Messages from my ancestors" is another play towards communication between offspring and parents.

This piece is executed in Mumba's idiosyncratic symbols that he has been developing over the years. The artist also has a rare untitled print from his formative years on display. Andrew Makromalis (b.1943) also provides an untitled piece along the lines of Mumba's except his is a painting on paper.



325 William B. Miko "Market Place"
1998, Acrylic on canvas, 101.5 x 128cm.
Donated by Royal Norwegian Embassy

325 Kunda, Style, "Chatting" 1994, Acrylic on canvas,
184.5 x 97.5cm.
Donated by Royal Norwegian Embassy



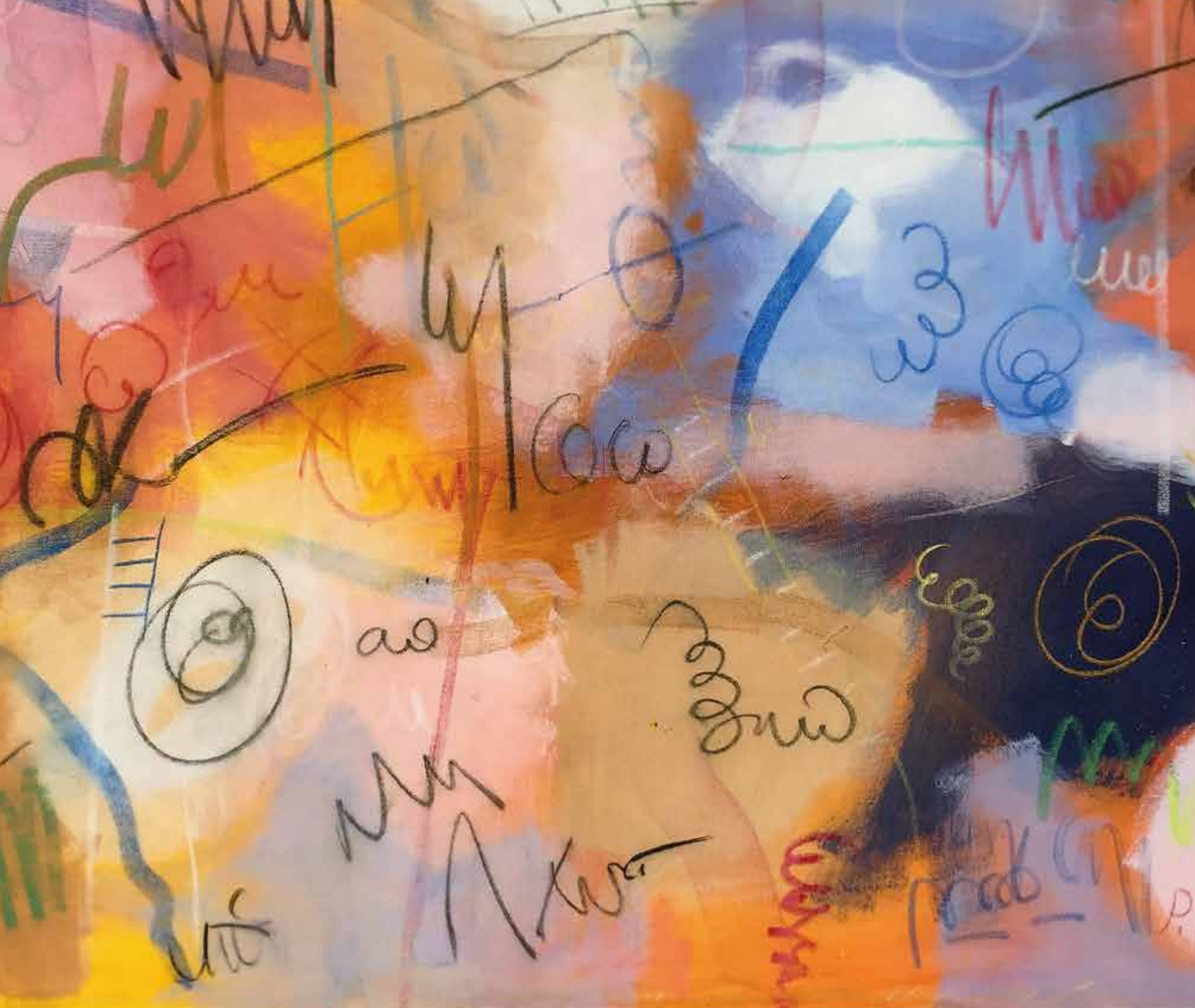
333 *Phiri, Vincentio, "Power of love"*
1997, Acrylic on canvas, 76.5 x 99cm.
Donated by Royal Norwegian Embassy



332 *Phiri, Vincentio, "Back yard"*
1997, Acrylic on canvas, 98.8 x 77cm.
Donated by Royal Norwegian Embassy



334 *Phiri, Vincentio, "Wandengeya road"*
1997, Acrylic on canvas, 77 x 97.5cm.
Donated by Royal Norwegian Embassy





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Simukanga, Shadreck, “On shores of Lake Kariba” 1994, Acrylic on canvas, 182 x 132cm.
Donated by Royal Norwegian Embassy

Shadreck Simukanga’s (b.1955- d.2004) “On shores of Lake Kariba”, Zenzele Chulu’s (b.1967) “Day break melody” a bright reddish cover piece of this brochure and Julie Barbara Ballachey’s “Still Water Kariba” provide a cluster of lake-themed landscapes, all rendered in similar shades and hues illuminating a sunset effect upon water.

Last but surely not the least are the works by two of Zambia’s modern masters, Henry Tayali (b.1943-d.1987) and Akwila Simpasa (b. 1945- ...). Tayali’s “The Wrestler” forecast him as a future maestro as it was executed in his formative years, painted in grey monochrome, it shows a mastered distortion of human anatomy.

Simpasa’s ‘Christiana happy face’, ensired by a loved one, renders a face inspired by African tribals’ masks, a style that would influence coming generations of Zambian sculptors, traceable in the works of artists such as Eddie Mumba (b.1953), Lutanda Mwamba (b.1966-d.2014) and Flinto Chandia (b.1958-d.2017).

By

Andrew Mulenga (Dip. ALC. MA, Rhodes),

Doctoral student, Fine Art Department,
Rhodes University, South Africa. CNN Journalist Award Winner.



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Ballachey, Barbara Julie, “Still Water Kariba” 1995, Acrylic on Canvas, 100 x 150cm
Donated by Mbile International Artists Workshop

Present Members of the Lechwe Trust Committee:

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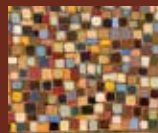
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. Patrick Mumba, 'Messages from my ancestors', 1998,
Acrylic on Canvas, 199 x 127cm
Donated by Royal Norwegian Embassy - Lusaka.

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