



AFRICA NOW

54 countries. Over 1.3 billion people. More than 2000 different languages.

The continent of Africa is a cultural treasure house beyond compare. Yet a history of colonialism and post-independence political and economic turmoil has brought particular pressures to bear. Too often exploited, diminished and stifled by being seen primarily through a Western lens, the voices and representations of the continent's creative forces have been either marginalised or not heard at all. That is now changing, and fast.

In the pages that follow we look at how a new generation of artists from African countries and their diasporas is refusing to accept the prevailing narratives and forging new connections and creative leadership. Inspired by issues ranging from migration and political repression to cultural identity and social upheaval, they are redefining authenticity and abandoning the old routes in favour of new pathways.

Now is their time to be heard.

Cassi Namoda. Lovers with ardent desires and strong will face obstacles along the way, safety in new lands are few and far between" Cyclone Eloise, 2021 a dedication to all those who have been impacted by climate change in Mozambique and it's neighbours. 2021. Acrylic and resin on cotton poly. 76.2 x 61cm. Image courtesy of the artist and South South

This issue's *In The Studio* features Terrence Musekiwa and Ronald Muchatuta, two of the artists who will be representing **Zimbabwe** in next year's Venice Biennale.

TERRENCE MUSEKIWA

"Ultimately I hope my work can demonstrate the importance of people believing in their culture. Understanding our heritage and passing on this knowledge to the next generation is such an important part of comprehending our contemporary selves."



Terrence Musekiwa. Image courtesy of the artist



Clockwise from top left: Terrence Musekiwa. *Wisdom Giver (Inopa Uchenjeri)*. 2018. Detail. Image courtesy of Catinca Tabacaru Gallery; Terrence Musekiwa. Image courtesy of the artist; Terrence Musekiwa. *Imwe pfungwa uye simba (one mind and influence)*. 2019. Detail. Image courtesy of Catinca Tabacaru Gallery

Terrence Musekiwa has been working with stone since he was five years old. Initially taught by his father, Kennedy Musekiwa, he observes how "my journey never really had a beginning, as it was more of an inheritance." Musekiwa draws inspiration from Shona culture and his homeland

of Zimbabwe (whose name is derived from the Shona word for "great houses of stone"), as well as being guided by the traditional spirit of *Mushavi* and trailblazing Zimbabwean artists such as Tapfuma Gutsa, Virginia Chihota, Gareth Nyandoro, Johnson Zuze, Admire Kamudzengerere and Chikonzero Chazunguza. "I consider the found objects I use as building blocks to communicate the narrative that I attempt with each series," he explains. "The stone always symbolises my Shona culture and traditions, while the found objects represent contemporary documented and undocumented histories."

Through his work, Musekiwa seeks to broaden understanding of Shona culture and encourage generational storytelling so people learn more about themselves and their identities, "I hope that my work can influence others to cultivate and continue their own cultural traditions, especially when so many of these practices are unwritten and being forgotten."