

LIZETTE CHIRRIME

Yellowwoods Art



Lizette Chirime, *Red 1*, 2016. Sewn fabric, canvas and paint; Image courtesy of the artist and Worldart, Cape Town.

ART AFRICA: You come from a very challenging past and credit nature, and more specifically water, as a major influence on your work. How did you draw on nature to overcome these issues in your life?

Lizette Chirime: I spent four months in Mozambique, surrounded by the ocean. I started challenging myself by walking alone along the sea for long distances, facing all my fears and demons. This was a healing experience for me. I would wake up before sunrise and run, walk, dance or do yoga. Before I was afraid of everything, even my own company. After these four months I felt I was ready to talk to my family about my problems, but all I could do was speak to my father, as the other members were still comfortable treating me badly and wouldn't listen to me. So nothing changed. Coming to Cape Town was a big jump in my life. I was far from home and those who treated me badly. Everything was new, so I could live and feel free. Here there are the mountains and the ocean, so I spent a lot of time walking, going up and down the mountain, crying and cleaning my soul, learning to understand and forgive. So nature and art were the main tools for overcoming my issues.

Your art practice involves using paint and sewing and the compositions are mostly composed of organic shapes. Can you tell us more about this choice of medium and the imagery used?

When I started working as an artist I recycled a lot and one of my aims was to change myself and the way people perceived me, especially my family. I would transform things and give them a new, beautiful life. I draw a lot and after drawing I dress the drawing with colourful fabrics and sewing. I chose these because it is the medium I am comfortable with. I can be more expressive in this way.



Lizette Chirime, detail of *Blue 1*, 2016. Sewn fabric, canvas and paint. Images courtesy of the artist and Worldart, Cape Town.

Your most recent works, *Blue 1* and *Red 1*, show a very controlled, immaculately executed use of material. Since your first solo exhibition 'Metamorfosa de sacco' (Transformation of Bags), has your art practice changed much?

Yes, my work has changed a lot as I believe I am growing. I have conquered most of my fears, and am more comfortable with myself and people. I don't have an art education and training, so my way of growing is by practicing, and also the way I see and embrace life and nature.

Lizette Chirime's solo exhibition 'Symphony of a free soul' will be on show at Worldart gallery in Cape Town from 1st - 29th September 2016.