

Richard Mudariki THE POLITICS OF LIFE

johans borman

FINE ART

FRONT COVER

Illusion of Freedom

BACK COVER

Tsotsi

OPPOSITE

The Merchant



Richard Mudariki THE POLITICS OF LIFE

FNB Joburg Art Fair

22 - 24 AUGUST 2014

johans borman

FINE ART

IN COLLABORATION WITH MARC STANES

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Richard Mudariki THE POLITICS OF LIFE

Richard Mudariki was born, raised and educated in Zimbabwe. His formative years were spent in an African country where society and politics are strongly intertwined; where cultural homogenization and socioeconomic issues are often exaggerated and magnified. As a result of living in a society where cultural, social and economic issues are continuously politicized, Mudariki has focussed on and created an awareness of this reality through his work.

Mudariki's interest in 'the politics of life' has resulted in his approach of questioning it, observing change and never accepting the status quo at face value. The artist's paintings seek to provoke public opinion and stimulate debate on social injustices and issues such as corporate greed, neo colonialism, censorship, human rights, rape and gender stereotyping *inter alia*. Art historian Lloyd Pollack comments on this in his foreword to Mudariki's first solo exhibition, 'My reality', in 2012:

Although such subject matter smacks of shrill, soap-box preachiness, the mise-en-scene proves so visually arresting that any specific political message becomes subsumed in a spectacular Breughelesque pageant of infamy and transgression. This transcends any chronological and geographic particularity, and becomes a timeless and universal statement conveyed with such gripping imaginative assurance that the resultant image entirely transcends the artist's activist goals.

Mudariki views life as a game; obtrusive checkerboard patterns cover the walls and floors of the walled spaces in his paintings, turning them into three dimensional chess boards. Pollack writes: Checkerboards are also associated with other games of skill and chance, such as checkers and draughts, which also involve combat, the capture of pieces and the conquest of territory. These allusions suggest that the paintings represent contests, and they identify life as conflict and strife. Mudariki's references to dice and card games intimate that the inhabitants of his world are not in control of their destinies, and that they are the playthings of sinister and malign forces.

Both the checkerboard upon which the action of virtually all the paintings is set, and the walls cordoning off space, and denying one any glimpse of what lies beyond, imply captivity and confinement, and operate as metaphors for a people denied freedom of choice, and room in which to manoeuvre. All these walls, barriers and boundaries imply no exit, and distill a hallucinatory quality indicative of dementia and delusion.

Mudariki's isometric boxes function exactly like a stage with the fourth wall removed, and the artist's décor exudes an overt theatricality, and conjures up a chimerical world that is both grotesque and macabre. The bizarre architecture, freakish hybrid beings and flamboyant costumes are scenographic fantasies.

They remind us of the medieval visions of Brueghel and Bosch both of whom rejected the real world in order to construct an infernal amusement park, a Disneyland of the afterlife in the words of W.S. Gibson.

This approach is particularly well illustrated by the artist in 'Illusion of Freedom', in which two monsters emerge from the background, looking to prey on the girl. A Nigerian flag hangs over a locked gate; a reference to the abduction of girls in Nigeria by a militia group. Symbolism and allegory render various meanings to these paintings. They present abstract ideas, meanings and messages in visual form through symbolic figures, actions or representations. Visual elements such as coins, dice, paper aeroplanes, gold bars, animals (goats, cockerel, baboon, sharks, dogs...) and animal-headed beings, all have a particular and profound meaning.

Lloyd Pollack observes that Mudariki's paintings create a surreal atmosphere: His introduction of logical inconsistencies into his handling of light, space, perspective and scale sabotage illusionist goals, and underscore the identity of his paintings as representations of reality, rather than reality itself. There is no narrative; no temptation for the viewer to loose himself in the unfolding action, and involve himself with the characters and their predicament, for that action is always arrested, and left hanging in the air.

Pollack summarises Mudariki's work eloquently: The static character of the scenario and absence of any resolution or catharsis, eliminates action and suspense. It enables the viewer to remain completely detached from what he/she witnesses, and invites an analytic rather than an emotional response, encouraging us to consider the political and social implications of the image just as we do in a Brechtian production.

Johans Borman

July 2014 Cape Town Mashonisas, a Zulu word meaning to 'sink', is the name given to the legitimate face of loan sharks, who lend pay-day money to the low income earners who find that they fall short before the end of the month. They are considered to be amongst the most ruthless exploiters of the poorest and most vulnerable of wage earners.



2014
Acrylic on canvas
88 x 74 cm
Signed and dated bottom right



The illusion of freedom will continue as long as it's profitable to continue the illusion. At the point where the illusion becomes too expensive to maintain, they will just take down the scenery, they will pull back the curtains, they will move the tables and chairs out of the way and you will see the brick wall at the back of the theatre ~ Frank Zappa



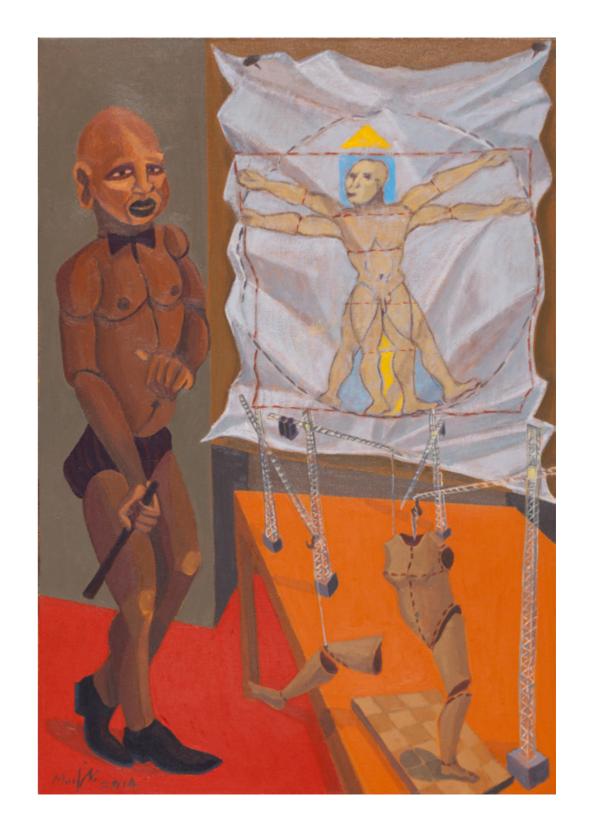
2014
Oil on canvas
150,5 x 150,5 cm
Signed and dated bottom left



This artwork comments on the social construct around man and masculinity: According to society, a typical male is physically strong, aggressive, independent, objective, dominant, and likes maths and science; he is active, competitive, logical, worldly, skilled in business, direct, and knows the ways of the world; he is someone whose feelings are not easily hurt; he is adventurous, makes decisions easily, never cries, acts as a leader, and is self-confident, ambitious, able to separate feelings from ideas, and is not dependent on nor conceited about his appearance.



2014
Acrylic on canvas
82,5 x 56,5 cm
Signed and dated bottom left



This piece is inspired by the 1982 song, *New Church*, by pop group Lords of the New Church. The New Church is a movement whose views, doctrine and morals stand in sharp contrast to the normal conventions of the old Church. It is all inclusive; politicians, merchants, thieves, actors and the immoral are all part of the New Church.

New Church

Songwriters

BRIAN JAMES, STEVE BATOR

When the heroes have all died away,
Priests and politicians have all lied away now.
Actors after all were only acting.
Church killed knowledge. Took the world a slave.

Chorus:

New Church
Join the New Church
Be a Lord of the New Church
Lords of the New Church Now – now

Ya gotta walk it, man, just like ya talk it.
Wear the uniform of your gang.
Purpose in life's just for living.
Dream merchants fantasy surreal so real.

(Chorus)

Divide and conquer – that's their game.

Beneath their haircut and clothes we're really all the same.

They threaten our lives with nuclear war.

Gonna crucify us just once more.

Join the New Church

Be a Lord of the New Church hey.

(Chorus)

Truth can't be found on the television.

Throw away youth ya gotta take a stand.

Music is your only weapon.

Spanners in the works go start your gang...

(Chorus)

You know we're The New Church Lords of the New Church

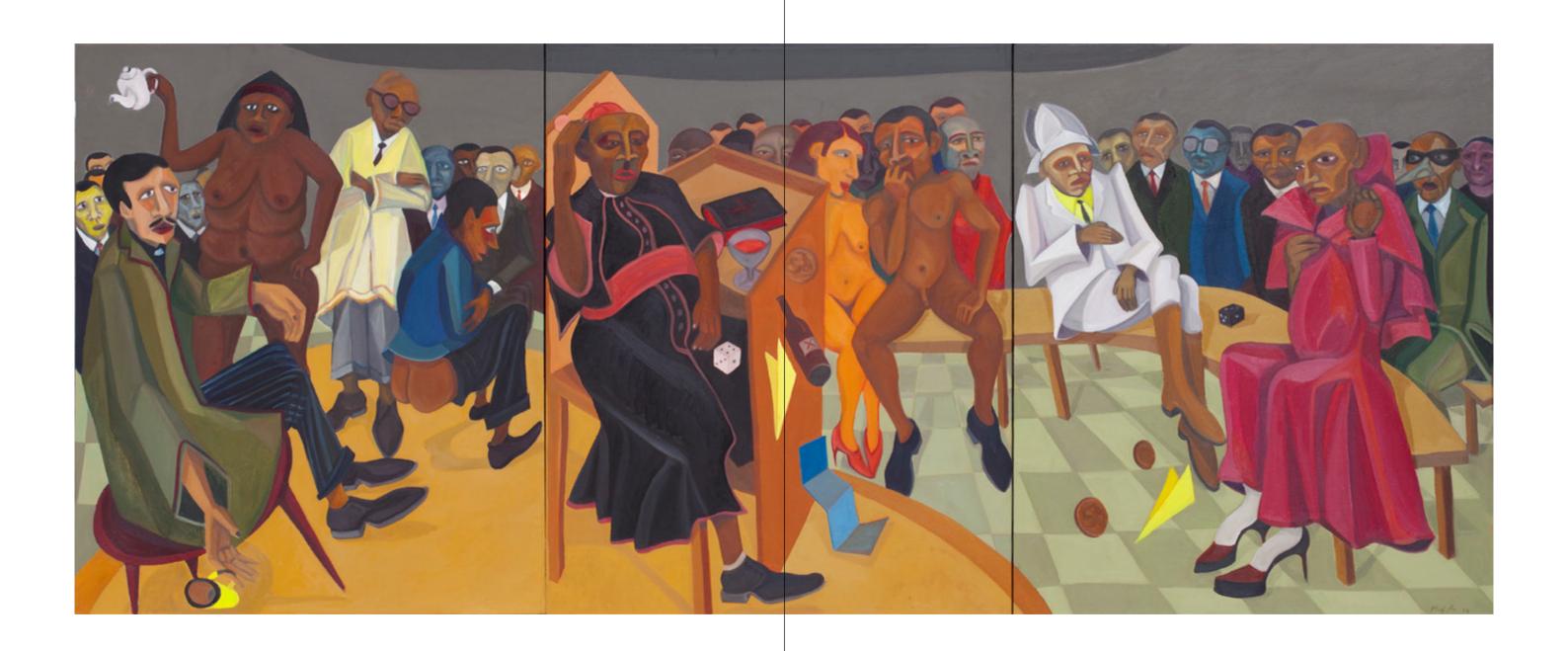
The New Church

2014

Oil on canvas (triptych) 89 x 73,5 cm (3)

Signed and dated bottom right





I have always seen the process of negotiation as a means of reaching an agreement, in which both sides must be prepared to compromise on their demands. Perhaps one side does better than the other – gains an advantage – but in successful negotiations both sides must feel they are gaining something. This painting is an interpretation of a bitter labour dispute, and the scene is of a negotiation process between workers and employers regarding salaries. The workers, seated on one side of the table, demand a salary increase, while there is an on-going strike. In the confrontation, they lay down their cards and will not budge on their offer. In the past, many strikes and negotiation processes have taken place in South Africa over various labour issues; the more prevalent ones in the mining industry in which workers earn poor wages whilst mine CEOs are awarded huge salaries and bonuses.



2014
Acrylic on canvas
82,5 x 56,5 cm
Signed and dated bottom right



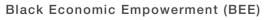
For centuries, Western imperialists with an appetite for the continent's resources have been a permanent feature in African history. China's footprint has been growing rapidly in most African countries during the past few decades: Is China a new colonial power? It seems that China is in Africa by invitation, and it is Africa's choice to engage with them. They are being invited because many African countries have serious infrastructure needs that China is able to assist with. However, there are some rogue Chinese investors who are allowed to get away with non-compliance with regard to socio-economic and environmental practices and laws. China is doing what is best for China. What is stopping Africa from doing what is best for Africa?



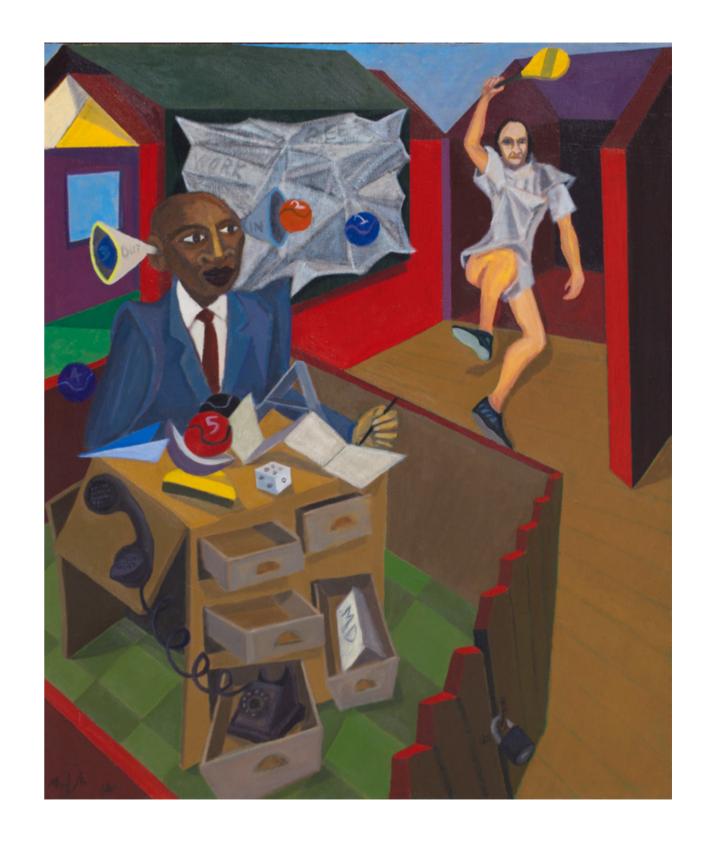
2014
Acrylic on canvas
73,5 x 89 cm
Signed and dated bottom left



Creating equality in the workforce by advantaging the previously underprivileged, and disadvantaging the previously privileged, is what BEE is/was aimed at. It has, however, created scenarios in which some employers have to consider the race and social background of any potential applicant rather than making decisions based purely on qualifications and experience. Thus, it is frequently seen as a system in which one's race is often the determining factor in finding employment in certain job types and industries.



2014
Acrylic on canvas
88,5 x 73,5 cm
Signed and dated bottom left





This work is about the Nkandla debacle.

Under the Magnifying Glass

2014
Acrylic on canvas
75 x 95 cm
Signed and dated bottom left

There has been a rising interest in contemporary African art in recent years. Some have suggested that contemporary African art blends the past with the present, and artists have expanded their approach to incorporate modern and contemporary inventions and technologies. It speaks to the viewer of the present, while at the same time evoking a rich cultural past. However, are all contemporary works from the continent truly African art?



2014
Acrylic on canvas
73,5 x 89 cm
Signed and dated bottom left



A good haircut has the potential to transform your face; it can bring your best features to centre stage, and send less fortunate ones into the wings. It can even reveal assets never noticed before. I recently had my hair cut by a local barber who did an amazing job, seemingly transforming the way I look, just like an artist would create a different reality.



2014
Acrylic on canvas
82,5 x 56,5 cm
Signed and dated bottom left



A young black gangster; urban, stylish and flashy.

Tsotsi

2014
Oil on canvas
30 x 21,5 cm
Signed, dated and titled verso

Richard Mudariki

Solo 2014	Exhibitions	May	Under the Magnifying Glass, Junction Art Gallery, Johannesburg
Aug	The Politics of Life, FNB Joburg Art Fair, Johans	May	Art Zimbabwe Today, Gallery Delta, Harare
	Borman Fine Art. Catalogue available online at	Apr	ZIMAGES Contemporary, Zimbabwe German
	http://www.johansborman.co.za/exhibitions/		Society, Harare
Mar	Open Agenda, Johans Borman Fine Art, Cape	Feb	Group Artists Exhibition, Junction Art Gallery,
	Town. Catalogue available online at http://www.		Johannesburg
	johansborman.co.za/exhibitions/	Jan	Emerging Artists Exhibition, Gallery Delta, Harare
2012		2010	
Jun	My Reality, Johans Borman Fine Art, Cape	Oct	Amani Arts Festival, Khayelitsha, Cape Town
	Town. Catalogue available online at http://www.	Sept	FACET, Zimbabwe Now, sponsored by the
	johansborman.co.za/exhibitions/		Germany Embassy, Gallery Delta, Harare
		Aug	Mother Earth, Gallery Delta, Harare
Grou	o Exhibitions	Jul	reflections.co.zw, National Gallery of Zimbabwe,
2014			Mutare
May	Still, Johans Borman Fine Art, Cape Town.	Jul	Drawings and Graphics, Gallery Delta, Harare
	Catalogue available online at http://www.	Jul	Insight - Fund Raising Exhibition, Gallery Delta,
	johansborman.co.za/exhibitions/		Harare
2013		Jun	Live and Direct 2010, National Gallery of
Aug	SPI National Portrait Exhibition, Rust en Vrede		Zimbabwe, Harare
	Gallery, Durbanville, Cape Town	May	Past and Present: 35 Years, Gallery Delta, Harare
Feb	Perceptual Vigilance, Association for Visual Arts	Apr	Roots – an art Exhibition in collaboration between
	Gallery in partnership with Spier, Cape Town		Dendera Gallery and Gallery Delta, Gallery Delta,
2011			Harare
Jan	Hope and Despair, National Gallery of Zimbabwe,	Feb	Young Artist Exhibition, Gallery Delta, Harare
0 1	Harare	2009	FACT 0000 Cattan Art Fullibition and and
Oct	Rendezvous Art Focus Painting, (Travelling	Dec	FACT 2009, Cottco Art Exhibition, sponsored
	Exhibition) North West University Gallery,		by the Cotton Company of Zimbabwe, National
Oct	Potchefstroom	Doo	Gallery of Zimbabwe
Oct	Persona, Johans Borman Fine Art, Cape Town.	Dec Nov	Summer Exhibition, Gallery Delta, Harare Walls: Competition and Exhibition. Sponsored by
	Catalogue available online at http://www.	INOV	the Germany Embassy, Gallery Delta
۸۰۰۰	johansborman.co.za/exhibitions/	Oot	Unity Exhibition. Sponsored by the European
Aug	At Night we Dream, at day we see, AVA, Cape Town	Oct	Commission, Gallery Delta, Harare
Jul	Colour Africa, Ort der Ausstellung: Amalienstraße	Jun	Ani-mal, Group Exhibition, Veo Gallery, Cape Town
oui	81, Gebäude im Hof, Munich, Germany	2008	7.1. mai, Group Exhibition, 100 dunory, Cupo fown
Jun	Contrasts, Gallery Delta, Harare	Dec	Post Election Selection, sponsored by the
oun	contracto, dunory Dorta, Hararo	200	. 331 2.30tion objection, application by the

Dec	Embassy of Spain, Gallery Delta, Harare Miniature Group Exhibition 2008, Veo Gallery, Cape Town	Jul	Netherlands, Gallery Delta, Harare Our Thoughts, Three Man Exhibition, National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Mutare	
Nov Oct	Salon 91 Art Exhibition, Salon 91, Cape Town Enriching Women, an exhibition for the International Women's Film Festival, Gallery Delta,	Mar	Don Quixote: An African Perspective, an exhibition sponsored by the Embassy of Spain, Gallery Delta, Harare	
	Harare	2005		
Oct	Let's Get Together: a group exhibition and competition sponsored by the French Embassy, Gallery Delta, Harare	Sep Jan 2003	African Contemporary Art, Gallery Delta, Harare Young Artist Exhibition, Gallery Delta, Harare	
Aug	Africa University Annual Festival of Art and Culture:	May	IKONS - An Exhibition of Greek, Serbian and	
	a group exhibition of paintings and graphics, National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Mutare		Russian Icons for the Greek Cultural Week, Gallery Delta, Harare	
Aug	Drawings and Graphics Exhibition, Gallery Delta, Harare	Jan	The Twenty Seventh Annual Young Artist Exhibition, Gallery Delta, Harare	
Jun	Onai Exhibition, Three Man Group Exhibition,	2002		
	National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Mutare	Apr	Explorations II (Student Work), Gallery Delta,	
Feb 2007	The Young Artists Exhibition, Gallery Delta, Harare	2001	Harare	
Dec	The Summer Exhibition, Gallery Delta, Harare	Feb	The Pritt Annual National Schools Exhibition,	
Sep	The Young Painters Artist's Exhibition, Gallery	1 00	National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, 2001	
	Delta, Harare			
Aug	Drawings and Graphics: An Overview, Gallery	Collections		
	Delta, Harare	Museu	useum Of Modern Art: Equatorial Guinea	
Jul	The Sixth Sense, an exhibition of paintings and graphics, National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Mutare	The Bruce Campbell Smith Collection		
Apr	Peace through Unity and Diversity, an exhibition	Art Fa	airs	
	and competition sponsored by the European	2014	The Politics of Life, FNB Joburg Art Fair, Johans	
	Commission, Gallery Delta, Harare		Borman Fine Art. Catalogue available online at	
Feb	The Young Artist Exhibition, Gallery Delta, Harare		http://www.johansborman.co.za/exhibitions/	
2006			Cape Town Art Fair, Johans Borman Fine Art.	
Dec	The Summer Exhibition, Gallery Delta, Harare		Catalogue available online at http://www.	
Dec	Verandah Gallery Portfolio Exhibition, Verandah	0010	johansborman.co.za/exhibitions/	
۸۰۰۰	Gallery, Emerald Hill, Harare Manicaland Visual Arts and Craft Association	2013	1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair, Somerset House, London	
Aug	(MANISA) Annual Exhibition, National Gallery of	2013	In the Shadow of the Rainbow, Johans Borman	
	Zimbabwe, Mutare	2010	Fine Art, FNB Joburg Art Fair 2013. Catalogue	
Sep	Rembrandt: An African Response, an exhibition		available online at http://www.johansborman.	
	and art competition sponsored by the Embassy of		co.za/exhibitions/	

2012 Museum of Modern Art: Equatorial Guinea exhibition at the FNB Jo'burg Art Fair 2012

Auctions

2014 Bonhams Africa Now auction, Bond Street, London

2013 Art Room African Art Auction: Contemporary and Modern Art and its Diaspora, Online Live Bidding ('Coup d'état' sold above estimate)

Awards and Recognition

- **2013** Finalist in the Sanlam Private Investments National Portrait Award competition
- 2010 Award for Painting, 'Artists in the Stream', the Young Artist Exhibition, sponsored by HIVOS Foundation, Gallery Delta, Harare
- 2010 Third Prize (Painting) from the Embassy of Germany and Gallery Delta Foundation, Gallery Delta, Harare
- 2006 Fourth Consolation Prize for Don Quixote:
 An African Perspective art exhibition and competition sponsored by the Embassy of Spain, Gallery Delta Foundation, Harare
- 2004 Best Visual Artist (Painting), The German Inter
 Afrika Art Competition, sponsored by the
 Embassies of Germany and Switzerland, Zimbabwe
 German Society, Harare
- 2003 Award of Merit (for Drawing) for an art exhibition and competition for the Greek Cultural Week sponsored by the Embassy of Greece and the Hellenics Community in Zimbabwe, Hellenic School. Harare

Publications

Johans Borman, 2014. *Still*, Exhibition Catalogue, Cape Town, South Africa

- Johans Borman, 2013. *In the Shadow of the Rainbow*, Exhibition Catalogue, Cape Town, South Africa Johans Borman, 2011. *Persona*, Exhibition Catalogue, Cape Town, South Africa
- Richard Mudariki, 2011. Contents, Contexts and

 Creators An introduction to the contemporary
 visual arts of Zimbabwe. Unpublished paper
 presented at the African Arts Institute, Cape
 Town, South Africa

Rendezvous Art Project, Focus Painting 2011 - 2012

Residencies

2010 Resident artist, Good Hope art Studios, Cape Town, South Africa

Workshops

- 2014 The Greatmore Studios Long Walk Project, Greatmore Studios, Woodstock, Cape Town
- 2008 National Mining Museum Exhibition Design Workshop, facilitated by the British Council and the National Mining Museum of Wales, Harare
- 2001 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) HIV/AIDS Art Workshop: 'Men Make A Difference', National Gallery Of Zimbabwe, Harare

Voluntary Work

- 2011 Board Member, Association for Visual Arts (AVA), Cape Town, South Africa
- 2005 Mural Artist Paintings and Decorations for the Greek Cultural Week, Hellenic School, Borrowdale, Harare
- 2006 Khami World Heritage Site International Youth
 Volunteer Restoration Camp, supported by the
 National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe
 (NMMZ), Association CHAM, UNESCO, French
 Embassy, Bulawayo

Written by Richard Mudariki, Johans Borman and Marc Stanes

Proof reading

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johans borman

F I N E A R T