



DAMBA NE PWERE

T A P F U M A G U T S A

DAMBA NEPWERE

“Damba nePwere is a pun. Damba is one fruit and pwere is both singular and plural of child/youth. So in this case the title translates Child/children with a damba. Damba can also derive from kutamba/ to play ne/with pwere/vana/ children. Further, dzakatamba nePwere politely refers to a childish mind, a simpleton children can occasionally manipulate and tease for a laugh.”

Tapfuma Gutsa

The concept of play is deceptively simple. Regardless of which language we speak, games and toys, which connect us to innocence of childhood, lose that innocence as we grow older. As humans we are not infrequently at a loss of agency, becoming the plaything of the powers that be, mere elements in the games of others people as well as force of nature at its largest and at its smallest.

Tapfuma Gutsa’s new exhibition dives deep into the potential for complexity chaos and opportunity for finding humour, compassion and wisdom in a world we often live through as space of terrible beauty.

Like the matamba shells and egg shells used in some of the works, human lives can be hard and fragile all at once. It is the vocation of the artist and the philosopher to assemble the disparate experiences and vicissitudes of life into something meaningful, but it is only the artist who can make our hearts soar and capture our imagination with the possibility of greatness.

There is an old proverb, which says that each person should carry a note in each of their pockets – the first note should say “I am but a speck of dust” and the other should say “The universe was created for me alone”. Every work in Damba nepwere is an answer to multiple questions each one of us is asking ourselves at the end of the day about our own fate and our own potential. There are universes and microcosms in these works which shift our scale and perspective on things around us and our role and condition in connection with them.

We might be playthings of a giant or giants playing with toys but for the moment it is enough to realize that just to be is a blessing and just to live is sublime.

Valerie Kabov

Curator

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Tapfuma Gutsa

Born in 1956, Gutsa is unequivocally the most revered and beloved figure of contemporary art in Zimbabwean art. A pioneer, who began his career as a stone sculptor studying under Cornelius Manguma at the Driefontein Mission School, which produced such luminaries like Nicholas Mukomberanwa and Joseph Ndandarika, he broke away from the purist stone tradition to look inwards to Zimbabwean indigenous art traditions, materials from clay and weaving to wood and horns and methods in a way that was a break through not only for Zimbabwean contemporary art but also internationally.

Like his friend and contemporary of the legendary Zimbabwean writer Dambudzo Marechera, Gutsa went to study in Britain in the 1980s, going on to establish an international career, with museum and gallery exhibitions ranging from Havana Biennale, Cuba, Contemporary African Art, Studio Museum, Harlem New York City, USA 1990 and taking part in the 1991 Venice Biennale, African Pavilion a project curated by Grace Stanislaus and South Meets West a survey featuring Artists: Jane Alexander, South-Africa, Fernando Alvim, Angola, Meschac Gaba, Benin, Kendell Geers, South-Africa, Tapfuma Gutsa, Zimbabwe, Atta Kwami, Ghana, Goody Leye, Cameroon, Zwelethu Mthethwa, South-Africa, Tracey Rose, South-Africa, Yinka Shonibare, Nigeria, Pascale Marthine Tayou, Kamerun, Yacouba Touré, Elfenbeinküste, Minnette Vari, Südafrika, Dominique Zinkpe, Benin and Uncomfortable Truths: The Shadow of Slave Trading on Contemporary Art at Victoria & Albert Museum which was held in 2007 and featured among others El Anatsui, Romouald Hazumé, Lubaina Himi, Yinka Shonibare and Fred Wilson as well as Gutsa and which laid some of the key foundations for reception of contemporary African art we are seeing today.

At the same time Gutsa has always worked with a sense of paying it forward and social responsibility, keenly aware of the importance of supporting emerging artists not just in Zimbabwe but across Africa and beyond. He was the first mentor and teacher to his now famous cousin Dominic Benhura and his workshops done with the Triangle Network are legendary from Kenya to Mozambique and Botswana but also in Kingston, Jamaica where he did a workshop at Xayamaca in 1993. In the era when African avant-garde was just forming Gutsa was part of the legendary Pachipamwe International Art Workshop which brought together such incredible luminaries like Bill Ainslie, Sokari Douglas Camp, David Koloane, Adam Madebe, Bernard Matemera, Antonio Ole as well as Gutsa.

After living between Zimbabwe and Europe for almost a decade in the early 2000s, Gutsa came back to Zimbabwe in 2009. Finding the small struggling young community emerging from the crisis of hyperinflation and isolation, he immediately re-engaged with the emerging artists community of Harare as an inspirational leader, joining the National Gallery of Zimbabwe as Deputy Director. His 'Live and Direct' exhibition in 2011, is regarded as a catalyst for the flourishing of contemporary art we are seeing today in Zimbabwe and features young and experimental artists from Moffat Takadiwa to Wycliffe Mundopa, Gareth Nyandoro and Misheck Masamvu with new large and daring works.

Returning to the studio in 2011 Gutsa represented Zimbabwe in the first Zimbabwean Venice Biennale Pavilion, while establishing a studio at Harare Polytechnic art department incorporating young artists in his practice.

The twin passions of collaboration and looking to indigenous culture and materials for inspiration are manifest in all of his recent major projects like Basket Case – a workshop and exhibition curated by Christine Eyene which brought together contemporary artists in conversation with the incredible skill and talent of Tonga basket weavers in 2015 and Mutations and Permutations a new major exhibition of new works at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe in collaboration with his two students – Daniel Chimure and Ronald Mutemeri.

The past few years have been a time of contemplation and in many ways laying down a foundations for his legacy. He decided to return to his ancestral home in Murehwa and use his land to start developing a major new project – a sustainable artist residency, which could both house artists, support studio practice but also involve artists in traditional farming practices – cultivation of crops and fruit, fish farming and raising animals to create a self-sufficient immersive environment, where artists and young urban artists in particular can reconnect with the land and in practice and in spirit.

Tapfuma Gutsa CV 2020

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2015 Mutations and Permutations, National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe
2011 Zimbabwe National Pavilion, 54th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy
2006 Tapfuma Gutsa, Senje Sandanga, October Gallery, London, UK
2003 The Power, The Object- The Object, The Power, Alliance Francaise, Harare, Zimbabwe
1997 The Future, National Gallery Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe
1996 Seeking Permission, Reece Gallery, New York, USA
1992 Tapfuma Gutsa, Sandro's Gallery, Harare, Zimbabwe
1985 By Ginde; Of Zen, A few Pots and Other Things, Galerie der Freischaffenden, Vienna, Austria

Selected Group Exhibitions

2019 Dream No Small Dream: Celebrating 40 Years of the Transvanguard, October Gallery, London, UK
2015 Basket Case II (Cristine Eyene Curator), National Gallery of Zimbabwe Harare and Bulawayo, Zimbabwe
2008 Angaza Afrika, October Gallery, London, UK
2007 Voyages; Crossing the Lake of Fire, October Gallery, London, UK
Uncomfortable Truths, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK
2005 Transitions, Brunei Gallery, SOAS, University of London, London, UK
Wasser Brent, Gallery Habari, Vienna, Austria
2004 Dak`Art, Dakar Biennale, Senegal
2004 Visions of Zimbabwe, Manchester City Art Gallery, Manchester, UK
2004 Step Inside, Gallery Dieleman, Chateau de Petit Leez, Belgium
2002 Kakuyu Ke Munyaka, Gallery Dieleman, Chateau de Petit Leez, Belgium
2000 South Meets West, Kunsthalle Bern, Bern, Switzerland
1999 Eddie Masaya, Richard Jack, and Tapfuma Gutsa, Künstlerhaus im Schlossgarten, Cuxhaven, Germany
1998 Zimbabwe Heritage, National Gallery Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe
1997 Landmark, The Midlands Artists, National Gallery, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe
1995 Johannesburg Biennale, Johannesburg, South Africa
1995 Genesis, Gallery Muensterland, Emsdetten, Germany

1995 180 Degrees, Group Exhibition, Los Angeles, USA
1994 Strong Winds, Stage Design, Arnolfini Theatre, Bristol, UK
1993 Gaelrie Knud Grothe, Charlottenlund, Denmark
1993 Open Studios, Delfina Studios, London, UK
1991 Contemporary Stone Sculpture from Zimbabwe, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Yorkshire, UK
1991 Havana Biennale, Havana, Cuba

1990 Five Contemporary African Artists (El Anatsui, Tapfuma Gutsa, Bruce Onobrakpeya, Nicholas Mukonberanwa, Henry Munyaradzi) Grace Stanislaus Kinshasha Holman Conwill commissioners, 44th Venice Biennale, Italy
1989 Contemporary African Artists: Changing Tradition, Studio Museum in Harlem, NYC, USA
1989 Pachipamwe International Artists Workshop Exhibition, Harare, Zimbabwe
1988 Sculptures by Tapfuma Gutsa, and Drawings and Paintings by Berry Bickle, Gallery Delta, Harare, Zimbabwe
1985 New Horizons, Royal Festival Hall, London, UK
1985 Hope, Botanical Gardens, Berlin, Germany
1985 Kunst Aus Zimbabwe, Bayreuth Museum, Bayreuth, Germany

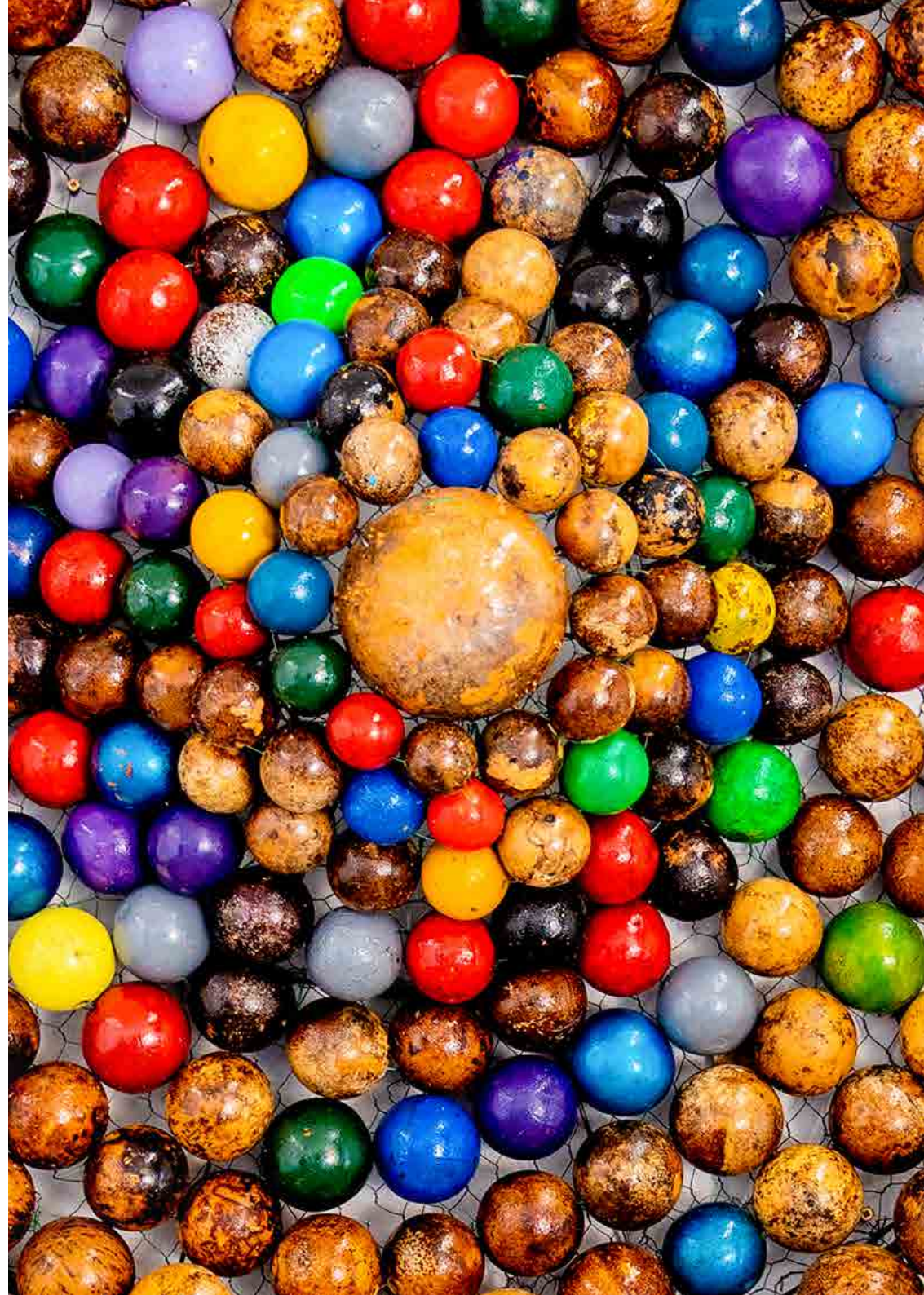




Zamu ramai

Painted and polished matamba and gourd

225 x 130 x 30cm





Hohwa mupengo

Painted and polished matamba and gourd

200 x 100 x 90cm



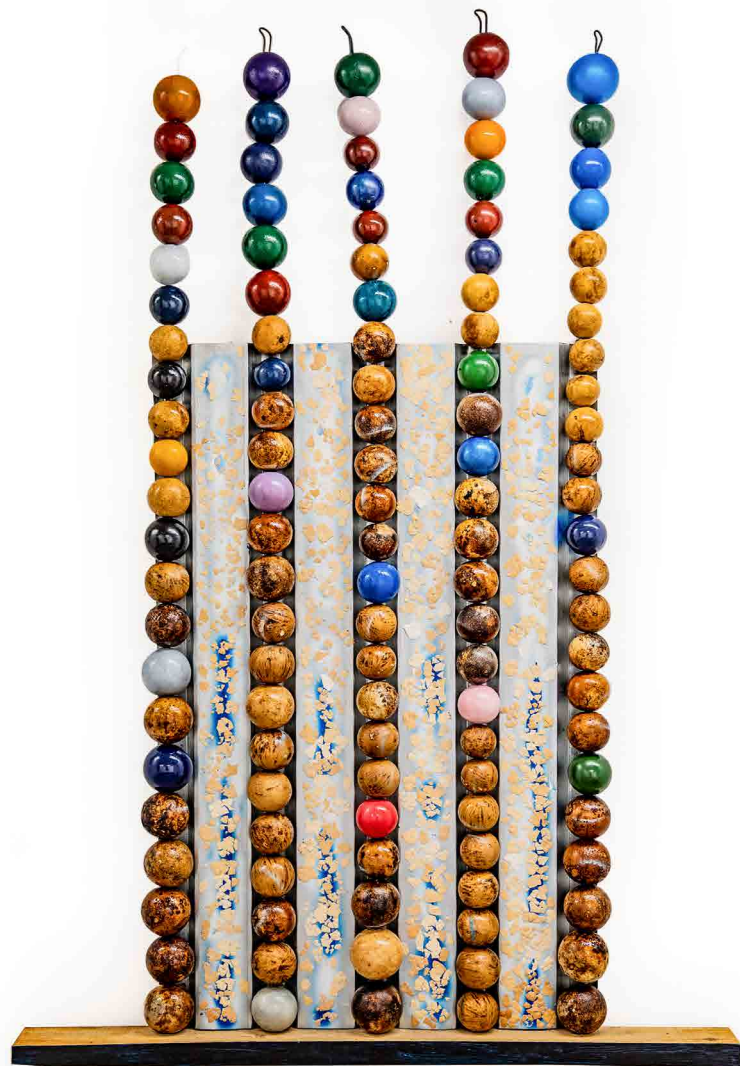


Kereke 2

Painted and polished matamba, corrugated aluminum, bark wood
and gourd

168 x 125 x 15cm





Fafitera

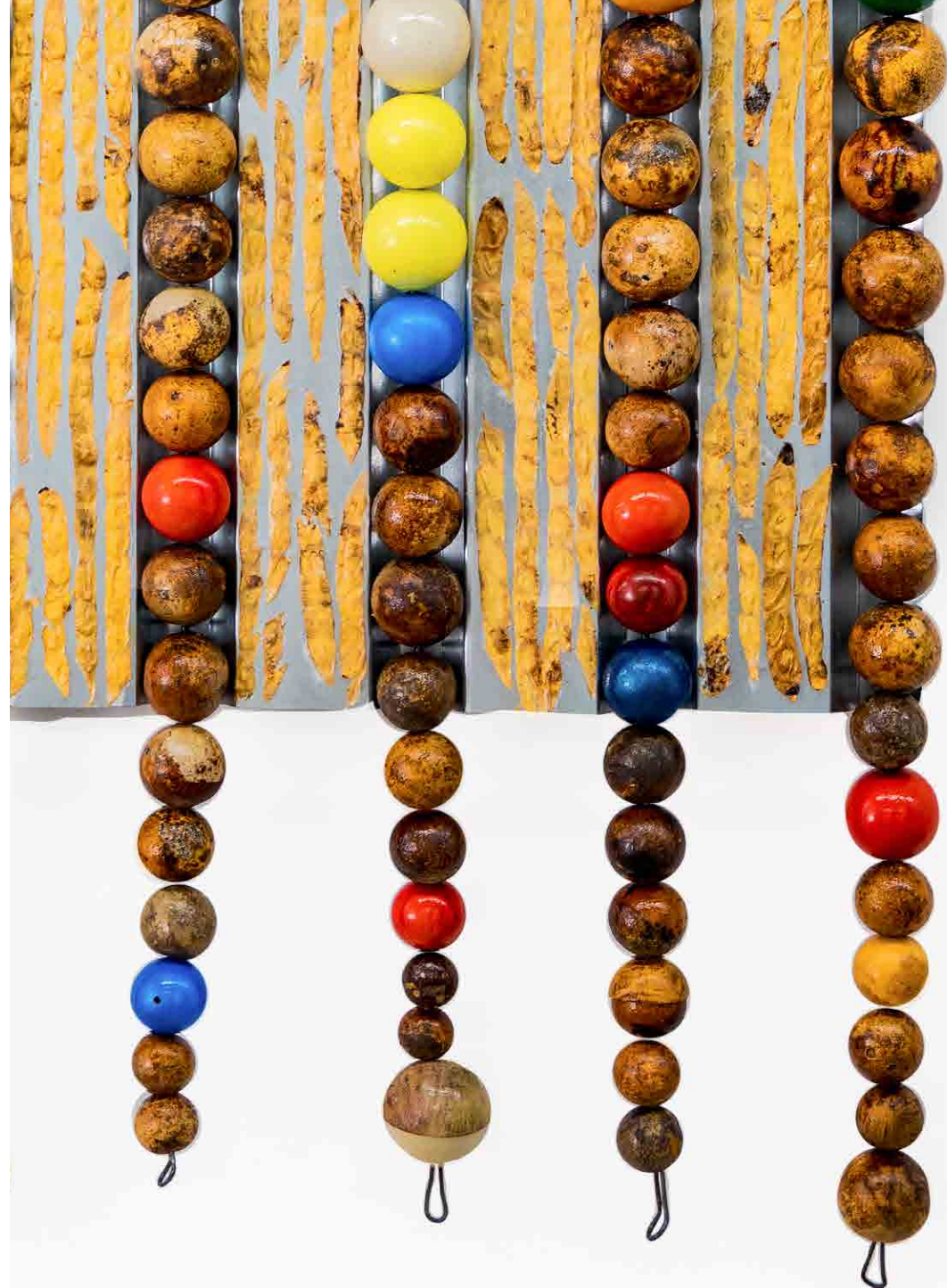
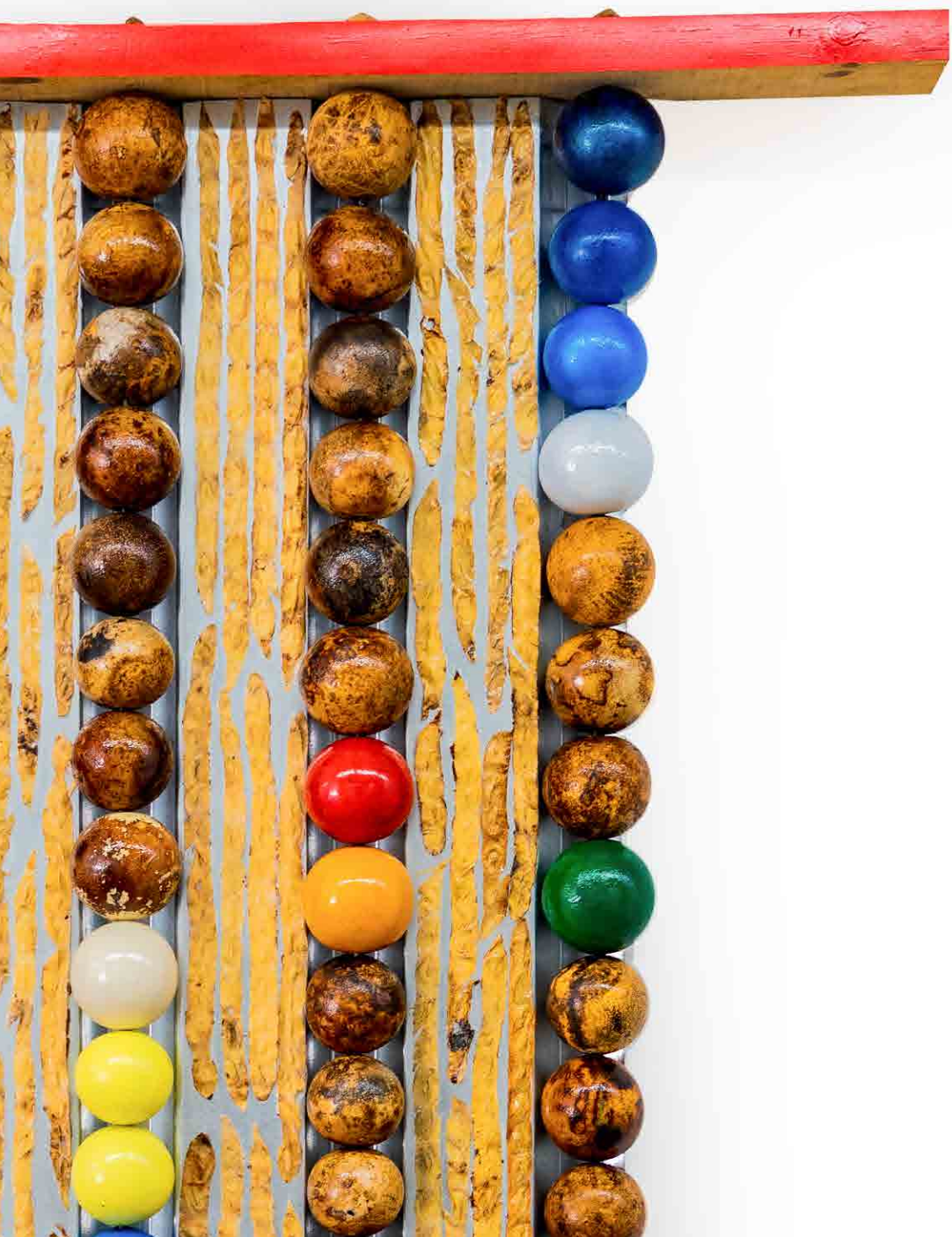
Painted and polished matamba, corrugated aluminum, leaves and wood
182 x 124 x 14cm



Suwo

Painted and polished matamba, corrugated aluminium, leaves and wood

165 x 125 x 15cm





Pagoda

Painted and polished matamba

110 x 50 x 50cm

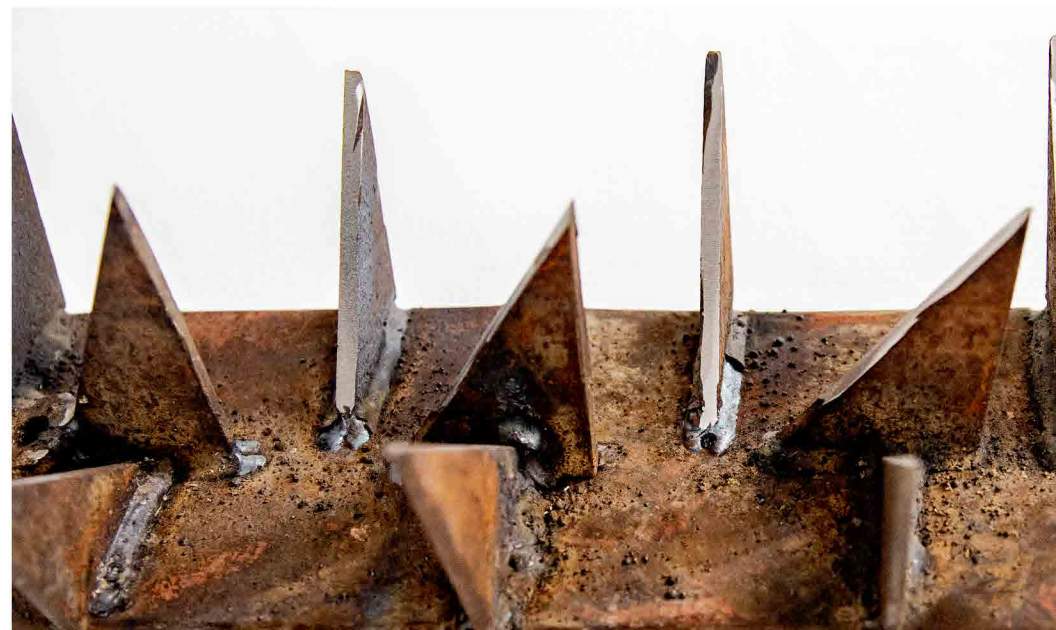




**Zvinogumbura/Shatirisi/Disagreeable
object from murehwa**

Painted and polished matamba, found metal

220 x 52 x 20cm





Bhingirishi

**Painted and polished matamba
252 x 150 x 55cm**

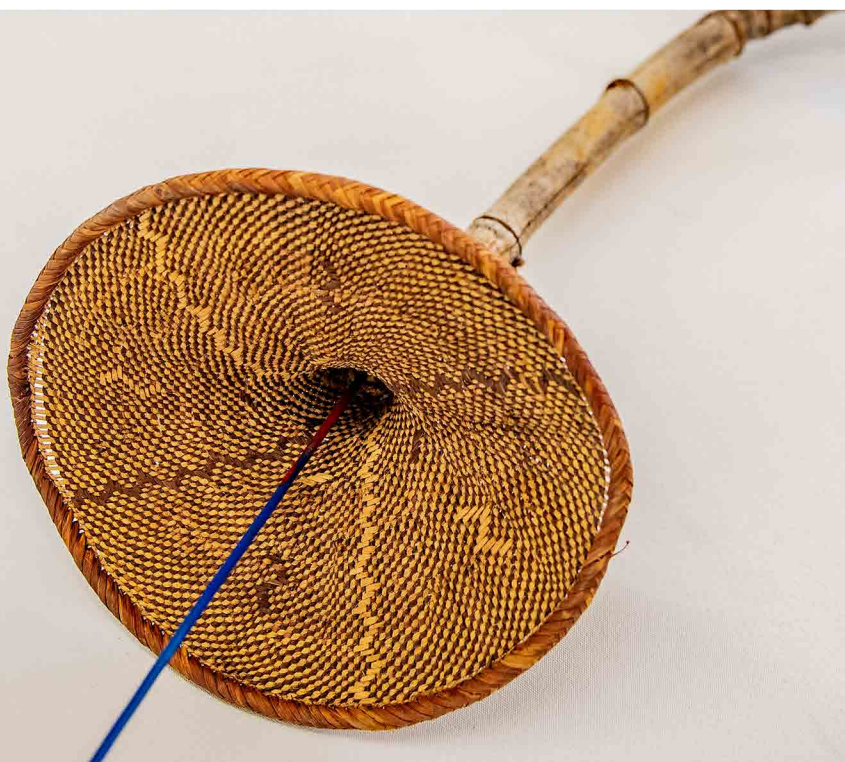




Bosvo raMasekela(Trumpet for Bra Hugh)

Painted and polished matamba, tonga basket, wire

280 x 70 x 20cm





Zvedzinza

Painted and polished matamba

300 x 140 x 20cm





Damba nePwere

Painted and polished matamba

212 x 70 x 70cm

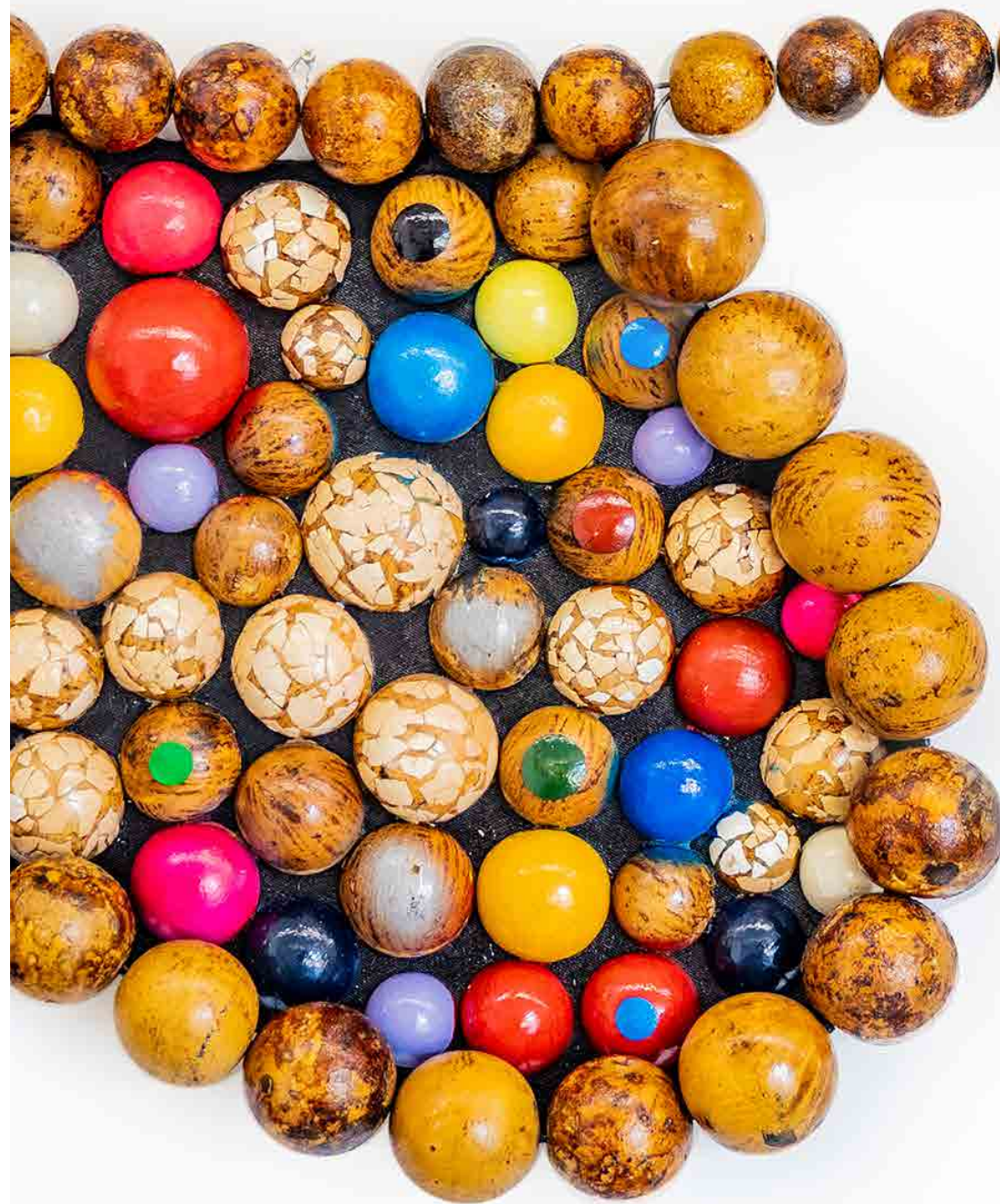




Rukotsikotsi

Painted and polished matamba and egg shells

205 x 85 x 14cm





Chisuwi Dende

Painted and polished matamba and wire frame

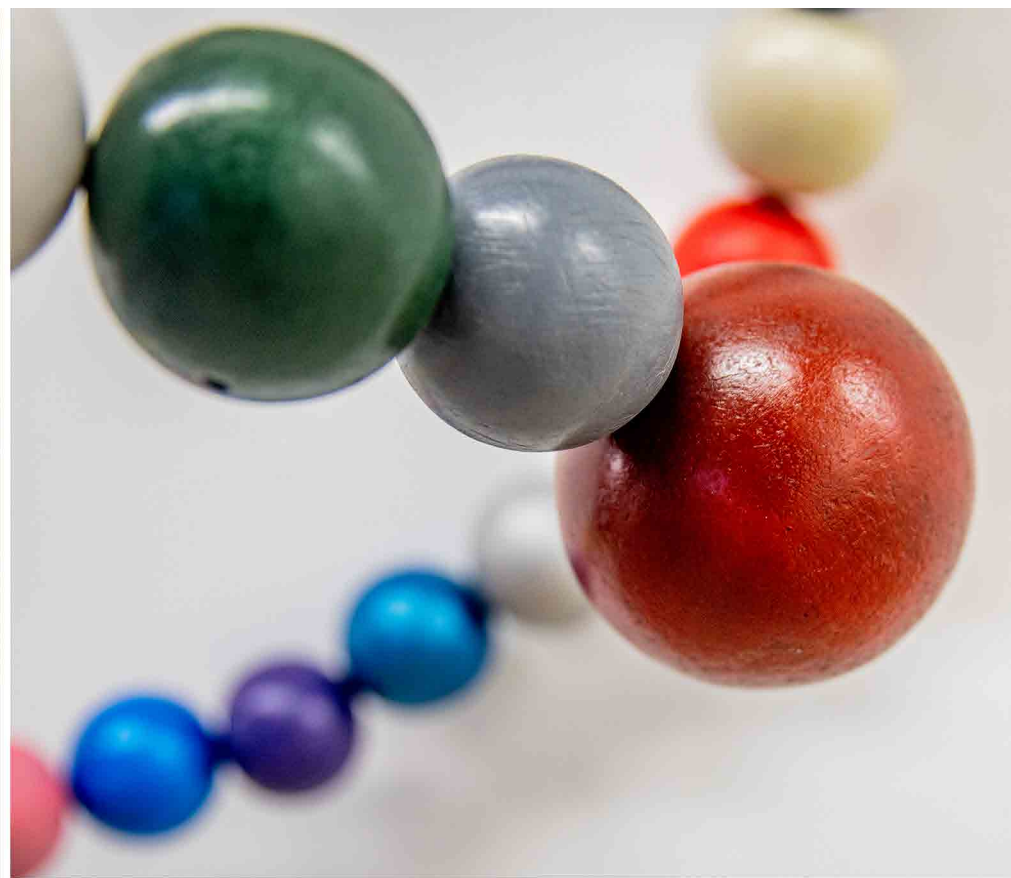
98 x 58 x 58cm





Chuma Changu

**Painted and polished matamba and gourd
180x 150 x 50cm**

















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