

Portia Zvavahera
Zvibereko zvemweya wangu

November 14, 2025–February 7, 2026
606 N Western Avenue, Los Angeles



Portia Zvavahera, *Takasunungurwa*, 2025
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David Zwirner is pleased to present *Zvibereko zvemweya wangu*, its third solo exhibition with the Zimbabwean artist Portia Zvavahera. Taking place at the gallery's 606 N Western Avenue location in Los Angeles, this presentation features a series of new works that continues to develop Zvavahera's experiments with different painting processes and subject matter by joining her carefully charted dream worlds with her lived experience and daily rituals. Zvavahera expands her practice with familiar motifs and narratives; her works are populated by symbolic creatures that become powerful conduits for the interpretation of spiritual visions and the contemplation of our earthly existence.

In her paintings, Zvavahera gives form to emotions beyond the domains of everyday life and thought. Her vivid imagery is rooted in the cornerstones of our earthly existence—life and death, pain and

pleasure, isolation and connection, and love and loss. These deeply personal visions are realized through layers of vibrant color and ornate, veil-like patterns that the artist builds up into palimpsestic surfaces through a combination of expressive brushwork and elaborate printmaking techniques. Zvavahera's compositions draw on particular traditions of figuration in past and present Zimbabwe, first expressed in the work of Thomas Mukarobgwa in the 1960s, while also pointing to postwar artistic practices that probe the nature of the human condition.

Zvavahera's latest exhibition powerfully continues this exploration of the human condition. Themes of love, loss, fear, family, and protection recur throughout this new series of paintings, mirroring her broader practice. The show title *Zvibereko zvemweya wangu* loosely translates from Shona as the "fruits of my soul," aptly describing the intense creative output behind these works. These monumental paintings are among her most energetic to date, deeply inspired by her love for family and, particularly, the passing of her late grandmother. Here, Zvavahera resumes her study of dreamscapes, delving into subject matter that women, especially mothers, have experienced across time. She strips away the protective veneer of modern society, exposing core emotions that relate to the profundity of life and death. Incorporating new motifs like vessels, trees, water lilies, and snakes, Zvavahera's paintings guide viewers on journeys, telling abstracted stories about the strength within the maternal and matriarchal world, where reality and imagination merge.

Shona is the artist's native language, which she speaks at home; titles in Shona are provided with a translation only when Zvavahera feels that the English words suffice. Experimenting with batik and block printing, oil sticks, and acrylic paints, Zvavahera's canvases are applied with layers, and then, like dreams, unfold into camouflaged compositions rich in symbolism and psychological depth. Within *Zvibereko zvemweya wangu*, Zvavahera portrays small figures, children unbound by the canvas and surrounded by protecting arms and feathered veils painted with leaves, using a traditional wax-resist batik method, in works such as *Kubuditswa muhari* (2025). Others like *Kubuditswa (redeemed)* (2025) show a series of bowing figures—a community seemingly praying as a form of collective strength, demonstrating their power in numbers.

Portia Zvavahera was born in 1985 in Harare, Zimbabwe, where she currently lives and works. She studied at the BAT Visual Arts Studio, National Gallery of Zimbabwe, from 2003 to 2005. She then received a diploma in fine arts from Harare Polytechnic in 2006.

Ndakaoneswa murima, the artist's first solo presentation in New York and her second with the gallery, was on view at David Zwirner, New York, in 2021. Zvavahera's first exhibition with the gallery, *Ndakavata pasi ndikamutswa nekuti anonditsigira*, was at its London location in 2020.

The artist has presented several solo exhibitions with Stevenson, Cape Town and Johannesburg (2014–2020), and a solo exhibition with Marc Foxx Gallery, Los Angeles (2017). The National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, presented her solo exhibition *Under My Skin* in 2010, and in 2020, the Institute of Contemporary Art Indian Ocean, Port Louis, Mauritius, held her solo exhibition *Walk of Life*. She was invited to show her work as part of the Zimbabwean Pavilion exhibition *Dudziro: Interrogating the Visions of Religious Beliefs* at the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013. In 2022, her work was included in the 59th Venice Biennale.

In 2024, Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge, England, presented *Zvakazarurwa*, a solo exhibition of the artist's work organized in collaboration with Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh, where the show traveled in 2025. Curated by Tamar Garb, this exhibition marked Zvavahera's first solo institutional presentation in the United Kingdom. Also in 2024, the Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris, presented *Imba yerumbidzo (House of praise)*, as the fifteenth iteration of its *Open Space* solo exhibition series. The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, opened *Hidden Battles / Hondo dzakavanzika*, Zvavahera's first institutional solo exhibition in the United States, in August 2025. The artist also opened her first solo institutional exhibition in Germany at Fridericianum, Kassel, on September 27, 2025.

Zvavahera's work is held in the collections of the Johannesburg Art Gallery; Minneapolis Institute of Art; National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare; Pérez Art Museum Miami; Tate, United Kingdom; University of Chicago Booth School of Business; Weisman Art Museum, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis; and Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa, Cape Town.

For all press inquiries, contact:

Elizabeth Gartner
egartner@davidzwirner.com

Julia Lukacher
jlukacher@davidzwirner.com