

Culture

'Kubatana' at Kristin Hjellegjerde, London



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Kristin Hjellegjerde is currently hosting a dual exhibition by Takunda Regis Billiat and Gresham Tapiwa Nyaude titled "Kubatana."

In this exhibition, the two artists natives of Harare, Takunda Regis Billiat and Gresham Tapiwa Nyaude, examine life in Zimbabwe. Both artists live and work in Mbare, which is Harare's and perhaps Zimbabwe's most colorful, populous and notorious neighborhood. Mbare was the point of arrival for Zimbabweans traveling to the capital Salisbury/Harare in the colonial times and to this day, retains the character of a port city, mixing trade, human traffic, urban decay with vibrancy of life persisting despite obstacles. The title of the exhibition, "Kubatana" is called "togetherness" in chiShona, the language of the Shona people, the majority ethnic group in Zimbabwe.

Born and raised in Mbare, Gresham Tapiwa Nyaude works against the sweeping identity that has been defined by the voice of the state. His images oscillate between figuration, abstraction and hallucination,

drawing from the restless energy of his hometown. Living on the verge between survival and demise has been somewhat of a call to poetry, at times proving brutal and at others sentimental or cynically satirical. His figures defy characterization, underscored by the humanity of their quest to attain a quality of life that appears even beyond the reach of dreams. His work, which was showcased at this year's New Museum Triennial in New York, draws on Shona proverbs and contemporary urban slang as inspirations for visualizations of complex ideas and touchstones for conversation, which disguise as much as they reveal. From camouflage to disjointed limbs and heads with gaping mouths, these canvases demand attention but also demand consideration.

Also living and working in Mbare, Takunda Regis Billiat is known for discovering and delivering the narrative properties of materials. Each object is selected not just for its aesthetic qualities, but for the complex and multiple stories it tells in the way it was used historically, traditionally and currently. This way cow horns, which have come to characterize his sculptures, perform as symbols at the core of Zimbabwean livelihood and culture as signs of wealth and marriage and communication with the spirits. The use of discarded telephone receivers in his work further makes reference to broken infrastructure and the refuse filling the streets, but also broken communication between generations. Even the cloth bindings he uses to tie his sculptures together become key objects, collected from the off-cuts found outside Harare sweatshops — the same off-cuts which are collected by the poor to sew their clothes from, an allusion to a society falling apart and yet desperately clinging to its identity.

The exhibition will be on view through June 2, 2018, at Kristin Hjellegjerde, 533 Old York Rd, London SW18 1TG, UK.

For details visit: <https://kristinhjellegjerde.com>

Click on the slideshow for a sneak peek at the exhibition.

<http://www.blouinartinfo.com/>

Founder [Louise Blouin](#)

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