

SOUTHERN GUILD



**SOUTHERN GUILD OPENS AT EXPO CHICAGO TODAY APRIL 24 – 27, 2025
PRESENTING NEW WORK BY LEADING CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS FROM
ACROSS THE AFRICAN CONTINENT**

**Festival Hall, Navy Pier, Chicago
Booth 232**

[Press Kit and Images](#)

As part of an active and expanding fair program and a commitment to ensuring deeper representation of African perspectives in global art contexts, Southern Guild returns to EXPO CHICAGO today for the third consecutive year.

New work by leading contemporary artists from across the African continent, including **Zanele Muholi** (South Africa), **Zizipho Poswa** (South Africa), **Kamyar Bineshtarigh** (South Africa/Iran), **Mmangaliso Nzuza** (South Africa), **Manyaku Mashilo** (South Africa), **Ayotunde Ojo** (Nigeria),

Roméo Mivekannin (Ivory Coast/Benin/France), **Bonolo Kavula** (South Africa), **Ange Dakouo** (Ivory Coast/Mali) and **Lulama Wolf** (South Africa) will be presented.



Spanning both traditional and non-traditional media, the featured works emerge from artistic practices that speak back to Western modes of art-making by articulating narratives of resistance and inclusive representation. Working in abstract modes, Bineshtarigh, Kavula and Dakouo invoke the rhythmic power of labour-intensive processes – mark-making, threading, weaving and wrapping – to reclaim memory, delve into the politics of language, and devise their own material approaches. Artists Muholi, Poswa, Nzuza, Ojo, Wolf and Mivekannin reclaim agency through representation of themselves and their communities, giving vivid figurative form to less visible spaces, symbols and subjects.

“Since our debut presentation at Expo Chicago in 2023, our presence in the US has expanded substantially. Our new gallery in Los Angeles, opened in February 2024, has served as a springboard for establishing connections with artists in the States and the diaspora at large, spotlighting our artists’ work in seven solo exhibitions and four group shows, and facilitating important residencies and museum engagements on the West Coast. We have also broadened our participation in US fairs to add San Francisco, Los Angeles and Aspen to our outings in Chicago, New York and Miami,” says Trevyn McGowan, co-founder of Southern Guild.

Highlights include:

Visual activist **Zanele Muholi** exhibits a lightbox and photographic print from their acclaimed *Somnyama Ngonyama* (Hail the Dark Lioness) series, an ever-expanding oeuvre of black-and-white images presenting the artist as a shifting vessel for different characters and archetypes. Impromptu and nomadic, the self-portraits employ quotidian objects beyond their primary functions, echoing a deeper disruption within the artist's practice as a whole. The series responds to the near-invisibility of Black women and non-binary bodies as subjects of representation in the history of Western painting and portraiture prior to the 20th century. Muholi is currently featured in a survey show at the Instituto Moreira Salles in São Paulo, Brazil and an eponymous solo at SCAD Museum of Art in Georgia, where they were recently the SCAD deFINEART 2025 honoree. Their participation in Expo Chicago will be immediately followed by the opening of a major retrospective at the Serralves Museum in Porto, Portugal (opening 9 April), and *Faces and Phases 19*, a solo exhibition at Southern Guild Los Angeles (opening 17 May) celebrating 19 years of the ongoing iconic photographic archive of Black lesbian, trans masculine and gender non-confirming communities with new participants from Los Angeles, London, Salvador, Toronto and São Paulo.

Zizipho Poswa exhibits two bronze and ceramic sculptures including a new work from her *uBuhle boKhokho* series, inspired by the elaborate art of African hair styling, and a striking work emblazoned with horns from her *iLobola* series that honours the traditional African custom of bride-wealth. Poswa's works are a deep invocation of her personal journey and an homage to the spiritual traditions and matriarchal stewardship of her Xhosa culture. Straddling figuration and abstraction, her anthropomorphic totems are characterised by an elliptical approach to form, textural application of glaze and striking pattern. Two totemic sculptures by Poswa, alongside a photographic work by Zanele Muholi, are currently featured in *Imagining Black Diasporas: 21st-Century Art and Poetics* at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (until 3 August, 2025), and *Between Distance and Desires*, a group exhibition at The Soloviev Foundation gallery (1 May – 31 December, 2025). Her work recently formed part of SF MoMA's exhibition *Liberatory Living: Protective Interiors & Radical Black Joy*.

A series of large-scale figurative oil paintings by **Mmangaliso Nzuza** continue to build his richly allegorical vernacular. Nzuza's weighted subjects find ease in spacious natural landscapes: bodies of water are sites of ritual cleansing, wheat fields connote the act of harvest, undulating hills invite an unfolding of energy. His figures exude a particular sculptural sensibility, with the body being utilised as an instrument to explore possibilities of composition and angular form. Working textural fragments of impasto paint into patchwork planes of movement and light, Nzuza has developed a distinct hand with a growing collector audience. The artist held his debut solo exhibition *An Open Letter* at Southern Guild Cape Town in 2024, and has shown his work with Southern Guild at fairs including FOG Design + Art, The Armory Show (New York), and the Investec Cape Town Art Fair. Nzuza will hold his second solo at Southern Guild Los Angeles this September.

A new painting by **Ayotunde Ojo** explores the fluidity of memory, space and consciousness in a domestic scene featuring a recumbent figure. Ojo's oil, acrylic and charcoal works find significance in representations of repose, drawing inspiration from conversations, experiences and canonical works by historical artists. He is interested in the idea of rest and introspection, particularly as a respite from the chaos and intensity of everyday life in Lagos. Methodically

constructed, the paintings accrue their depth from the artist's sensitive approach to his materials: thin films of paint hover over areas, the fine graphite linework just visible beneath. Ojo held his debut solo exhibition, *These Four Walls*, at Southern Guild Cape Town in November 2024. Southern Guild has presented his work at FOG Design+Art Fair (2025), Investec Cape Town Art Fair (2024, 2025) and at Expo Chicago (2024).

A triptych painting by **Kamyar Bineshtarigh** continues his exploration of the intermeshed relationship between language, mark-making and political mobilisation. The monochromatic painting made from printing ink on canvas is part of a larger series whose power coalesces from the repetition – and interruption – of a singular, curvilinear brushstroke. The rhythm builds upon itself in an effort to be heard, speaking to rebellion, a communal shedding, a movement of multitudes rising in protest. This is the third year Southern Guild has shown Bineshtarigh's work at Expo Chicago, in addition to recent presentations at Aspen Art Fair, The Armory Show and the Investec Cape Town Art Fair, where he was selected for the SOLO Section in 2024. His work formed part of *Mother Tongues*, the inaugural group exhibition at Southern Guild Los Angeles, and *signifying the impossible song* last year. Bineshtarigh is currently working towards his second solo exhibition with Southern Guild at its Cape Town location in August 2025.

An abstract tapestry by **Ange Dakouo** foregrounds his unique approach to materiality featuring “woven gris-gris” – protective amulets made of newspaper, skilfully tied together with cotton thread to form cardboard briquettes. The pieces are interconnected to create large wall panels, configured into simple geometric shapes. The artist's use of folded newspaper is in homage to his father, a printer who came home every evening with piles of publications. Dakouo creates gradient effects by varying the density of ink on the selected paper, using colour as a symbolic, disruptive or narrative device. In the Vodún religion, gris-gris are believed to protect the wearer from evil or bad luck, a practice Dakouo learned about from Mali's Donso hunters, a brotherhood that strives to protect the ancestral memories and spiritual knowledge of their community. Dakouo was a finalist of the 2024 LOEWE Foundation Craft Prize and was featured as one of APOLLO's 40 Under 40 last year. Southern Guild has presented his work at Design Miami and in the group exhibition *signifying the impossible song* (2024) at its Los Angeles gallery.

A large diptych painting by **Manyaku Mashilo** invokes the objects, teachings and rituals passed down as guiding forces by the matriarchs in her Sepedi culture. Mashilo builds speculative worlds that materialise ancestral knowledge systems inhabited by female figures expansively take up space. The work featured in her most recent solo exhibition, *The Laying of Hands*, at Southern Guild LA this past winter, which mapped out an alternative cosmology, establishing a vital link between her maternal forebears, current context and imagined future. The recurrent use of clay and red paint in her work references the application of ‘letsoku’, a vivid paste of red ochre mixed with clay and animal fat, smeared on young women's bodies as they come of age. Mashilo's participation in the 2025 Stellenbosch Triennial includes an installation work that references vernacular architecture, a roofless circular space called *mafuri* where women gather to connect, share stories and cook meals.

Roméo Mivekannin's expansive painting, *Bouguereau (The Myth of Orestes)*, is inspired by 19th century painter William Bouguereau's depiction of the myth of Orestes, which forms part of

a trilogy of Greek tragedies. Mivekannin's practice pivots on the reappropriation of historical artworks that have left their mark on him, often inserting himself into these mythological scenes and inviting the audience to question inherited narratives. In this work, first shown in *signifying the impossible song* (2024) at Southern Guild Los Angeles, he depicts his own visage in the figure of Orestes as he is pursued by the three furies sent to dispense justice for his murder of his mother. Foregrounding himself in the dramatic cycle of murder and revenge, he thwarts the duality of perpetrator and victim, choosing to reflect on the rage and culpability in all of us. Mivekannin's solo exhibition, *Black Mirror*, is currently on view at Collezione Maramotti in Emilia-Romagna, Italy, and in the group exhibition *The True Size of Africa* at World Heritage Völklinger Hütte in Vöcklingen, Germany.



A new wall hanging by **Bonolo Kavula** foregrounds her use of tiny discs of fabric connected by thread. The South African artist hones in on a singular, culturally resonant material: traditional *shweshwe* cloth, inspired by a dress of her mother's that is now a family heirloom. Stitched together at mathematically precise intervals, her near-translucent fabric grids are embedded with collective histories of culture and ancestry. The process is that of excessive repetition, each dot with its own landscape of minutiae, telling of the meditative action of labour and of the creation of new meaning through deconstruction and transformation. Southern Guild has presented Kavula's work at Frieze Los Angeles and in *signifying the impossible song* at its Los Angeles gallery in 2024.

Lulama Wolf's two-panel painting foregrounds the human figure's deep connection with the earth using expressive, simplified forms that echo the landscapes in which they are portrayed. Wolf references pre-colonial African traditions in her mixing of sand into her paint and the use of smearing and scraping techniques. Traversing both the personal and the political, she engages themes of African spirituality within a contemporary context and merges that with colour theory influenced by South African vernacular architecture and indigenous rock art. Wolf has held solo exhibitions at SoShiro Gallery in London (2022), The Breeder Gallery in Athens (2022) and THK Gallery in Cape Town (2023), as well as a duo show with the estate of Danish-French sculptor Sonia Ferlov-Mancoba at Eighteen Gallery in Copenhagen (2023). She was the finalist of the Emergence Art Prize hosted by THK in 2020 and named House & Garden's Artist of the Year in 2024. Her work was recently featured in *signifying the impossible song* (2024) at Southern Guild Los Angeles.

Next month, Southern Guild will make its debut presentation at **Frieze New York** spotlighting artists who deploy representation as an act of agency, speaking to the historical exclusion and pictorial conventions of the western canon. A group presentation of sculpture, painting, tapestries and photographic will include work by **Zanele Muholi, Zizipho Poswa, Kamyar Bineshtarigh, Dominique Zinkpè, Bonolo Kavula, Alex Hedison and Roméo Mivekannin**, artists whose works respond to the need for contemporary visibility, documentation, preservation of cultural heritage, and memorialisation within today's fractured socio-political climate. Further details to follow.

7-11 May, 2025

Frieze New York, The Shed, 545 West 30th Street, Manhattan
Booth A6

All images: Southern Guild booth at Expo Chicago 2025, photo by Mikhail Mishin, courtesy of Southern Guild

/END

2025 LOOK AHEAD

Southern Guild Cape Town

Dominique Zinkpè: *Ejire (Double Rhyme)*, until 15 May 2025

Usha Seejarim, *Unfolding Servitude*, until 15 May 2025

Kamyar Bineshtarigh: Solo, 21 August – 23 October 2025

Andile Dyalvane: Solo, 30 October 2025 – February 2026

Ange Dakouo: Solo, 30 October 2025 – February 2026

Southern Guild Los Angeles

Cheick Diallo: *Taama*, until 3 May 2025

Manyaku Mashilo: *The Laying of Hands*, until 3 May 2025

Zanele Muholi, *Faces and Phases 19*, 17 May – 6 September 2025

Group exhibition: *In Us is Heaven*, 17 May – 6 September 2025

Mmangaliso Nzuza: Solo, 13 September – 1 November 2025

Madoda Fani: Solo, 13 September – 1 November 2025

Expo Chicago, Chicago, 24 – 27 April 2025

Frieze New York, Manhattan, 7 – 11 May 2025

RMB Latitudes, Johannesburg, 23 – 25 May 2025

The Aspen Art Fair, Colorado, 29 July – 2 August 2025

The Armory Show, New York, 5 – 7 September 2025

ABOUT SOUTHERN GUILD

Established in 2008 by Trevyn and Julian McGowan, Southern Guild represents contemporary artists from Africa and its diaspora. Based in Cape Town and Los Angeles, the gallery's programme furthers the continent's contribution to global art movements. Southern Guild's artists explore the preservation of culture, spirituality, ancestral knowledge and identity within our current landscape. Their work has been acquired by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), the Art Institute of Chicago, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM), The Mint Museum, The Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, the Denver Art Museum (DAM), the Vitra Design Museum, Design Museum Gent, and The National Gallery of Victoria (NGV).

<https://southernguild.com>

Communications and Media Relations

Lyn Winter, Inc.

213 447 0788

Lyn Winter, lyn@lynwinter.com

Isabelle Alfonso, isabelle@lynwinter.com