GUNS & RAIN

# (Re)constructing the Shadow

## Thina Dube | Tawanda Takura

**5 March - 6 April 2020 | Johannesburg**

## About Tawanda Takura (Zimbabwe)

In this deeply disturbing body of sculpture, Tawanda Takura (b. 1989), who trained as a shoemaker, takes apart and expertly re-assembles old shoes which carry the traces and biographies of their owners. These new figurations carry the subtle but persistent smell of rubber and leather. Hollow, hybrid, tortured and distorted, sometimes carnivalesque, Takura's work comments on socio-political injustice, and takes clear aim at the extractive practices of charismatic churches.

The artist describes how, "at times, in earlier years, I was considered a madman, going around collecting old shoes...people would see a heap of shoes in my house". He goes on to describe how his work has opened up conversations and dialogue with neighbours and others in his community: "People really want to say things but they don't know how to say it. I get to speak through my work and address the things that they are facing and going through [in daily life]."

A laughing mermaid-devil with a scaly body of many tongues, a head of molten plastic, high-heels for a horned crown and swimming flipper for her tail. A macabre decapitated spirit-head talks to his body: split football boots trace the firmness of the human spine and back; shoulders rise up from the undersides of well-worn ballet slippers. *Mai Mfundisi*, the 'lady pastor', flourishes under her lurid fascinator, her face adorned with condom packets.

A shocking pair of screaming yet mute heads seem to comment on economic desperation and the erosion of basic dignities. Look closely: one of the mouths bears the New Testament's Book of Timothy, with some of the miniscule verses underlined: "*For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."* The lips of its nearby anguished twin are smeared with the defunct Zimbabwe dollar, millions of them - a reference to 15 years of economic turmoil and increasing deprivation. Elsewhere, no irony is lost with the same dollars being used to line the anus of a feline creature that mutates into an assaulted, cowering human torso, its head mummified with bank notes. Around its neck: the priest's collar.

If Takura's critique of the abuses of state and church is an expression of suffering and anger, his continuous binding together of materials is also an attempt to stitch back together what is torn asunder. Takura has exhibited at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe, several times at the Joburg Art Fair (2015, 2016, 2018) and Cape Town Art Fair (2017, 2018, 2020), and in shows in Mauritius and Hong Kong. In 2019 he completed a residency with the South African Foundation for Contemporary Art and participated in a group show at Guns & Rain.

## About Thina Dube (South Africa)

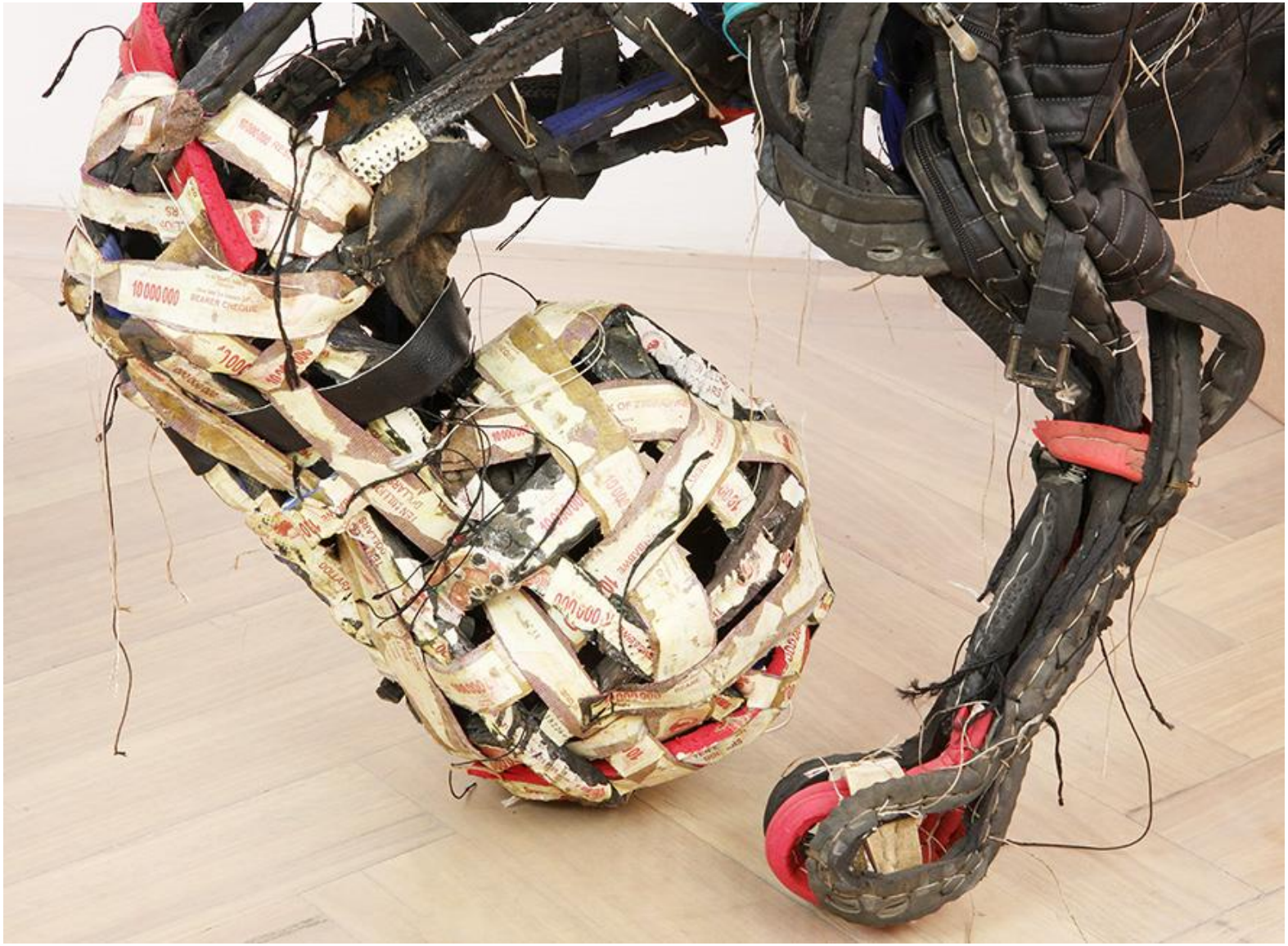
Thina Dube's (b. 1993) work explores identity politics in South Africa. He considers identity's many layers, both visible and hidden, and its fluid qualities, constantly changing and responding to social environments. He asks how local identities have been, and continue to be shaped, by colonialism, trade and multi-culturalism, among other external forces.

In this newest body of work, Thina turns to look at internal forces in psychology and consciousness. He references the work of Carl Jung, one of the most influential forces on modern psychology and psychoanalysis, whose concept of "the shadow self" refers to the repressed part(s) of the unconscious mind, made up of the traits and feelings that individuals deny and would rather ignore.

"Growing up, we were always told to not focus on negatives, weakness and darkness that we hold," says Thina. "We seldom accept our flaws and we praise perfection. We choose to assume certain roles for ourselves because they make us safe, and no one judges us." Using silhouettes and layering in his paintings and monotypes, he explores ideas around concealment, embodiment and self-awareness in relation to our shadow selves, and to the social expectations of others. His use of translucent handmade paper is suggestive of the uncomfortable vulnerability that we often push away.

Born in 1993 in Johannesburg, Dube graduated with a Fine Art diploma from the University of Johannesburg, holds a postgraduate diploma in Education, and teaches at the National School of the Arts. He is also an art therapist who has taught children with special needs. Dube has exhibited in multiple group shows in Johannesburg and Cape Town, as well as presenting two solo exhibitions with Guns & Rain. His most recent art fairs include Latitudes Johannesburg (2019), Joburg Art Fair (2018) and AKAA Paris (2018).

TAWANDA TAKURA (ZIMBABWE)
*Anything for the decimals (2020)*
Old shoes, leather, strings, bearer note
135 x 65 x 30 cm (variable)



*Anything for the decimals*

THINA DUBE (SOUTH AFRICA)
*We don't like them and they don't like us (*2020)
Acrylic, drawing ink, charcoal and soft pastel on Fabriano
100 x 70 cm

THINA DUBE (SOUTH AFRICA)
*No one remains innocent* (2020)
Acrylic, drawing ink, collage, soft pastel, charcoal on canvas
149 x 91 cm

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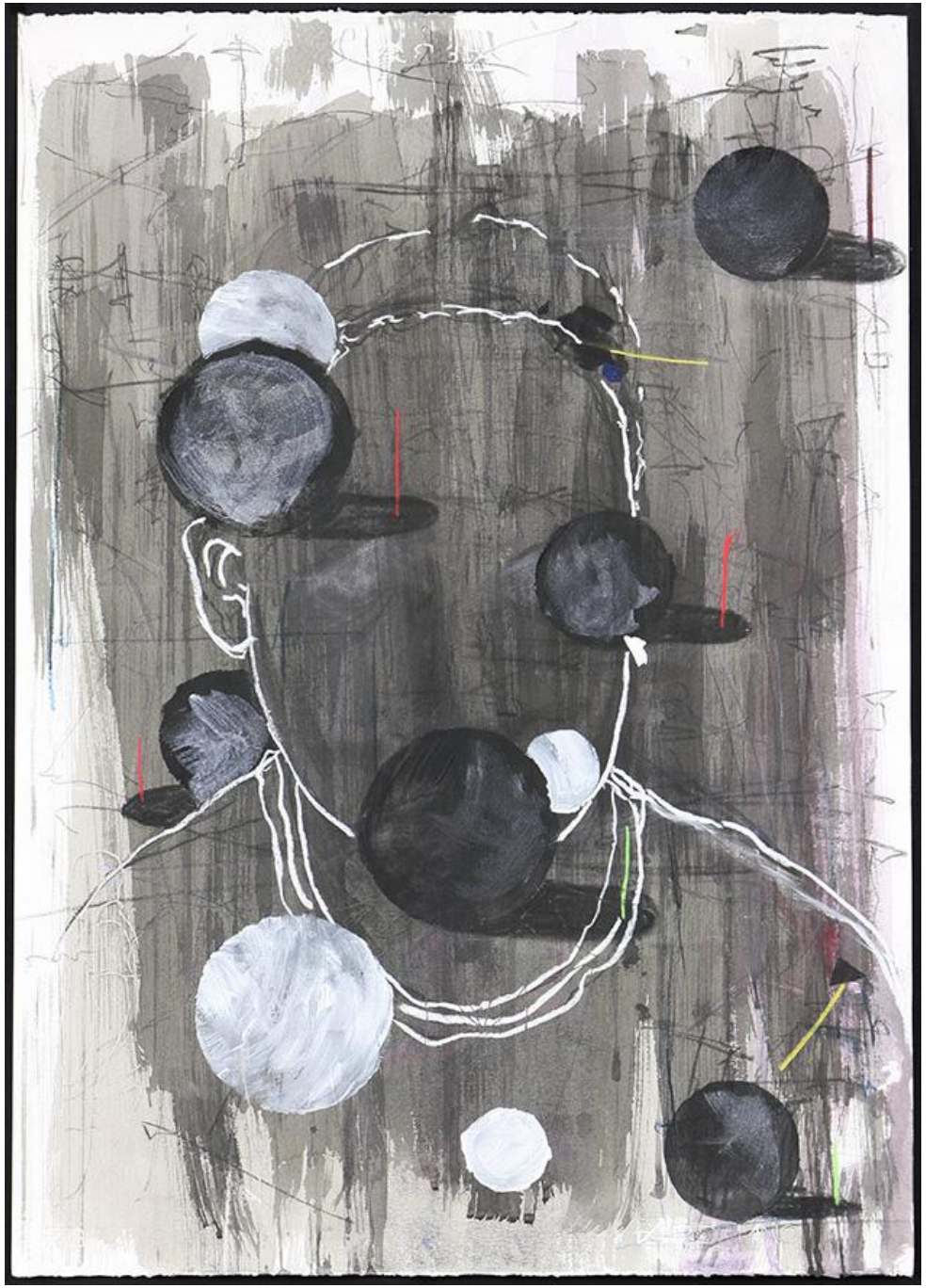
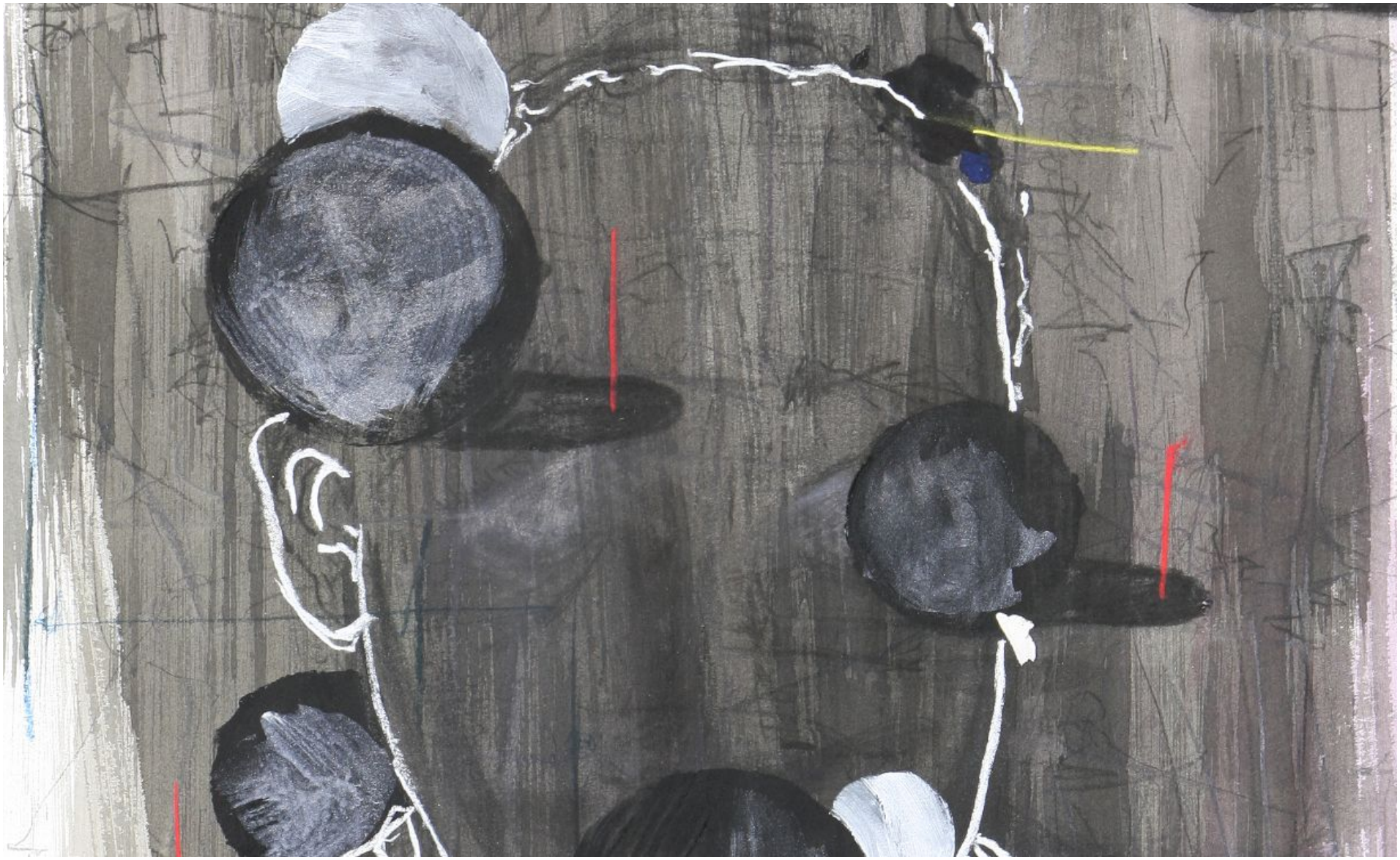
THINA DUBE (SOUTH AFRICA)
*Listen to the music while time allows it* (2020)
Acrylic ,drawing ink, collage, soft pastel, charcoal on Fabriano
100 x 70 cm

TAWANDA TAKURA (ZIMBABWE)
*Tinavo pakati pedu / They are amongst us I* & II
Found objects assemblage (shoes, Zim dollars, Bible pages)
60 x 20 x 40 cm (dimensions variable)

*Tinavo pakati pedu / They are amongst us I* & II

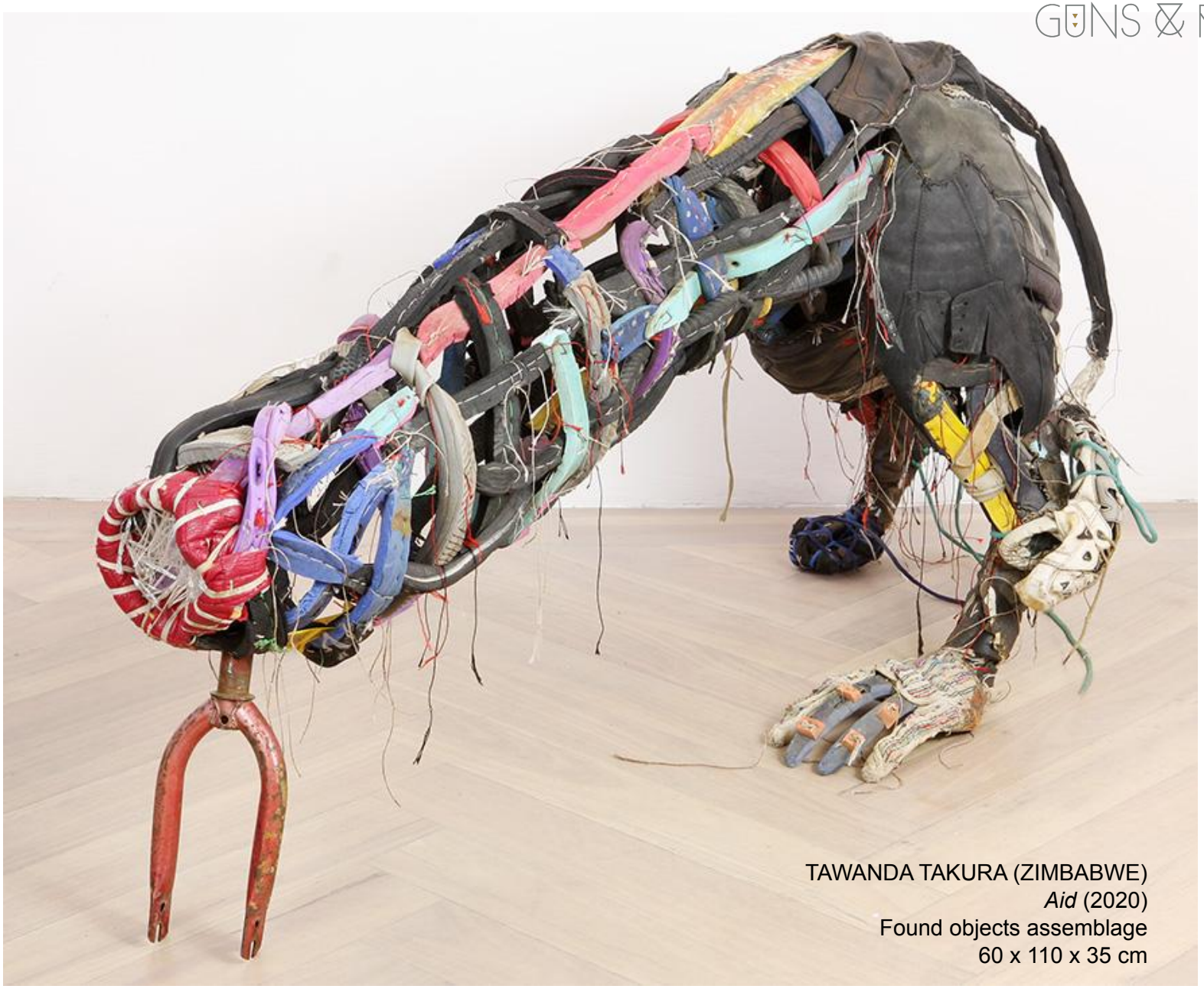


THINA DUBE (SOUTH AFRICA)
*We sing songs and practice life*
2020
Acrylic, drawing ink, charcoal and soft pastel on Fabriano
70 x 50 cm



*We sing songs and practice life* (detail)

THINA DUBE (SOUTH AFRICA)
*Colouring book*, 2020
Acrylic, drawing ink, charcoal and soft pastel on Fabriano
70 x 50 cm

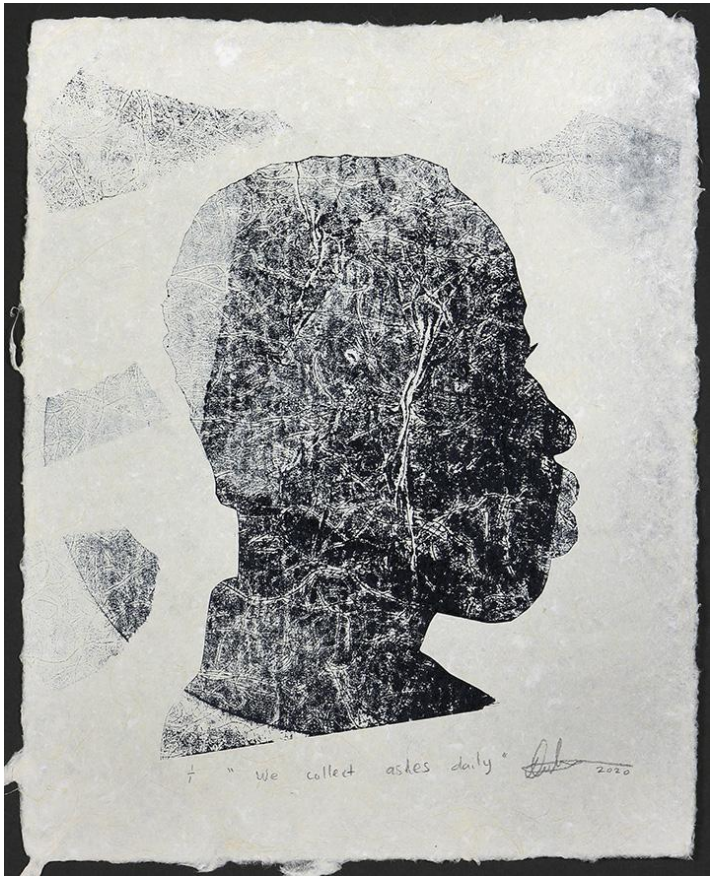


TAWANDA TAKURA (ZIMBABWE)
*Aid* (2020)
Found objects assemblage
60 x 110 x 35 cm

TAWANDA TAKURA (ZIMBABWE)
*Amen to Papa (2020)*
Found objects assemblage
97 x 37 x 20 cm

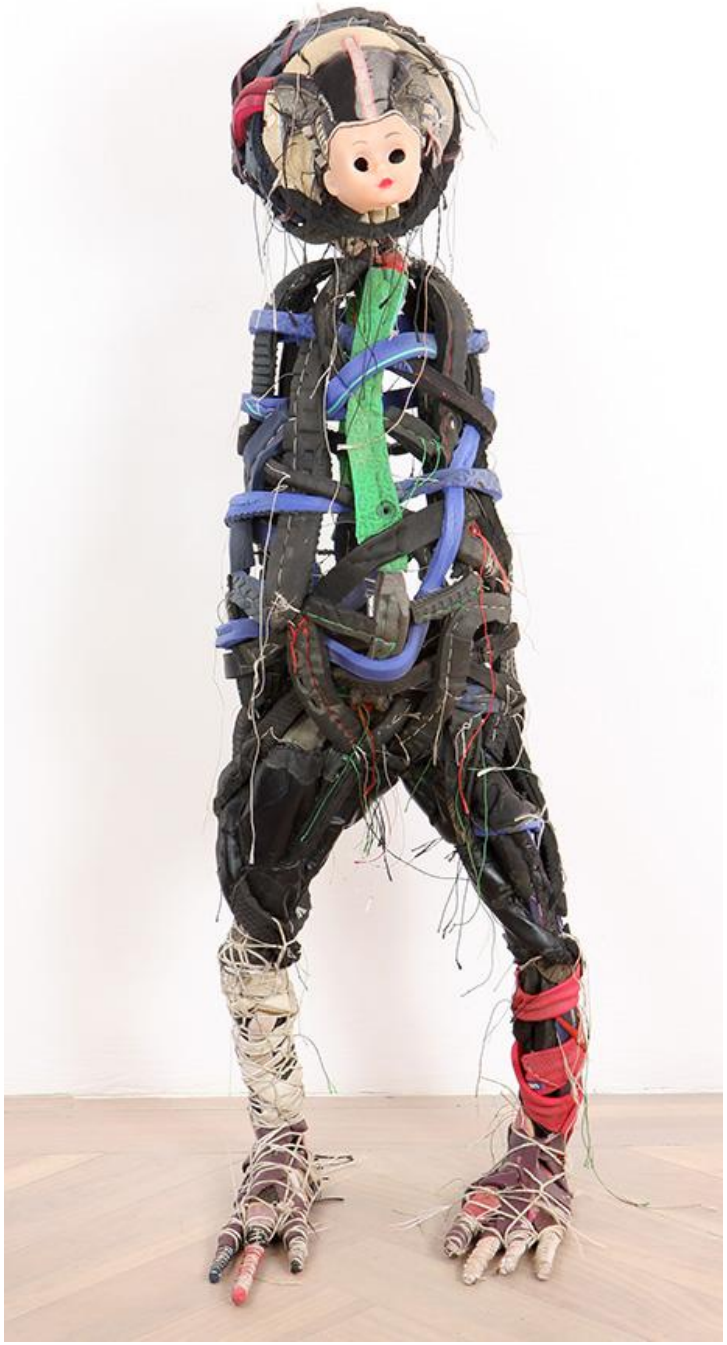
*Amen to Papa(2020)*

THINA DUBE (SOUTH AFRICA)
*Peter Pan stares from a distance*, 2020
Monotype on Handmade Paper
35 x 28 cm




THINA DUBE (SOUTH AFRICA)
*We collect ashes daily*, 2020
Monotype on handmade paper
35 x 28 cm

THINA DUBE (SOUTH AFRICA)
*Gardened Smile*, 2020
Acrylic, drawing ink, soft pastel, charcoal on canvas
88 x 70 cm



TAWANDA TAKURA (ZIMBABWE)
*Gaburona tungamira / Gabriel lead me* (2020)
Old shoes, string, doll
100 x 30 x 25 cm

TAWANDA TAKURA (ZIMBABWE)
*Nhapwa Mutemberi* (2020)
Found objects assemblage
119 x 48 x 60 cm (dimensions variable)

*Nhapwa Mutemberi (2020)*

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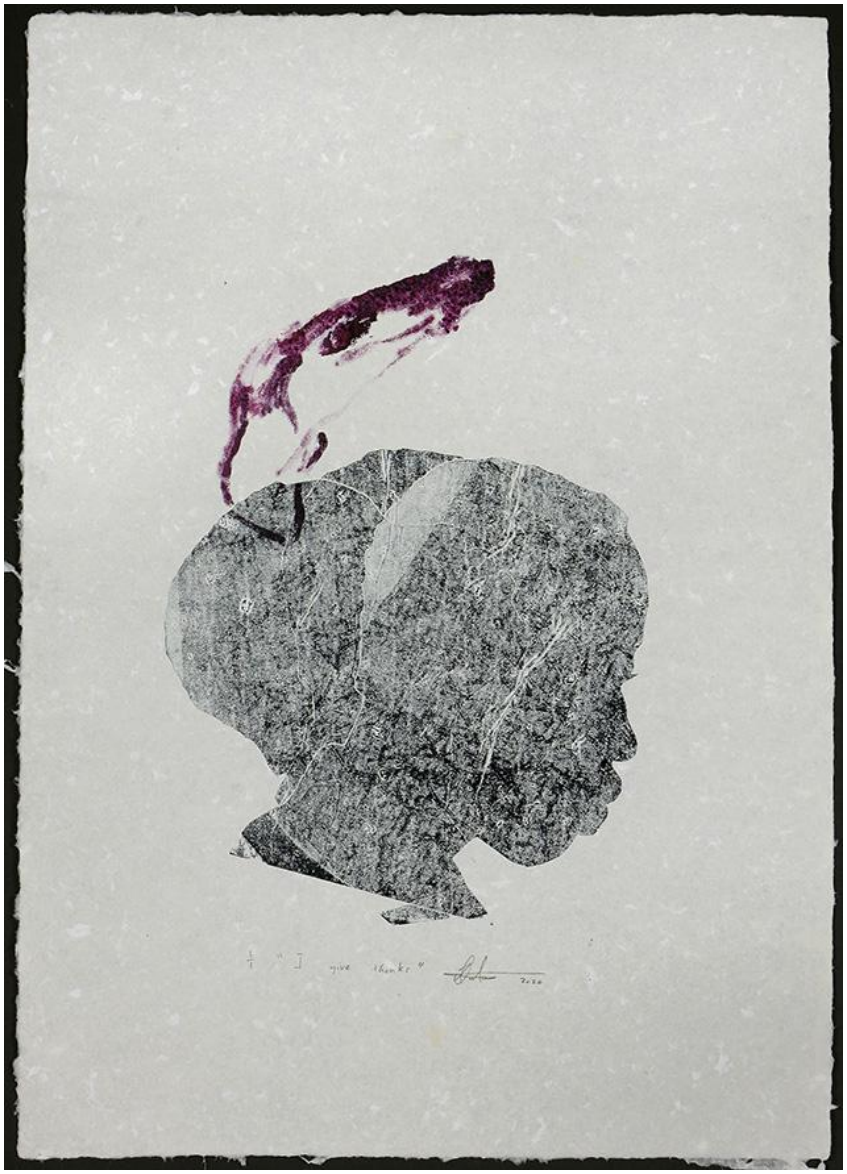
THINA DUBE (SOUTH AFRICA)
*The temple, the body. I'm mental.*
2020
Acrylic, drawing ink, charcoal and soft pastel on handmade paper
83 x 58 cm

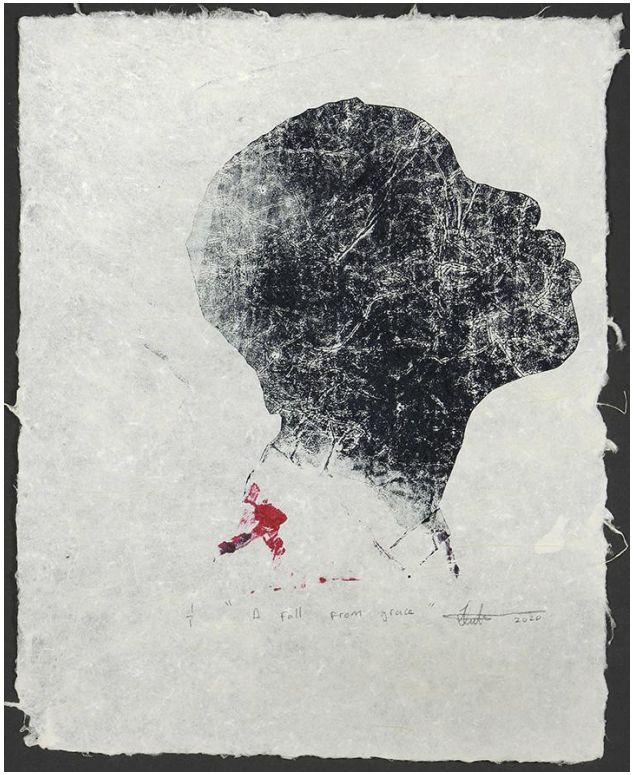
TAWANDA TAKURA (ZIMBABWE)
*Untitled*
Found objects assemblage
60 x 13 x 25 cm (Dimensions Variable)

TAWANDA TAKURA (ZIMBABWE)
*Mai mfundisi I / Lady Pastor I*
Found objects assemblage
50 x 17 x 4 cm (dimensions variable)

*Mai mfundisi I / Lady Pastor I (detail)*



THINA DUBE (SOUTH AFRICA)
*I give thanks*, 2020
Monotype on handmade paper
60 x 42 cm



THINA DUBE (SOUTH AFRICA)
*A fall from grace*, 2020
Monotype on handmade paper
35 x 28 cm

TAWANDA TAKURA (ZIMBABWE)
*Source (2020)*
Found objects assemblage (shoe tongues, heels, flipper, plastic)
146 x 30 x 30 cm (Dimensions Variable)

*Source (2020)*