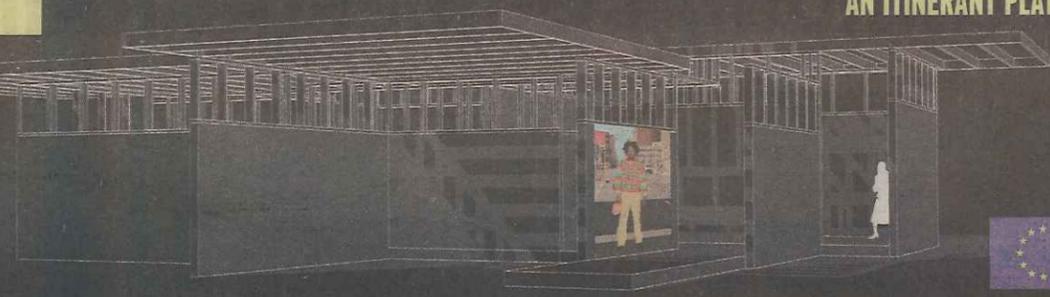


**HARARE, ZIMBABWE**  
NATIONAL GALLERY OF ZIMBABWE  
**MAY 24<sup>TH</sup> - JULY 2<sup>ND</sup> 2012**



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17

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Margareth Chinowaita  
ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

# Art at Work exhibition showcase in Zimbabwe

**T**HE European Commission is bringing to Zimbabwe a travelling art exhibition entitled **Visionary Africa: Art at Work.**

This exhibition is meant to bring together and reconcile painful historical backgrounds with the complexity of the present through a celebration of African Culture.

This project includes an itinerant urban exhibition of contemporary African artistic practices, residencies for African artists, and workshops on the relation between art and the development of modern urban centres in Africa.

Culture is at the heart of African and European dialogue and one of its aims is to highlight the importance of culture and creativity as development tools. This initiative is part of the strategic partnership between the EU and the African Union.

The symbolic exhibition will officially open on May 23.

The European Commission head of mission in Zimbabwe, Aldo Dell'Araccia said: "We are happy to bring this exhibition to Zimbabwe. It is coinciding with Africa Day when more than 20 African countries are celebrating 50 years of independence.

"This demonstrates our commitment to supporting the arts and culture in Zimbabwe as we believe that it is an important aspect of any nation."

Dell'Araccia welcomed the exhibition's opening in Zimbabwe during culture week. "It was critical for the exhibition to come to Zimbabwe during culture week when the country is focussing on developing, nurturing and preserving culture."

The Centre for Fine Arts in Brussels partnered with the National Gallery of Zimbabwe to bring the exhibition.

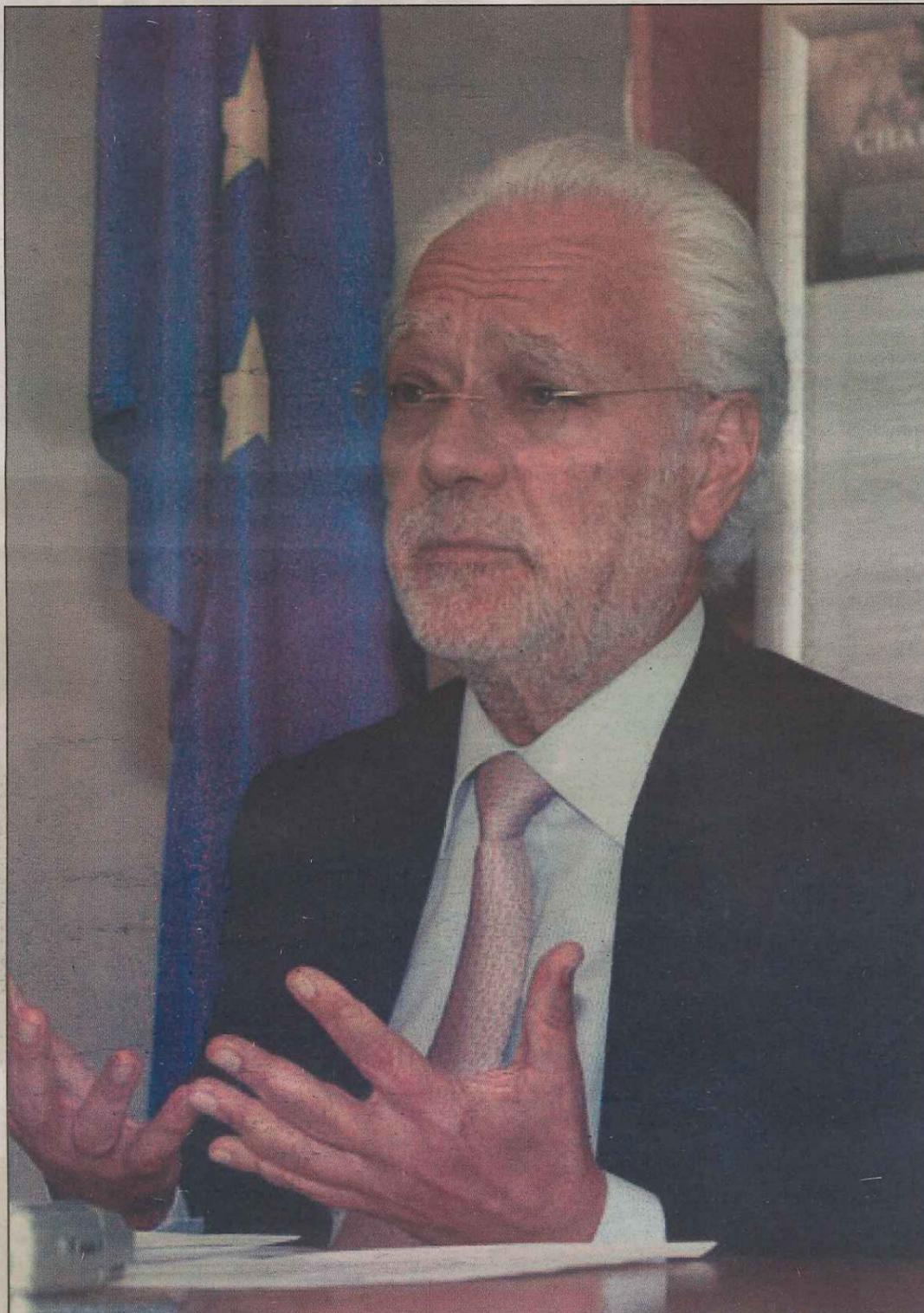
Curator of the NGZ, Rapheal Chikukwa said Zimbabwe appreciated the international recognition to exhibit the world class exhibition.

The exhibition was presented for three weeks in several African cities in conjunction with important institutional and cultural events.

After a launch in Tripoli (Libya) in the form of preview at the 2010 EU-African Union Summit, it was presented in full in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso, 2011) during one of the focal points of celebration of African culture; the pan-African cinema and television festival Fespaco.

It was then held in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) at the headquarters of the African Union on the occasion of the African Union Summit (January 2012), and in Cairo, in the highly-visited Al Azhar Park (February 2012).

The aim is to provide, through



The European Commission head of mission in Zimbabwe, Aldo Dell'Araccia.

the work of African artists, a snapshot of the transformations that have occurred on the African continent during the last half century, as well as put its future development into perspective.

The driving curatorial concepts of this project are:

- the intent of accessibility to all (free of charge and in a public space)

- the exhibit's Pan-African content (not often seen in some African contexts), and reference to African independence and

- the temporary and adaptable nature of the structure, including its investment by a local art contemporary centre and artists.

Housed in a wooden pavilion designed by architect David Adjaye, the exhibition is divided into four sections.

The core section is derived from the 2010 exhibit at the Centre for Fine Arts. It includes: Urban Africa, David Adjaye's personal 10-year photographic survey of the architectures of African capitals; A useful Dream, curated by Simon

Njami, which celebrates 50 years of African photography; and the Atlas Wall which maps significant culture and arts policy-making documents related to Africa and created both on the international and national level from 1954 to present.

The fourth section offers a showcase of artists from the host city, curated by a contemporary art centre. In Harare's case, it is *Mifananidzo yeZimbabwe ndiyo Nhorowondo yedu*: Images of Zimbabwe are our narratives curated by

Chikukwa.

Each section retains its autonomy. At the same time, there is a continuous interface and dialogue between the four modules.

Seen from this perspective, the exhibition dovetails perfectly with the philosophy of the Visionary Africa festival and represents its natural extension.

*Mifananidzo yeZimbabwe ndiyo Nhorowondo yedu*: Images of Zimbabwe are our narratives showcase young emerging photographers. These artists will interrogate the Zimbabwean reality from their own perspectives through images.

This exhibition seeks to give an opportunity to six Zimbabwean photographers to tell the Zimbabwean story from a Zimbabwean perspective.

Chikukwa said in the past we have had the Zimbabwean and the African story in general being told by other people.

*Mifananidzo yeZimbabwe ndiyo Nhorowondo yedu* also gives an opportunity to these voices to explore both our past and present history that have been misrepresented.

The exhibition will attempt to negotiate this position of self by framing the idea of Zimbabwe differently through photography. It thus complements Simon Njami's section, *A Useful Dream*.

Zimbabwean artists presented are: Anne Mpalume, Believe Nyakudyara, Tsvangirayi Mukwazhi, Bhetule Nkiwane, Hilary Maradzika, Aaron Mfumeli and Nancy Mteki.

In choosing to partner with the National Gallery of Zimbabwe, the organisers described the gallery as, "A visionary institution since its inception, thanks to excellent leadership and an unconditional dedication to African arts and artists, as evidenced by this 1957 statement by founding director Frank McEwen 'It is high time that African art were shown more often in Africa, and reclaimed culturally by its creators.'"

The National Gallery of Zimbabwe, through Chikukwa, has a mission to reengage Zimbabwean artists in the international scene of contemporary art. NGZ curated the Zimbabwe pavilion of the 2011 Venice Biennale.

Equally as important is its strong outreach mission to bring art in communities. These realities made the National Gallery of Zimbabwe an obvious and natural partner for the Harare edition of Art at Work.

# VISIONARY AFRICA

# ARTatWORK

AN ITINERANT PLATFORM IN AFRICA

HARARE, ZIMBABWE  
NATIONAL GALLERY OF ZIMBABWE  
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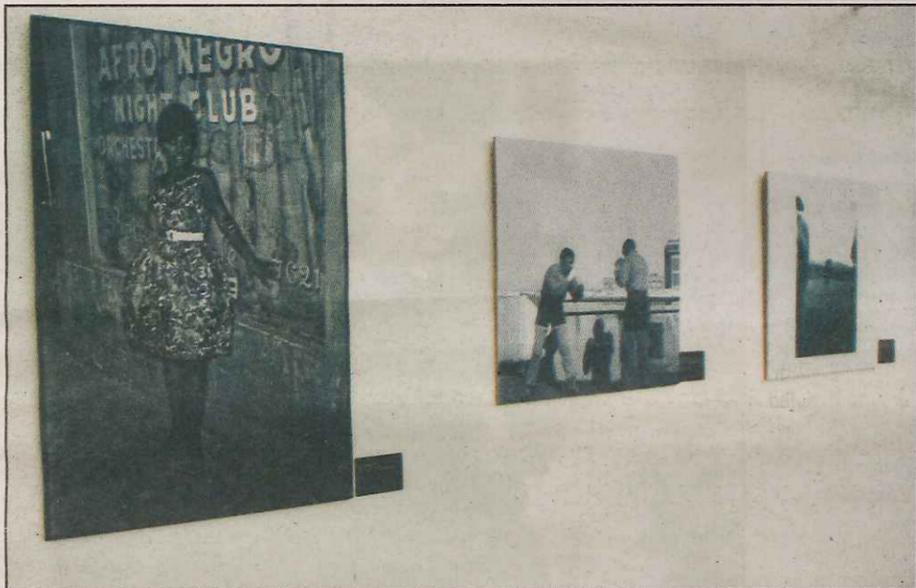
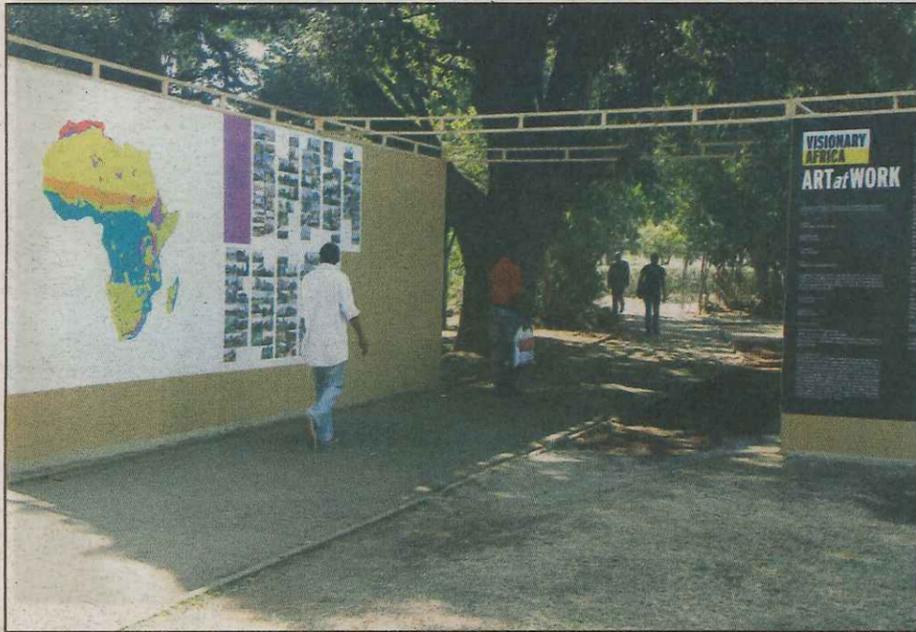


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19

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**EU TRAVELLING EXHIBITION:** Final preparations for Visionary Africa: Art at work at the National Art Gallery. The exhibition will open its doors today, everyone is invited to come and witness a showcase by renowned African as well as contemporary Zimbabwean photographers.

PIC: Annie Mpalume