

*Mercy Moyo*  
*“Bringing In Hope and Peace”*



*The James E. Lewis Museum of Art*  
*Morgan State University*

Cover

*Kumazhanje (wild fruits gathering)*

10" x 13"

2021

*Mercy Moyo*  
*“Bringing In Hope and Peace”*

February 12 - March 28, 2022  
The James E. Lewis Museum of Art

Morgan State University  
Carl J. Murphy Fine Arts Center  
2201 Argonne Drive  
Baltimore, MD 21251

“We wish two things for our children: the first is roots; the second is wings.”

- Sudanese Proverb

## **Gabriel Tenabe** - Director, James E. Lewis Museum of Art

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The James E. Lewis Museum of Art is an academic support program at Morgan State University created by James Lewis with the intention of bringing artworks from around the world. We are proud to present an exhibition of an up-and-coming artist, Mercy Moyo from Zimbabwe, Africa.

It is artists like Moyo, from across the water, that JELMA provides an arena for heightened visibility and takes pride in exposing to the community. It is also artists like Moyo that help us to supply a well-rounded education for students, faculty and staff, we are equally proud of presenting a diverse cultural experience.

Mercy Moyo started her journey as an artist going with her grandmother into the forest to collect barks of trees to use for dying fibers and mixing colors for weaving baskets and mats in different sizes and dimensions. Her grandmother would say, “get the best” and “choose wisely” because different trees made an assorted color creation. As her grandmother worked, she would tell the best fairytales which inspired

Mercy to tell stories through her artwork. Weaving was like drawing so it is not strange that she started drawing and painting at a very young age; it seems as if it runs in the genes.

Moyo’s artwork depicts ordinary people within their environment because she loves to show people who are never known to affluent surroundings. She shows the rural side, fetching water, where there are challenges for electricity and firewood, looking at the modern, never acceptance, but holding on to culture.

Moyo has made much progress presenting her work in several parts of Europe and Africa. We are proud to present her here at Morgan State University. We hope that by the end of the exhibition, the Morgan family and the community will have enjoyed the work of Moyo as much as we have enjoyed presenting it.

## Robin Cherry Howard - Curatorial Statement

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Zimbabwean women were rarely accepted as practicing artists in public spaces being recognized for their talent and subjectivity. Certainly, the traditional domestic crafts of basket weaving, beadwork and pottery no matter how skillful in the execution, were born out of necessity.

African women's artistry has relevance in leadership, creativity, education of children, cultural roles and guardianship. The absence in numbers of women artist shows denial of identity not just in Africa, but around the world. Largely unnoticed are painters, print-makers, sculptors and videographers, the struggle for representation continues.

Mercy Moyo considers herself lucky as her work has graced galleries in Zimbabwe and internationally. She has won several awards including Zimbabwe's highest the National Arts Merit Award. Despite her success, her position as a female artist is not without handicaps.

As a nuanced professional, Mercy explores

deeply weighted topics of social economic and cultural influences, comparing old, traditional culture to contemporary African norms.

"Bringing in Hope and Peace" fosters an appreciation for the conventional ways of life, choosing carefully, patiently and pursuing the best. Moyo uses her visuals to tell the story of her life. Her work interprets the beauty of real African women in traditional garments, long skirts, head nicely wrapped and humility in check.

Her narratives convey passion and elements of realism with recognizable images that make you say, "what will happen next?". She compares challenges and stories, some are painful, harsh stories examining political situations where the economy is hard but tries equally to show the positive side.

In 2008 when Zimbabwe couldn't get food or materials, most shops and businesses closed

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and there was no way to buy anything. People left the country, they left books that were being thrown away and for Moyo old books became substitutes for canvases and paper. As book pages became the standard many times the words from the stories would be the inspiration for the artwork on the page. With fabric, acrylics and the book text she trusted her ability to communicate through collage. Ironically, created out of necessity rather than design, the response was impressive. As a result, Mercy has been able to produce a profitable body of work.

I see her work as a gift of global friendship and community. It reminds us that all nationalities want the same thing. It is not by coincidence that Mercy has been holding her own in her expression of Zimbabwean culture.

## Mercy Moyo - Artist Statement

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I began to draw as a very young person, and used my drawings to describe the world around me and tell the story of life in contemporary Africa. My images are primarily collages, incorporating objects, which complement and reinforce the images depicted. I use oil, acrylics, charcoal (and most recently smoke from candles) and pencils to create vibrant images of contemporary women in Zimbabwe today. I want to use my art to showcase the beauty of African women be they from the village or the capital city of Harare.

I have exhibited at the National Gallery of Art, Zimbabwe many times. My work has been included in shows in the Czech Republic, Finland, South Africa, and the United States. I have the distinction of being the first woman artist to win the National Arts Merit Award for two-dimensional work in Zimbabwe (2006) and have received a number of residencies.

I studied at the Peter Birch School of Art and Design and the National Gallery of Zimbabwe Visual Art Studios. Significant accomplishments include exhibitions in Denmark, in March, 2013, and participation in the Vermont Studios Residency in November of the same year. In 2015, my work was exhibited in support of HIV/AIDS awareness and Women At The Top at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe, a solo exhibition at Lafayette College, Easton, PA, the acquisition of artworks by the David C Driskell Center in MD, and a group show at the Ellarslie Museum in Trenton, NJ.



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2016 began with a collaborative residency, at the “NJ Printmaking Studio and EPI” under the tutelage of Curlee Holton, an art exhibition with the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. of Prince George County, an exhibition and gallery talk at Centenary College during Black History month and residency with a solo exhibit at the Artists Association of Nantucket. After returning home, I was a participant in the CCA Lagos Akiko curatorship program in Ethiopia and ended 2017 as a contributing artist in an all-women’s exhibition “Neshango” at the National Museum of Zambia in the Henry Tayali Gallery.

2018 amounted to another exciting year with the Kuboneshango show in Lusaka, Zambia, commissioned artworks during women’s history month at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe, National Wild Geese Art Fair, as well as artworks selected for the Belt and Road Afro-Sino art exchange in Beijing, China, African Impressions, Verandah Galley in Harare, Zimbabwe.

Of tremendous significance three of my works were selected to be rented to the Office of The President of Zimbabwe.

Although a challenge due to the pandemic, 2020 still proved to be extraordinary. The year included gallery representation in Denmark, and being selected as one of the 263 artists from around the world to participate in the United Nations “symbol of life, freedom & happiness” online exhibition. Ending the year on a momentous note, one of my work was included in the New Jersey Governor’s mansion for the traditional diversity event and the headquarter offices of the Neighborhood Housing Services in Manhattan.

As for 2022, my visit to the US ends with a solo exhibition of new works at the Black Wall Street Gallery in New York, “From Zimbabwe with Love” and “Bringing In Hope and Peace” at the James E. Lewis Museum of Art at Morgan State University in Baltimore.

“Art is my life and those of my ancestors and constant changes.  
It is through our art that we make sense of the world and the constant changes”.

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Traditionally, it was believed that their spirits could be communicated with to provide guidance. There is a reduced belief in the spiritual realm and the ability of ancestors to intervene with life, one’s heritage remains crucial to Zimbabweans’ concept of personal identity.



**Zvaringana (it is well), 2018**  
5.5” x 8.5”  
Ink, fabric, acrylic, charcoal  
on book page

Looking into social networks people create and maintain with each other this enables society to function.



**Murehwa and the Blue Box, 2021**  
 8.5" x 11"  
 Acrylic and ink on book page



Looking into covering and blending of cultures to get shelter and hold on to it, unfortunately part of the shelter is blown away.

**Fukidziro (shelter and wind), 2021**

26.5" x 36"

Published at Raven Fine Art Editions

Master Printer: Curlee Raven Holt

Experimental Reductive Serigraph Print



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**Kutsi kwehope (deep sleep), 2021**  
8.5" x 11"  
Acrylic, charcoal on book page





**Subway Ride, 2018**

Oil on paper

46" x 36"



**Don't Shush Me, 2018**  
Acrylic on book page  
24" x 36"





**The jury panel, 2020**  
 Acrylic, charcoal on book page  
 8.5" x 5.5"





**Zvaringana, (it is well), 2016**

Fabric, acrylic and charcoal on paper

18" x 12.5"



**Ratenderara (turning wheel), 2008**  
25" x 17.5"  
Charcoal on paper





**Laundry Day, 2021**  
8.5" x 11"  
Acrylic, charcoal on book pages

## **List of Artworks**

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### **Zvaringana (It Is Well I)**

6" x 10"

Fabric, acrylic, charcoal on book page

2016

### **Fukidzior (shelter and wind)**

Print on paper

26.5" x 36"

2021

### **The Glove**

Charcoal on paper

18" x 12.5"

2008

### **Zvaringana (It is well)**

Acrylic and charcoal on paper

18.5" x 24.5"

2016

### **Ruvarawa (Fallen Rose)**

Acrylic and charcoal on paper

23.5" x 27.5"

2021

### **Ratenderara (Turning Wheel)**

Charcoal on paper

25" x 17.5"

200

### **Munana**

Acrylic on charcoal on paper

19" x 24"

2016

### **Zvaringana (It is well, II)**

Fabric, acrylic on book page

11" x 11"

2021

### **Zvaringana (It is well)**

Fabric acrylic and charcoal on paper

18" x 12.5"

2021

### **Zvaringana (It is well, II)**

Acrylic, charcoal on book page

8" x 11"

2020

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**Waiting**

Acrylic on book page

4.6" x 8.5"

2020

**Don't Shush Me**

Acrylic on book page

34" x 26"

2016

**Zvaringana (It Is Well)**

Acrylic, charcoal on paper

18" x 26"

2021

**Man Leaning**

Acrylic on paper

36" x 24"

2015

**Subway Ride**

Oil on paper

48" x 36"

2016

**Village 69**

Acrylic, charcoal on book page

6" x 10"

2021

**Vendor**

Acrylic, charcoal on book page

8.5" x 5"

2020

**Waiting**

Acrylic on book page

8.5" x 4.6"

2013

**Zviregwe seated**

Charcoal on book page

6" x 8"

2013

## **List of Artworks**

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### **The Jury Panel**

Acrylic, charcoal on book page

8.5" x 5.5"

2020

### **The aroma**

Acrylic, charcoal on paper

5" x 8.5"

2018

### **Kutsi Kwehope (Deep sleep)**

Acrylic charcoal on book page

8.5" x 11"

2020

### **Murehwa and the blue box**

Acrylic and ink on book page

8.5" x 11"

2021

### **Musaborina (Umbrella)**

Acrylic on book page

8.5" x 11"

2021

### **Zvaringana (It is well) II**

Fabric, acrylic on book page

8" x 11"

### **Kumanazhanje (Wild fruits gathering)**

Acrylic on book page

10" x 13"

2021

### **Zvaringana (It is well)**

Fabric, acrylic and charcoal on book page

6" x 10"

2021

### **Zvaringana (It is well, II)**

Fabric, acrylic on book page

5" x 8.5"

2021

### **Zvaringana (It Is Well)**

Acrylic, charcoal on book page

10" x 13"

2021

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**Wheel barrow**

Acrylic on book page

8" x 11"

2020

**Laundry Day**

Acrylic, charcoal on book page

8.5" x 11"

2021

**Crossroads**

Acrylic on book page

6" x 10"

2018

**Zvaringana (It is well)**

Fabric acrylic and charcoal on book page

8" x 5.5"

2018

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## Acknowledgements

The James E. Lewis Museum of Art

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Our students who work and intern throughout the year

Akintomide Adeloye  
Digitization Assistant  
(PhD candidate, History)

Courtney Stanley  
Graphics and Social Media  
(Screen Writing and Animation)

Malcolm Mobley  
(Engineering)

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WHERE ART, HISTORIES & CULTURES MEET