



TUWAYE

“Lets Talk”

An exhibition by

NABUKENYA HELLEN

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"Lets Talk"

NABUKENYA HELLEN



How can art be shaped to address universal values?

Nabukenya gives a new life to pieces of fabric from tailors in Kampala that would otherwise be discarded. Given the different histories attached to the different companies that produce textiles for a Ugandan market, Hellen's work narrates the history of fashion trends Uganda has witnessed from the recent past to present. In every part of her artwork - knotted, stitched or bound - the pride invested in selecting, grouping, and making these installations is

evident. She is attentive to fabrics and patterns. Drawing attention to their textures, the resulting creative ingenuity is visually engaging. The highly textured artworks reveal ideas around dialogue and community, and the complexity involved in her thought process. Her artworks grant a glimpse into a rarely captured historical scope ignored by the mainstream media or academic research. Various colors and tones of her textiles tackle the transformative color themes within social and economic trends revealed through commercialism in fashion and the process of discarding textiles from which she exhumes her materials and gives them a new life as artwork. The process of how the textiles return into the cycle alongside the stories is invigorating.

She invites viewers to immerse themselves into her progressive path through collective creation by women whose activities extend from conversations as they stitch, knot and weave waste textiles into visual contemporary art. The social sentiment they communicate has so much currency today. They remind us that while much of contemporary life is steeped in wastefulness, Ugandans have always had ways of exploiting fabric remnants. In her *Mama Yampa, Taata Yampa* painting, Maria Naita highlights families making clothes for their children with left-over fabrics in a patchwork method.

By Margaret Nagawa



'ABENAKYO', 2m x 2m, Textile off cuts, 2016



'AKIROR', 2m x 2m, Textile off cuts, 2016



'ALAKARA', 2m x 2m, Textile off cuts, 2016



'AUMA', 2m x 2m, Textile off cuts, 2016



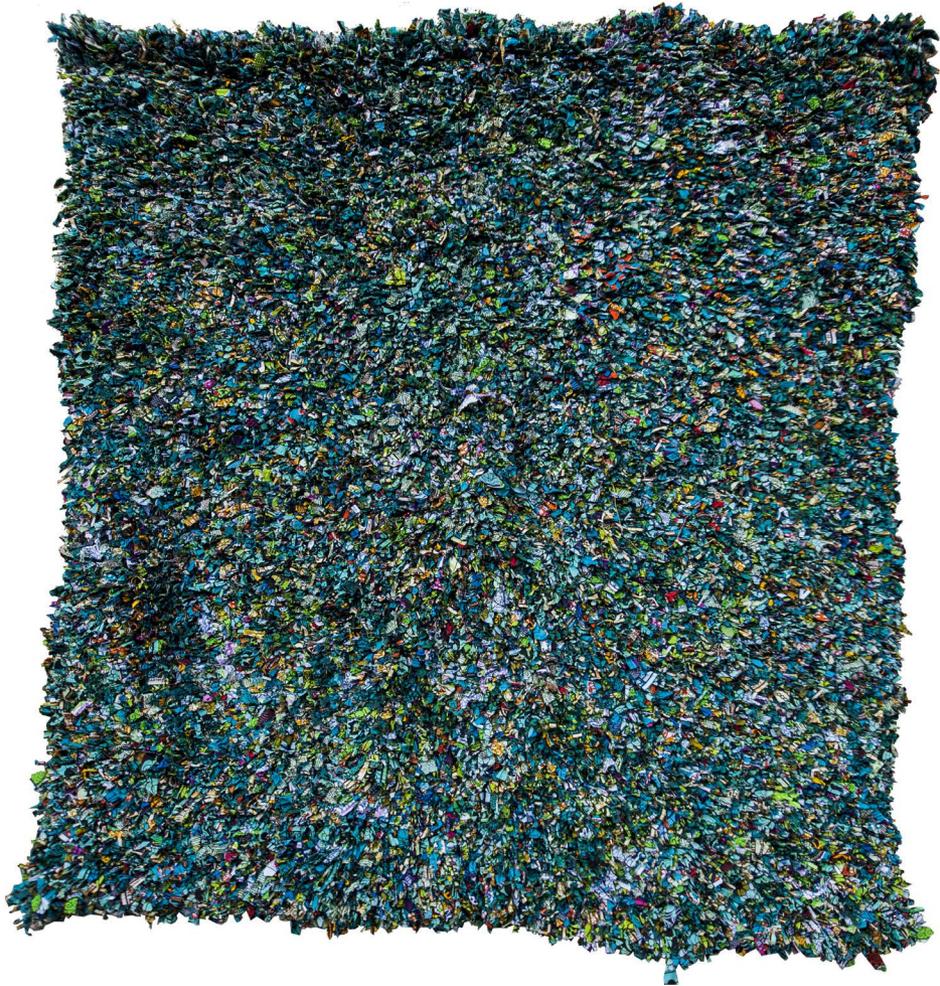
'GYETUVA', 6.5m x 7m, Textile off cuts, 2018



'MABIRA', 2m x 2m, Textile off cuts, 2018



'MPANGA' , 2m x 2m, Textile off cuts, 2016



'NABAKOOZA' , 2m x 2m, Textile off cuts, 2016



'NALUBAALE' , 2m x 2m, Textile off cuts, 2016



'NALUBEGA' , 2m x 2m, Textile off cuts, 2016

PARTNERS

artpunch studio



Z A A B U

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Born in Jinja 1983, Hellen Nabukenya laces social realities with a creative interrogation of challenges faced by women into a well-structured multifaceted social narrative. As a child she was attracted to engage in stitching and crocheting activities with her mother. Her work re-invents a wealth of memories witnessed as a child staying with her mother as she grew up to become passionate about fashion and textiles.

In 2008, she completed her education in textile design at Kyambogo University. In the ensuing years as a textile artist, she needed studio assistants for the labour-intensive techniques she employs. Instead of following the regular pattern of instructing assistants, Nabukenya invited women in her community of Buziga to interact with her collection at her studio. She offered training and a degree of freedom many had rarely encountered. Subsequently, they were able to share personal stories in conversations and eventually woven into the art itself.

