

Cosmas Shiridzinomwa

Our Common Diaries



Remembered
Oil on Canvas
144 x 198 cm, 2021

It has been six years since Cosmas Shiridzinomwa's participation in the Venice Biennale, and five since the prestigious "Five Bhobh" exhibition of Zimbabwean painting at the Zeitz MOCAA in Cape Town. Having vested his creativity within his community at Zinyau, in unpredictable forms and surprising media, he returns to painting with his latest works forming this exhibition, *Our Common Diaries*. We are not only proud to be able to show the work of a painter as esteemed as Shiridzinowma, indeed, we consider it an honour to do so.

The word diary implies a space to note some truth about ourselves, our lives, our contexts and our perceptions. It is the author's account of their experience at a certain place and time. It is, by implication, personal and private. It is a self-centric and hierarchical positioning of "I": I am here, this is my experience, this is me in relation to the world that I see, this is me in relation to you. It is written for me now, and perhaps at a time of my choosing, for you.

But how do we understand the word "common"? With whom and how are these entries "common", and what might that mean? Are they multiple records of different individuals' perceptions? Are they observations of the same worlds and contexts and how do they differ? Or are they perhaps an account of a group, and if so, what is the nature of that group; Is it hierarchical? Does each member have access to the same resources? What characteristics of race, gender, social or economic status come into play in that equation? Does the group perceive these experiences as a whole, and is that even possible? What account of common experiences is possible with these varying factors?

Through subtle changes in viewpoint, composition and the framing of his narratives, Shiridzinomwa carries the spectator through a multitude of possibilities. We are at one time the principle protagonist, at a table around which our subordinate group attends. At another, observer to a game in which we do not participate but sense we have a stake, carried forth by the gladiatorial spectacle.

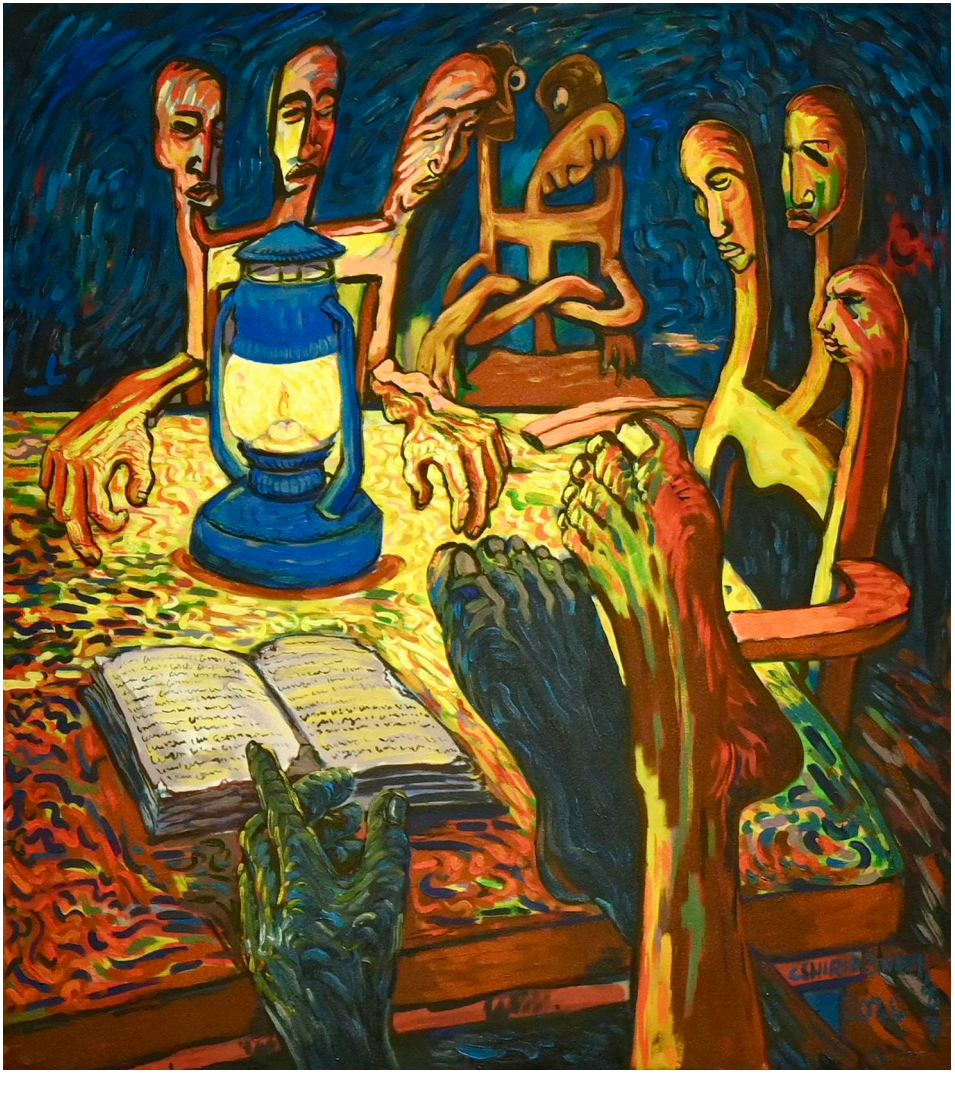
Elsewhere, wholly emerged in a violent tempest, where controlled but unknown forces wrestle with the randomness of nature. In each, Shiridzinomwa invokes imagery with his rich, unexpected, multilayered juxtapositions of colour, and the symbolism for which he is renowned. We become witness to immense forces, both subtle and not, faced with themes of collective trauma, the sanctity of refuge, power, chance and the motivations for both mutual and selfish gains.

The common diaries are the intersections of the experiences of multiple individuals, caught in an intricate world with everything that embodies. What Shiridzinomwa reveals are pages of a diary, but not the entirety of the story. It remains for the spectator to meet him there, to look at what is both literally and metaphorically illuminated by his lamps, and to make their contribution. Irrespective of our inherent differences, through our telling a version of a more complete story is written, and re-written. Like any diary, its disclosure is by the authority of the writer, whether in the present or future. And, like any entry, collection of entries or records of any kind, interpreted by the reader according their own present, their own perceptions and their own values. Each adding their own layer to the common diary and the ever-present account of the emerging story.

Greg Shaw,
Curator,
Harare, March 2025



Meddlers
Acrylic on Canvas
152 x 298 cm, 2025



LEFT: **It is Written**
Acrylic on Canvas
112 x 98 cm, 2025

RIGHT: **Hypocrisy**
Oil on Canvas
100 x 135 cm, 2025







The Harvesters
Oil on Canvas
157 x 300 cm, 2021





LEFT: **We Love it Here**
Acrylic on Canvas
179 x 135 cm, 2025

ABOVE: **Who can be Against Us?**
Acrylic on Canvas
170 x 135 cm, 2025

RIGHT: **When All is Well**
Acrylic on Canvas
122 x 175 cm, 2025



RIGHT: **Behind the Closed Door**
Acrylic on Canvas
152 x 86 cm, 2025

FAR RIGHT: **The Secret Admirer**
Oil on Canvas
152 x 86 cm, 2017

Cosmas Shiridzinomwa Biography

Born, Harare in 1974

1993 – 1995	National Diploma in Fine Art, Harare Polytechnic
2000 – 2022	Head of Art, Harare Polytechnic, Zimbabwe
2012 – 2022	Dean of Students, Harare Polytechnic, Zimbabwe
2022 – Present	Lives and works in Zinyau Village, Mutare, Zimbabwe

Solo Exhibitions

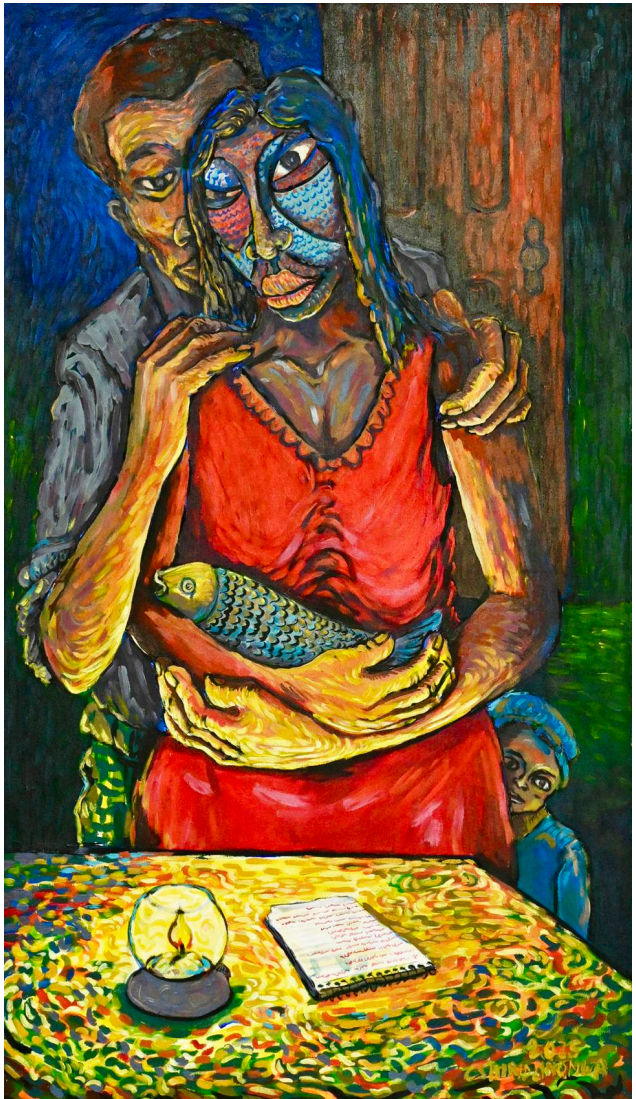
2006	Cosmos' World, Galley Delta, Harare
2007	Observations, Chronicles and Captions, Gallery Delta, Harare
2010	Chronicles, National Gallery of Harare
2013	Episodes, Gallery Delta, Harare

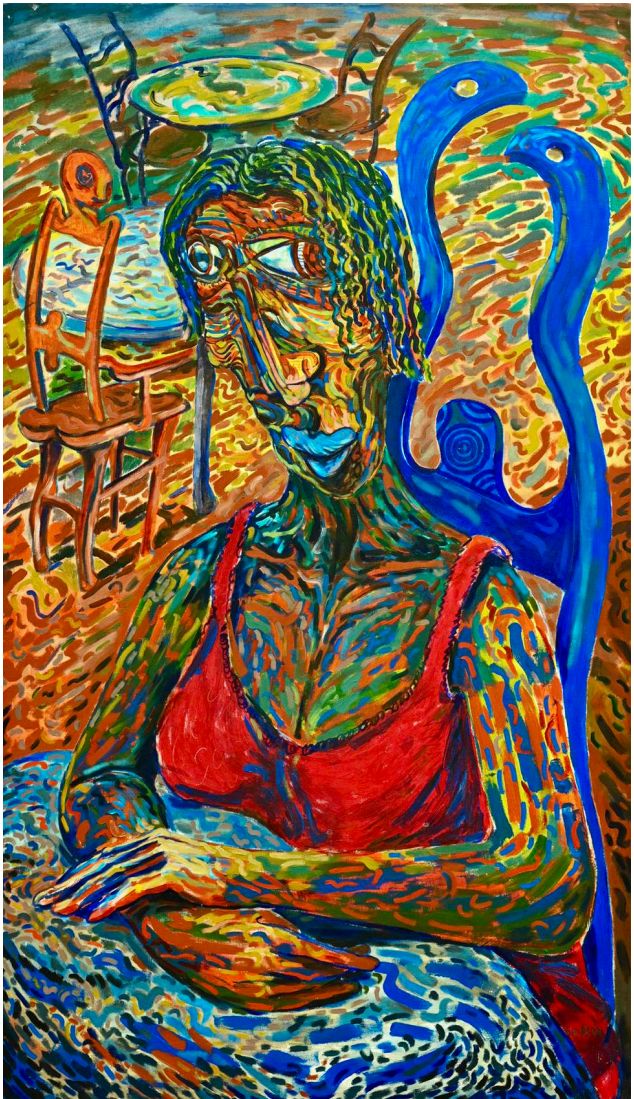
Selected Exhibitions

1994 – 2021	Multiple group exhibitions, Gallery Delta, Harare
1996	Annual Zimbabwe Heritage Exhibition, National Gallery Zimbabwe
1997	Crossroads, Gallery Delta, Harare
1997	Crossroads and Beyond, Gallery Delta, Harare
1999	International Print Exhibition, South Africa
2000	Earth Vision, Gallery Delta, Harare
2004	Legacy, Munich Contemporary Art Fair, Munich
2006	Reliving the Trauma, Gallery Delta, Harare
2008	Post Election Selection, Gallery Delta, Harare
2008	A Select Collection, Gallery Delta, Harare
2009	Another Perspective, Gallery 23, Amsterdam
2009	The Land, Gallery Delta, Harare
2010	35 Years, Gallery Delta, Harare
2011	Colour Africa, Munich
2012	A Tribute to Nikos Kazantzakis (1883-1957) – The African Dream Fulfilled, Gallery Delta
2018	Resina Soko Musina: Venice Biennale, Zimbabwe Pavilion, Venice
2019	Five Bhobh, Painting at the End of an Era, Zeitz MOCAA, Cape Town

Workshops and Awards

1998	Mobile International Artists Workshop – Lusaka, Zambia, sponsored by the British Council
2007	First Prize for Painting, Peace Through Unity In Diversity, Gallery Delta, Harare







Ended I
Oil on Canvas
157 x 300 cm, 2021



Ended II
Oil on Canvas
157 x 300 cm, 2020

Helpers
Acrylic on Canvas
150 x 295 cm, 2025



The Arches @ Aberfoyle

31 May 2025

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