



Billie Zangewa
Heart of the Home, 2020, detail
Hand-stitched silk collage
53.5 x 43.25 inches
136 x 110 cm

Billie Zangewa

Wings of Change

October 1–November 7, 2020

501 24th Street, New York, NY 10011

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New York, September 2020—Lehmann Maupin is pleased to announce *Wings of Change*, an exhibition featuring seven new silk works by Johannesburg-based artist **Billie Zangewa**. For her first exhibition with Lehmann Maupin and first in New York, Zangewa has created a body of work that explores the new reality of living and working in isolation during the Covid-19 pandemic. Best known for her intricate collages composed of hand-stitched fragments of raw silk, Zangewa creates figurative compositions that explore contemporary intersectional identity in an attempt to challenge the historical stereotype, objectification, and exploitation of the black female form. *Wings of Change* will feature new work that examines Zangewa’s personal experiences during the recent months of global lockdown, especially those of love, loss, and emotional transformation.

Beginning her career in the fashion and advertising industries, Zangewa employs her understanding of textiles to portray personal and universal experiences through domestic interiors, urban landscapes, and portraiture. Her earliest works were embroideries on found fabrics depicting remembered botanical scenes and animals from Botswana, but she soon transitioned to creating cityscapes, focusing on her experience as a woman in the city of Johannesburg and her personal relationships. After the birth of her son, Zangewa began creating her well-known domestic interiors to explore the shift in focus from self-examination and femininity to motherhood and the home. Often referencing scenes or experiences from everyday life, Zangewa has stated that she is interested in depicting the work done by women that keeps society running smoothly—but which is often overlooked, undervalued, or ignored.

The works in *Wings of Change* visualize the recent, radical shifts in daily life and mundane routines, as well as the growth and loss of personal relationships as a result of the pandemic. In *The Heart of the Home*, Zangewa depicts her son studying at the kitchen table—a highly relevant image as many parents have begun homeschooling their children due to school closures. For Zangewa, the kitchen has become a communal space for joy, education, work, and sustenance, bringing her and her son closer together. *A Fresh Start* speaks to the

renewed power of a simple shower, which Zangewa sees as representing transformation that allows for new beginnings and an opportunity to start fresh. This morning ritual sets the tone for the day, but the shower has also become a place for self care and respite where one can find a moment of solace amidst this period of extreme stress. Where *The Heart of the Home* and *A Fresh Start* signify a renewed perspective on daily routines, *Free Spirit* signifies loss. *Free Spirit* is a tribute to Zangewa's friend, Henri Vergon, who recently passed away. Unable to attend the funeral due to lockdown measures, this work is a way for Zangewa to honor him. In *Free Spirit*, she depicts Henri as an angel, standing in his "celestial" gallery, smiling, happy, and energized. Though signifying personal loss, this work also represents a spirit set free, imagining a chance for a new beginning.

Wings of Change acts as a marker of this unique time and the radical changes of 2020. The works featured illustrate all that has been lost, rediscovered, and let go, as well as the resilience developed and the lessons learnt during this difficult and deeply emotional period. The title of the exhibition suggests possibility in the face of a global crisis that is forcing the world to change and critically reexamine personal, governmental, and societal priorities. For Zangewa, it is important that her representation of this moment focuses on not only its hardships but offers a candid view of domestic life in its altered state and an opportunity to make necessary changes in our habits, relationships, and day-to-day. The ultimate message is thus one of hope, and an offering of love for oneself and all of humanity.

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