



# KUPINDUKA

## VIRGINIA CHIHOTA



· c/ Américo Vespucio, 2  
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**Junta de Andalucía**  
Consejería de Cultura y Deporte  
Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo

With the collaboration of  
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Curated by: Jimena Blázquez Abascal | Cover: Kuva inini (being me), 2025. Serigraphy, Indian ink and screenprinting ink on Arches cotton rag

**CAAC** CENTRO ANDALUZ  
DE ARTE  
CONTEMPORÁNEO

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**"I was born into the conditions of a restless spirit,  
with the obligation to dream awake."**

FERNANDO PESSOA, *The Book of Disquiet* (1913-1935, published in 1982)

**"I was born with a scream."**

DAMBUDZO MARECHERA, *The House of Hunger* (1978)

In *The Book of Disquiet*, Fernando Pessoa renders existence as a state of suspension, where identity splinters and certainty drift out of reach. His words pulse with unease yet also with clarity: the awareness that incompleteness forms the very condition of being. This atmosphere of disquiet, not as paralysis but as vital force, provides a resonant framework for the work of Virginia Chihota (Chitungwiza, Zimbabwe, 1983).

In her first major solo institutional exhibition in Europe, *Kupinduka*, presented at the Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo (CAAC, Seville), Chihota brings together paintings, drawings, prints, and large-scale works on paper, including a new series shown for the first time. Her practice is profoundly introspective, shaped by every day and transformative experiences: motherhood and kinship, loss and displacement, memory and faith.

Chihota fuses painting, drawing and screen-printing into intricate layers of pattern, colour, and line. The female body, often her own, recurs as fragment and silhouette, dissolving into abstraction, multiplying across the surface, or folding inward as if in retreat. These figures carry vulnerability and endurance in equal measure, their fragile contours sheltering memory while opening toward transformation. At the core of her practice lies the notion of *Kupinduka*. In Shona (the main languages of Zimbabwe), the word suggests a turning, a shift of state, often understood as moving into the spiritual realm to carry a message. It is not merely change, but a passage, a rupture in which the self-unsettles, transforms, and speaks from another register. In Chihota's work, this act of turning becomes visible in the way her figures fold, double, or dissolve; in the way lines repeat like echoes; in the way absence itself becomes a presence on the page. Her drawings and prints do not present the body as fixed or whole, but as a site of continuous passage, charged with the possibility of conveying something beyond the visible. *Kupinduka*, in this sense, gives her visual language both its fragility and its force: an art of threshold, where the intimate body becomes a messenger of the unseen.

The new works reveal a heightened delicacy: translucent lines, vegetal motifs, and spiritual signs that drift between interiority and transcendence. Here the body is not a stable form but a shifting terrain, generative and open, where silence becomes rhythm and instability gives rise to renewal. Pessoa (Portugal, 1888-1935) wrote: "To exist is to drift between what I dreamed and what I lived." Chihota's practice inhabits precisely this drift. Her figures oscillate between protection and openness, silence and rhythm, disappearance and return. They embody the sense that life unfolds in motion, suspended between inner vision and lived experience.

If Pessoa lends the echo of metaphysical unease, Dambudzo Marechera (Zimbabwe, 1952-1987), Zimbabwe's incendiary poet and novelist, shadows her work with the urgency of fracture and survival. Marechera's writing confronts dislocation, exile, and the volatility of identity with a raw intensity that refuses containment. His declaration that "to write is to burn and to emerge as ash" resonates with the way Chihota's forms seem to dissolve only to reconstitute themselves, fragile yet insistent. Where Marechera's words tear open the fabric of belonging, Chihota's images mend and unmake simultaneously, balancing fracture with tenderness, refusal with hope.

Chihota's universe ultimately turns restlessness into vision. Her paintings and works on paper are not depictions but meditations, where pigment and line open into states of passage. At their heart is *Kupinduka*: the turning through which the body unsettles itself, crosses thresholds, and speaks in new forms. Figures emerge and retreat, bodies collapse into pattern, colour trembles against absence. She builds a visual language in which fragility is not a weakness but a source of renewal. What is incomplete becomes fertile ground, what is fractured becomes a path toward imagining otherwise. In this sense, Chihota's work invites us to see painting as both shelter and threshold, a place where the body enacts its own turning, dreaming of what it might yet become.

JIMENA BLÁZQUEZ ABASCAL