
Sekai Machache

SVIKIRO



Mount Stuart 2023

***Svikiro* Collaborators and Practitioners**

Alberta Whittle (research support, gestural performance)

Mele Broomes (movement work, choreography, dance performance)

Eyve Madyise (musical performance, and original song
by Eyve in collaboration with Trisha Margolis)

Trisha Margolis (musical performance, and collaboration with Eyve Madyise)

Esther Swift (full musical score composition with harp performance)

Zethu Maseko (mbira score music)

Fiona Catherine Powell (costumes and on-site install support)

Goitsewang Gumbura (hair by Gigi) - hair consultant and stylist

Adebusola Ramsay (research assistance and production)

Chris Ramsay (sound tech and foley recording)

Carine Barinia (production assistance and admin support)

Gillian Katungi (film score composition and performance)

Rhea Lewis (production consultancy and production support)

Tilda Williams-Kelly (support work, admin assistance, paintings and production support)

Anushka Gunoath (vocal coaching for call and response and improvisation)

Mekhala Dave (Administrative support)

Samah Ahmed (Install support and craft services)

Filmed, Photographed and Edited by

**Ambroise of Paradox Period,
Douglas Tyrell Bunge and Washington Gwande**

Directed, produced, researched, written and conceptualised with performance by

Sekai Machache

Special thanks to

**Patricia Fleming Gallery, Talbot Rice Gallery, Centre of Contemporary Arts, Cove
Park, National Theatre of Scotland, Creative Scotland**

**Sophie Crichton-Stuart, Morven Gregor,
Jessica Insley, Lynsey Nairn
and to all the team at Mount Stuart**

**To Ellen Machache, Irene Chimonyo
and Philip Machache**

This film is dedicated to the memory of

Patricia Maria McKay

For those who have gone before and are soon to return

Artist's Statement

With an interest in occult and esoteric symbolism, I was extremely moved by the invitation to respond to the house and grounds at Mount Stuart.

I resonated with and felt compelled to respond with a body of work that encompassed the potential of not only my own practice but that of other artists whose work embodies similar themes.

The project is inspired by the concept of Svikiro, meaning one who mediates between the spiritual and human world, receiving visions in dreams, performs healing rituals and serves as a messenger in Shona culture.

A Svikiro is considered a gifted individual who practises their craft in service of the collective. They are often imbued with specific talents such as dance, music, art in aid of healing the wider community.

With the invitation that was extended to me as an artist I chose to invite other artists and creatives to Mount Stuart to share their gifts, to create a collaborative body of work utilising experimental and innovative storytelling suggesting alternative readings of past and present, proffering a model for a decolonised future archive.

List of Works

Marble Hall

Svikiro
Film (2023)

Commissioned by Mount Stuart Trust, *Svikiro* utilises academic, visual, and embodied research at Mount Stuart, collections and archives to counter ongoing erasure of a complex oracular culture that is profoundly connected to envisioning the future. This series of short films will support experimental and innovative storytelling, suggesting alternative readings of past and present, and proffering a model for a decolonised future archive built on collaboration.

These films will comprise performances in dance and song by invited artists including Alberta Whittle, Mele Broomes, and Eyve Madyise. Each adorned in beautiful bespoke costumes created in collaboration with Fiona Catherine Powell.

With themes of hyper visibility and invisibility, erasure and existence, apparitions and traces; Machache has succeeded in curating an emotive display that offers us glimpses of the diasporic experience of familial severing and habitual longing. Machache does this, while utilising literary and symbolic references, in a stunning showcase of multidisciplinary skill and collective visioning. At Mount Stuart these themes resonate with the spiritual enquiry of the Third Marquess of Bute and his embedding of religious, astrological, and mythological iconography in the architecture, decoration and fabric of the house.

Svikiro
Original Song (2023)

Written, composed and performed by Eyve Madyise in collaboration with Trisha Margolis.

Svikiro refers to both the concept of spirit and to an individual whose primary role is to act as a conduit between the world of the living and realm of the ancestors.

Blue of the Horizon
Indigo dye on calico fabric (2021)

Blue of the Horizon is a uniquely designed period-inspired dress. The pattern and structure of the dress was created in collaboration with artist and seamstress Fiona Catherine Powell originally created for the artist's *Divine Sky series*. In *Svikiro*, we see the dress again transporting the artist to the new spiritual realm present in the film, and in the *Poised Blue* performance by the artist within the Blue Bedroom.

Waking the Dead, on Rewilding

Gestural performance by Alberta Whittle present in main *Svikiro* film.

Chapel

Acapella performance of *Svikiro* song by Eyve Madyise and Trisha Margolis.

Drawing Room and Lady Bute's Room

Mutambi I, II, III and IV
Dance performance by Mele Broomes (2023)

From Mele's movements:
Repetition, Recoil, Rebound

The Library

With Love and Gratitude
Behind the Scenes film (2023)

Collaborators, practitioners and crew at work in behind the scenes footage.

Filmed and Edited by Douglas Tyrell Bunge.

Original poetry by Sekai Machache
Embedded in film score

Mutambi

Present Existence: The Sisterhood of the Sacred Leaves are come to commune in the Gardens

Mweya Usipo

Ink drawings by Sekai Machache

The artist usually starts any project by working on a series of abstract ink drawings, using a limited colour palette that becomes integral to the final work. Through them she traces and maps the interplay between production and research. For the *Svikiro* project the artist had added her original poetry to the ink drawings.

Costuming and installation of corsets by Fiona Catherine Powell.

Paintings by Tilda Williams-Kelly.

Family Room

Present Existence
Gestural performance by Sekai Machache and Alberta Whittle (2023)

In *Present Existence* Alberta Whittle and Sekai Machache braid and sew seeds into each other's hair as a gesture of care and reciprocity. Actions that have been enacted before, each gesture a repetition informed by the last, accumulative, as in previous collaborative work, some initiated by Alberta and others by Sekai and many in absent and present communication.

Artist Bio

[Sekai Machache](#) is a Zimbabwean-Scottish visual artist and curator based in Glasgow, Scotland. Her work is a deep interrogation of the notion of self, in which photography plays a crucial role in supporting an exploration of the historical and cultural imaginary. Aspects of her photographic practice are formulated through digital studio-based compositions utilising body paint and muted lighting to create images that appear to emerge from darkness.

In recent works she expands to incorporate other media and approaches that evoke that which is invisible and undocumented. She is interested in the relationship between spirituality, dreaming and the role of the artist in disseminating symbolic imagery to provide a space for healing against contexts of colonialism and loss.

Sekai is the recipient of the [2020 RSA Morton Award](#) and is an artist in residence with the [Talbot Rice Residency](#) Programme 2021-2023.

Sekai will be exhibiting at the 60th [La Biennale de Venezia](#) in 2024 as part of Zimbabwe's Pavilion.

Sekai works internationally and often collaboratively, for and with her community and is a founding and organising member of the [Yon Afro Collective \(YAC\)](#)

Current and Upcoming projects:

Exhibition with Talbot Rice, March 2024

Exhibiting Artist at the [60th Venice Biennale](#), Zimbabwe Pavilion, April 2024

Exhibition and new film [Svikiro](#) at Mount Stuart, Isle of Bute. Opening on the 2nd of September 2023.

sacred x mundane x profane with [Sakhile & Me Gallery](#) Frankfurt Germany. 29 Jun – 12 Aug 2023

In the Same Breath [Freelands Foundation](#) London, 23 March – 29 May 2023

Lively Blue tapestry, [Dovecot Studios](#) for the Edinburgh Arts Festival 250 Years of Women in the Arts. May 2023

In August 2022, Sekai participated in a month long residency at [Cove Park](#), which was funded through the [Bridge Awards Emerging Artists Grant](#)

You can find her work and a review of *The Divine Sky* project in the Summer issue (no.35) of [Scottish Art News](#) with the [Fleming Collection](#), who recently acquired her series *Light/Deep Divine Sky*

Solo exhibition with [Sakhile & Me Gallery](#) in Frankfurt from October 27th to December 3rd, 2022.

In January 2022, Sekai showcased her RSA Morton Award outcomes at [Research: RSA Awards in Focus](#) alongside John Brown and Hannah Paterson at the National Galleries in Edinburgh.

In October 2021, she exhibited her *Invocation* series at the [1:54 African Art Fair](#) with [Sakhile & Me Gallery](#).

Sekai also exhibited at the Edinburgh Arts Festival 2021 with Alberta Whittle's [RESET](#), a group show at Jupiter Artland and a solo, [Projects 20 at Stills Gallery](#) where her new film work *The Divine Sky* had its debut.

In the summer of 2021, [Body of Land: Ritual Manifestations](#) had its public debut at Street Level Photoworks as part of a two person solo exhibition with Kenyan artist Awuor Onyango. This project was facilitated by [Focas Scotland](#) and supported by the [British Council East Africa and Scotland](#) programmes.

[These Stories](#) with artist Thulani Rachia, curated by Katherine Ka Yi Liu, at The House for an Art Lover's Heritage Centre building at Studio Pavilion. Both exhibitions were part of the [Glasgow International Festival 2021's Across the City Programme](#).

