

ARTFORUM  
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Wallen Mapondera, *Zvanza Moyo*, 2022, Cardboard, reaped floor and waxed thread on canvas, 73 5/8 x 191 3/4". Installation view. Photo: Grégory Copitet.

PARIS

## Wallen Mapondera

GALERIE MITTERRAND  
79, rue du Temple  
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To create the wall assemblages in his solo exhibition “Chikokoko (Little Pleasures That Counts),” Harare-based artist Wallen Mapondera layered cardboard supports with scraps of kitenge fabric and newspaper. He then

painted over the new surfaces, sanded them down, and attached an arrangement of repurposed everyday materials. Colorful threads and twine-swaddled palm seeds spill from nests of tree bark, while pulp egg cartons pucker into honeycombs and hives. Elsewhere, tight stacks of these trays recall ribbed concrete, the fore edges of books, or even rope fiber. When flattened and blackened, they can also recall destruction.

In 2005, under the misrule of Zimbabwe’s erstwhile liberator Robert Mugabe, the government launched Operation Murambatsvina, a campaign to “drive out the rubbish” from the slums. The mass demolitions and displacements that followed left razed streetscapes across Zimbabwe. The aftermath is imprinted on Mapondera’s work. For *Zvanza Moyo* (all works cited 2022), the artist stained a roomwide rip of salvaged tent canvas with wet cement, cut several holes in the fabric, and embroidered it with bright flakes of packaging cardboard. The swirling densities suggest maps of rerouted movement or fingerprints cleft into mismatching halves.

Mapondera sows “Little Pleasures” throughout the show, bearing witness as well as hope. The found Toms shoe in *Some People Have Hopes and Dreams* may have first landed in Zimbabwe as a presumptuous foreign social-entrepreneurship ploy. Yet, once discarded, it receives a kind of clemency, red tassels now adorning its open weave.