

ADMIRE KAMUDZENERERE

Zimbabwean, born Harare, Zimbabwe, 1981

RACHEL MONOSOV

Russian, born St. Petersburg, Russia, 1987

First Home, Aug. 21, 1972 from the series *1972, 2017*

Inkjet prints in artist frame, cardstock, and pins, 12 x 9 inches

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In 2017, Zimbabwean artist Admire Kamudzengerere and Rachel Monosov, a Russian-Israeli artist, were married in Harare, Zimbabwe, by a traditional shaman in a Shona-Jewish ceremony that took place under a Chuppah before family and friends. Although their interfaith, interracial relationship may not seem questionable today, it would have been highly taboo under the white settler-colonial governments that ruled the country for much of the twentieth century. Monosov and Kamudzengerere explore this sociopolitical history in *1972* (2017), a series of twenty-three black-and-white photographs that employ ethnographic approaches and fiction to address racist attitudes and historical anxieties about miscegenation.

The project was catalyzed by Kamudzengerere and Monosov's unsuccessful attempts to find photographs of interracial couples in Zimbabwe's National Archives. To overcome this absence, the artists created the types of "archival" images they initially sought out, casting themselves and friends as both actors and directors in a multi-part photographic quasi-fiction. Set in 1972 during the violent Bush War between black nationalists and the ruling white minority government, the photographs chronicle the marriage and domestic life of a black Zimbabwean named "A," and his partner, a white Israeli woman named "R." The images capture the preparation and festivities surrounding A and R's wedding, their leisure time, their first home, and the natural environment of Harare and surrounding villages.

Whether framed singly or in pairs, the photographs are all set in white mats and accompanied by typewritten captions affixed with pushpins at the frame's lower left or right corner. These captions evoke the excessive description and pretenses of ethnographic evidence, and thereby lend credibility to the photographs' quasi-fictional scenes. "What Monosov and Kamudzengerere have effectively done," observed the critic Loring Knoblauch, "is create a visual time capsule in the present, buried it, and then pretended to unearth it as documentary evidence from 1972."¹ As a consequence, the project convolutes distinctions between reality and image, fact and fiction, forcing us to reckon with just how historical attitudes about race continue to haunt and shape social relations in the present.

—Antawan I. Byrd '21 PhD, Art History

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1 Loring Knoblauch, "Rachel Monosov/Admire Kamudzengerere, 1972 @ Catinca Tabacaru," *Collectors Daily*, April 5, 2018, <https://collectordaily.com/rachel-monosov-admire-kamudzengerere-1972-catinca-tabacaru>.