

Art Exchange Visit in Harare, Zimbabwe

27th April until 1st May 2019

The aim of the visit was to understudy the arts and culture of Zimbabwe in order to identify areas of cooperation which will benefit both the National Arts Council of Seychelles and the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe. It is important to note that this exchange visit is subsequent to previous discussions between Mr. Jimmy Savy CEO National Arts Council Seychelles and Mr. Nicholas Moyo Director National Arts Council Zimbabwe, which took place during the IFACCA 8th World Summit on Arts and Culture in Malaysia, from 11th to 14th March 2019.

The exchange program allowed us to visit and meet with different people who are fully immersed, engaged or involved in the creative and cultural industry of Zimbabwe. This official trip was made by Ms Vivienne Croisee, the senior Arts Development Officer at the National Arts Council of Seychelles and Mr. James Agricole, a visual artist and also a member of the federation for visual arts, SEYLAR.

We believe that this visit will provide greater opportunities for exchange programmes between visual artists from both sides, while the National Arts Council seeks to benefit through numerous opportunities for its staff, NAC board of directors and other partners with interests in art as well.

The table below provides an insight into the kind of activities, meetings and experiences we were exposed to:

DATE	ACTIVITY
Sat-27 th April	Arrival of Delegates & artwork
Sun-28 th April	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mounting of Exhibition at National Art gallery• Tour of Chitungwiza Art Centre
Mon-29 th April	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tour of Dominic Benhura Studio• Official launch of the Arts Exhibition
Tues-30 th April	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Official Launch of the SADC Afro-Sino Art Exchange Association• Arts Forum
Wed -1 st May	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visit to Chinhoyi Cave
Thurs 2 nd May	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Departure

About the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe “The National Arts Council of Zimbabwe was established in 1985 by an Act of Parliament. Its main function is to foster, develop and improve the knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts and their presentation, performance, execution, and the exhibition of the same to various public. The head office is situated in Harare, while it also has 10 offices in the provincial capitals to ensure that it interacts and share ideas with artists and arts & culture organizations for the development and promotion of arts. The provincial offices have a provincial Arts Manager and a Programme Officer who ensures that NACZ roles and functions are fulfilled. Some of the NACZ main events are:

- Workshops
- Art in residencies
- National Arts Merit Award
- Culture week
- Dance Festival
- National Arts Indaba (A National Arts Strategy dialogue)
- NACZ has also established an Arts Development Fund (ADF)

The National Art gallery of Zimbabwe “The gallery was set up in 1999; it strives to be the prime essential and global centre for the presentation, promotion and critical interrogation of Zimbabwe’s visual Heritage and contemporary Art both locally and internationally. It boasts of a vast permanent collection consisting of modern and contemporary Zimbabwean art”

The gallery offers the following services:

- Exhibitions
- Educational Tours
- Library (The gallery has a library which consists of literature on all visual art forms)
- ArtLife Shop (It offers a wide range of art products of Zimbabwe)
- Gallery cafe



Hall of exhibition

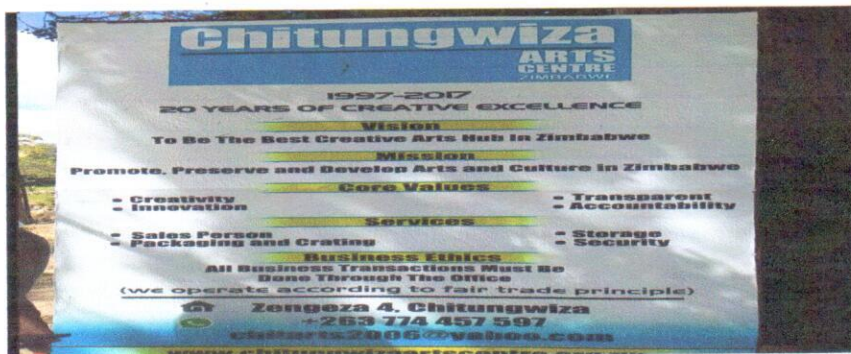


ArtLife Shop

Chitungwiza arts Centre “The Chitungwiza Arts Centre is located in the heart of Chitungwiza – Zimbabwe’s third largest City – 30km South-west of the capital, Harare. It was established in 1997 out of poverty alleviation programme, which was supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Zimbabwe Ministry of Education and Culture and the National Arts Council.

It is a successful community arts project, whereby artists/sculptors work with **stones**, which is benefiting its people in providing a stable work place where artists can develop skills and source markets for their art products. The centre also provides a platform for women and youth to get training from experienced artists and thereby create self-employment for many.

This centre also gives visitors the opportunity to purchase unique and innovative pieces of modern art directly from the artists.



Dominic Benhura Studio

The Seychelles & Chinese delegations got the honor of visiting the Mr. Benhura, who is a professional stone sculptor, well known and respected locally and internationally. He began his career in sculpture at the age of 10. Now at the age of 51, Dominic has become one of Africa's greatest contributors to the World of contemporary arts. Benhura's art depicts human life and nature themes.



Stone sculpture



Dominic Benhura at work



Stone Sculpture

About the official launch of the Art Exhibition

The art exhibition had a total of 120 art pieces from Zimbabwe, Botswana, Zambia, Seychelles, Kenya and China. The theme for the exhibition was south meeting east, a tale of two communities creating an opportunity for the artists from both south and the east to network. The National Arts Council of Zimbabwe organized this exhibition in partnership with the National gallery of Zimbabwe, Afro-Sino Cultural Association, Embassy of China, jacaranda Cultural and Media Corporation and Zimbabwe Chinese Business Association.

Some of the speakers at the official opening ceremony of the exhibition were:

- The Zimbabwean acting minister of youth, sports, arts and recreation, Mr. kazembe kazembe
- The Chinese ambassador to Zimbabwe, Mr. Guo Shaochun
- The Director of National Arts Council of Zimbabwe, Mr. Nicholas Moyo
- The Dean of Academy of Arts & Design at China's Tsinghua University, Mr. Lu Xiaobo
- The Chairperson of the Afro-Sino Cultural Exchange Association, Mr. Franklin Asira

To note that Mr. James Agricole participated with two art pieces shown in pictures below:



Title "Play a piece of music between two sounds"



Title "Fight for fire"

The Official Launched of the SADC Afro-Sino Art Exchange association

During this art exchange, we had the opportunity to witness the official launching of the Afro-Sino Art Exchange association.

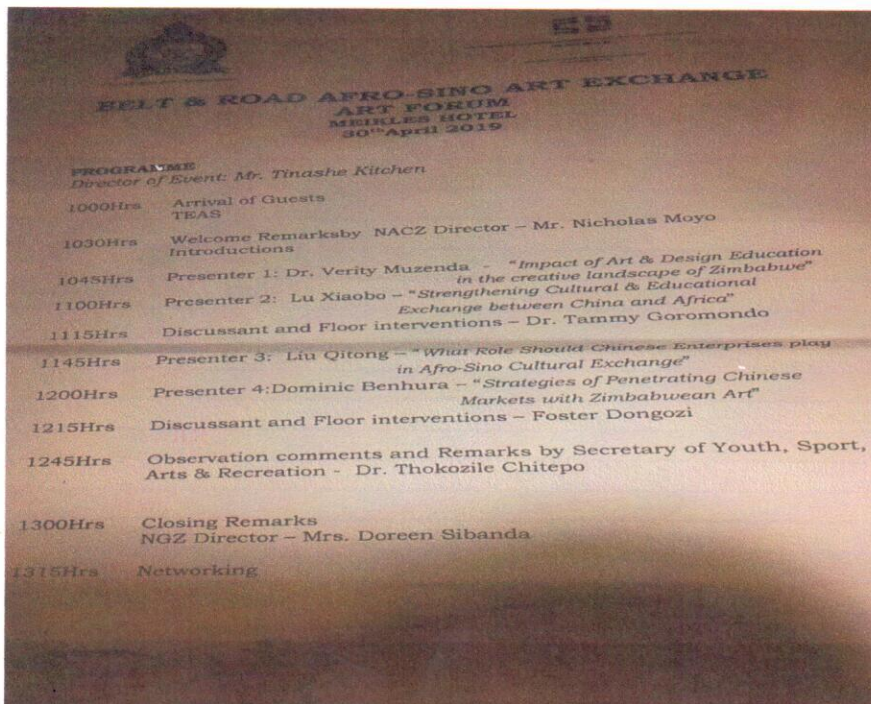
The Southern African Development Community (SADC) chapter was launched to further enhance cultural ties between China and southern Africa, down to grassroots level.

The SADC chapter is the first of five regional chapters that the Afro-Sino cultural exchange association hopes to establish in Africa, by August next year.

Speaking at the launching of the association, Mr. Franklin Asira, chairperson of the Afro-Sino cultural exchange association said” **the association is in response of China’s growing call for closer cultural ties between China and Africa under the Belt & Road Initiative, I feel proud to launch this SADC chapter, which will be headquartered in Zimbabwe**”

The SADC chapter will be chaired by Mr. Nicholas Moyo, the director of the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe.

In the same instant, the arts forum was also launched whereby artists and officials exchanged views and ideas on growing cultural ties.



To conclude the forum, one of the presenter said, I quote “ Do not go to your grave and carry all the best that you have, Go empty, let us share our experience, alone we cannot go far but together we can make a difference”.

Areas of possible actions:

We believe the possibility to further engage in activities in the following is possible:

1. Our visit took us to different indoor and outdoor galleries and studios such as Chitungwiza and Dominic Benhura centres, where we met different highly respected Zimbabwe artists who are capable of running workshops for visiting artist programme or residencies. Our recommendation will be for the Zimbabwe artists to conduct workshops during the Arts Festival to experiment with stone sculpture.
2. There must be an exchange of a list of festivals and events by both countries to assist in the planning of events and or festivals to participate in.
3. Have representation from Zimbabwe to participate in the Seychelles biennale in 2020.
4. Invite representatives of the National Arts Council Zimbabwe, as guests of honor, to the Seychelles Arts Award to be held in November 2018, and in the same instance start negotiations on the possibility of signing an MOU.

Conclusion

The Seychelles delegation are indebted to both National Arts Council of Seychelles and the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe for facilitating the exchange.

Report compiled by: Ms. Vivienne Croisee (Senior Arts Development Officer) & Mr. James Agricole (Visual artist)