

TEMPLON



BILLIE ZANGEWA

LIVING SPACE, Jun 2020

By Robyn Lane

STITCH *by* STITCH

Malawian artist Billie Zangewa is a master of embroidery, a seemingly lost art, and creates sensational scenes of everyday life

WORDS ROBYN LANE



YOUR USE OF FABRIC AND EMBROIDERY IS BEAUTIFUL. DO YOU USE SCRAPS OF FABRIC AND WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE TO WORK WITH?

I use both scraps and fabric bought off a roll. My favourite is dupion silk although I like to mix it up a little and use small pieces of other types of textiles such as satin to add texture.

HOW DID YOU GET INTO EMBROIDERY?

My introduction to needlework and embroidery was via my mother's sewing group that sometimes used to meet at our house; I would watch them with fascination. My primary school also offered needlework as an extracurricular activity and I saw the opportunity to learn with my peers at school.

YOUR STITCHES LOOK VERY FINE. DO YOU WORK BY HAND OR WITH A MACHINE?

I work strictly by hand. That is what it's about for me: paying tribute to what I consider to be a dying art. And also, you just don't get the same kind of hypnotic effect that you get with the repetition of machine stitches. And to be perfectly honest when I studied textiles for my GCSEs, I was totally rubbish at sewing with the machine, I just couldn't manage the pedal!



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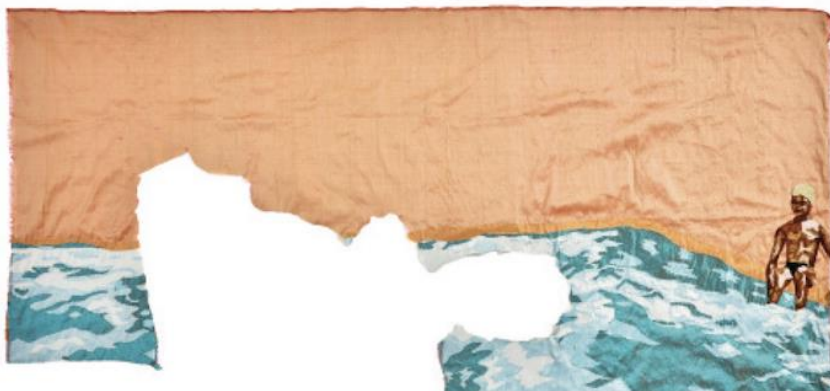
CHIT-CHAT

ARE THERE ANY PROJECTS COMING UP THAT YOU ARE WORKING ON?

I have some work to finish for a solo gallery show for NYC and a museum show in San Francisco. There are museum group shows scheduled for June at the Musée d'Art Modern de la Ville de Paris and Centre Pompidou, but I do not have to produce new work for these.

WHAT INSPIRES YOUR SUBJECT MATTER?

Daily life. Personal experiences. The search for connection. My beautiful boy!



PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY IMAGES

ART IN A PANDEMIC

Billie Zangewa's exhibition *Soldier of Love* opened at Galerie Templon, 14 March 2020, just before Paris went into lockdown. The re-opening, circumstances allowing, is planned for 23-30 May. In anticipation of this, these photos give a valuable glimpse of the exhibition in place.