





Rise! Take Your Mat and Walk



THE ARTIST: Nonhlanhla Mathe

Nonhlanhla Mathe is a Zimbabwean-born artist who lives in Bulawayo. She studied art at the Mzilikazi Art and Craft Centre in the late 90s, and she is now very well-known both locally and in other African countries.

She has won the National Award of Merit as the best female artist in the Visual Arts, Bulawayo. Her paintings are abstract and semi-abstract figurative works with lots of texture and an emphasis on colourful finishes. She says 'I find inspiration in people's lives, reflecting their expectations, experiences and points of view. I focus mainly on women because obviously as a woman I can relate to their lives but also because I like the idea of a woman representing women without male control.'

She has exhibited at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe and National Gallery of Bulawayo, and across Africa - in Botswana, Namibia, Mozambique and South Africa. She has also exhibited in Denmark, and has had solo exhibitions in Bulawayo and in Louis Trichardt, South Africa.

As well as being a full-time artist she teaches Art to A Level students at her old school, Townsend Girls High.

THE PAINTING

This painting portrays people's lives in Zimbabwe. At the top of the picture, the background represents a transition from the darkness of a difficult past to the rising sun and light of a more prosperous and promising future. The buildings reference Zimbabwe's history and ancient culture - the 'stone houses' from which Zimbabwe derives its name. The national flag connects this history to the empowered figure, depicted in warm, optimistic tones. The leaves represent the potential for economic productivity as Zimbabwe is an agricultural economy. The figures are a display of love, healing and reconciliation inspired by the bible story (John 5: 2-9a).

