

SIMON CHIDHARARA

ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE, 2007

NYANGA

Simon Chidharara was born in 1980 in Mutare. He started sculpting at the age of 11, apprenticing with his older brother Kenneth. Simon completed his secondary education before deciding that he wanted to pursue his passion for carving full time. But learning is still important to him and he is voracious reader. "Any topic interests me," he says. "Geography, history, science all influence human life and I like to find out more about what makes us do the things we do, and feel the way we feel."



Simon is one of the founding members of the Nyanga Arts Centre, a co-operative venture run by local artists in the Nyanga region. Now one their most successful artists he mentors younger sculptors.

Simon takes full advantage of the range of beautiful stone that's available to sculptors in this region of the country. He says the rock itself is a source of inspiration, as are the spirits of his ancestors. His work is contemplative, often evoking a particular emotion or mood. He has a spare unadorned style, sometimes choosing to leave parts of the stone unworked and unpolished.

His subjects are often women or "feminine" spirits. "Women are the centre of life," he explains.

Simon has participated in several group exhibitions at The National Gallery of Zimbabwe in Mutare. His work has been bought by galleries and collectors from Holland, the UK, the US, Canada and Germany.

ZimArt has represented Simon in Canada since 2001.

In 2007, Simon Chidharara will travel from Zimbabwe to Canada to be the sponsored artist-in-residence for ZimArt's annual outdoor exhibitions, Shona D'Afrique III and Rice Lake VIII. He was also offering stone sculpting workshops at the Rice Lake Gallery in August 2007.

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