

SYLVESTER SAMANYANGA



“Although my quest is perfection, it makes me feel good”

(b) 27.06. 1986 Chinoyi, Zimbabwe

Sylvester Samanyanga started sculpting at the knee of his father Kennedy, while still a child. “Most of his pieces were abstract, so it was natural that I should continue in that tradition,” he explains. In 1998 the family left Chinhoyi and settled in the heart of the stone-sculpting region of central Mashonaland near the rural Sanganai cooperative studio.

At age 14, Sylvester started an apprenticeship with a local sculptor, Kudzanai Dambaza. Not only did he find a masterful tutor, he also fell in love with his tutor’s daughter and married Patience Dambaza, who now assists him with his sculptures. The couple have a young daughter.

Sylvester finished his O-levels at Chifamba High School, but chose to sculpt full-time rather than pursue his studies. Whilst still working with Kudzanai, he sculpted smaller pieces in Serpentine and Springstone, but in recent years has tested his ability, sculpting larger, more monumental works. He prefers using the colourful Serpentine stone found in the hills near his home in Sanganai, or else Springstone from the chrome mines near Tengenenge Artists’ Centre. He pays great attention to the finishing process, which exemplifies the inner natural beauty of the stone.

Sylvester Samanyanga is one of only a few artists currently working in Zimbabwe whose work is exclusively abstract. He says his works reflect his shifting inner moods and emotions. Outwardly he is a genial, confident artist with a ready smile and easy demeanour. His sculptures reveal a much more turbulent inner life.