

Victoria Miro

Kudzanai-Violet Hwami: *A Making of Ghosts*

Exhibition 14 April–13 May 2023

16 Wharf Road, London N1 7RW



Kudzanai-Violet Hwami
Murapi, 2023
UV print, oil, charcoal, and acrylic on canvas
177 x 156 cm
69 3/4 x 61 3/8 in
© Kudzanai-Violet Hwami
Courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro

Victoria Miro is delighted to present an exhibition of new work by Kudzanai-Violet Hwami. Comprising paintings in dialogue with large-scale wall-based and suspended photographic images, *A Making of Ghosts* reflects on aspects of grief and the action of memory, unfolding as the viewer moves through the gallery space.

Kudzanai-Violet Hwami's paintings combine visual fragments from a myriad of sources, such as online and archival images, and personal photographs, which collapse past and present. Autobiographical in nature and 'dealing with internal and private curiosities,' her works address how in a digitised world of infinite images we construct a sense of self, or experience and try to understand one another in a complex social reality.

Conceived across both levels of the gallery, *A Making of Ghosts*, the artist's second solo exhibition at the gallery, features paintings and large-scale photographic images – some presented as floor-to-ceiling vinyls, others suspended in the space – sharing references including family photographs that act as touchstones for thoughts about grief, its action on memory and its fragmentary and disorienting effects.

Hwami's work often speaks to the fallibility of memory as images are produced and reproduced, impressing themselves upon us while becoming unmoored from their original sources. Through her process, the artist questions things that appear fixed, or possess apparent finality, opening up a space of imagination and discovery shaped in part by her years growing up in Zimbabwe and South Africa, her interest in metaphysics and spirituality, and expressions of contemporary Black and Queer identities. Here, the historical medium of painting is folded into a collage-like approach

analogous with the layering of formats we associate with social media platforms today. ‘I think I am seeking freedom,’ Hwami has said. ‘Collage making, which is a process I use to create a picture, has given me absolute freedom as a strategy...’.

In the context of *A Making of Ghosts*, the digital and physical processes Hwami employs – splice, repetition, overlay, changes of scale and medium, in addition to the free play of imagination – are intrinsically linked to ideas of proximity in time and space, and how images and their accompanying narratives are endlessly constructed and reconstructed, living within us and beyond us.

As Osei Bonsu comments in the publication accompanying the artist’s 2022 solo exhibition at Kunsthau Pasquart, Switzerland, ‘Hwami’s images are digitally recomposed to question the legitimacy of the “real” in relation to spiritual and existential experiences connected to memory, time or place. In a world dominated by digital technologies, Hwami’s mixing of timelines and temporalities evokes connections between places near and far, generations living and dead, a space between home and a possible elsewhere.’

About the artist

Born in Gutu, Zimbabwe in 1993, Kudzanai-Violet Hwami currently lives and works in London. In 2016, the same year she graduated from Wimbledon College of Arts with a Bachelor of Fine Arts, she was awarded the Clyde & Co. Award and the Young Achiever of the Year Award at the Zimbabwean International Women’s Awards, as well as being shortlisted for Bloomberg New Contemporaries. In 2019, Hwami presented work at the 58th Venice Biennale as part of the Zimbabwe Pavilion, the youngest artist to participate in the Biennale. In 2022 she returned to the 59th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia as part of *The Milk of Dreams*, curated by Cecilia Alemani. Hwami’s first institutional solo exhibition, *(15,952km) via Trans – Sahara Hwy N1*, was held at Gasworks, London, in 2019. Recent institutional exhibitions include a solo presentation at Kunsthau Pasquart, Switzerland, which was on view 10 April–12 June 2022.

Other group exhibitions include *Reframed: The Woman at the Window* at Dulwich Picture Gallery, London, UK (2022); *When We See Us: A Century of Black Figuration in Painting*, Zeitz MOCAA, Cape Town, South Africa (2022); *Ubuntu, a lucid dream*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France (2021–2022); *Mixing it Up: Painting in the UK*, Hayward Gallery, London, UK (2021); *Citizens of Memory*, The Perimeter, London, UK (2021); *The Power of My Hands*, Musée d’Art Moderne de Paris, France (2021); *Force Times Distance: On Labor and its Sonic Ecologies*, Sonsbeek 20-24, Arnhem, Netherlands (2021).

Hwami’s work is held in public collections including Fondation Blachère, Apt, France; Government Art Collection, London, UK; High Museum of Art, Atlanta, USA; Kadist Foundation, Paris, France; Norval Foundation, Cape Town, South Africa; Jorge Perez Art Museum, Miami, USA; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands; The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, USA; Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, USA; Zeitz MOCAA, Cape Town, South Africa.

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