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At age twenty, Dan Halter left his native Zimbabwe to study at the Schule für Gestaltung, in Zurich. The European experience strengthened the artist's fascination with his continent of origin even further. After feeling like an outsider in Swiss territory, he concluded his artistic formation in South Africa, the country in which he decided to settle and work.

In the self-imposed exile of the Zimbabwean and his family—he, in South Africa, his parents, in Europe—the relation that Halter sustains with his country of birth is one of continual observation, reflection, and criticism, a routine that feeds his projects.

"The revolutionaries who fought against the old establishment are now part of the government. These are the people who had all of their rights taken; many were unjustly arrested. It is understandable that corruption and crime have emerged, they are only taking back what has been denied to them for a long time," he says.

But the exercise should not be understood as an incitation to political positioning: "I am not sure if I would define myself as an activist *per se*," says the artist, who does not see himself as "someone who uses their work to force change."

In 2006, Cape Town hosted Halter's first solo exhibition. In the event, held at the João Ferreira contemporary art gallery, the artist showcased the multiplicity of resources that characterizes his work: the use of myriad materials, such as coins, pills, stones, or a pool table, and of various languages and media, including video, installation, assemblage, performance, and object creation.

The exhibition included *Untitled (Zimbabwean Queen of Rave)*, a video selected for the 16th Videobrasil (2007) that earned Halter the Videobrasil Capacete Residency Prize. The piece was born out of adolescent memories combined with later experiences. "In 1991, I attended the same school as Rozalla's brother when her omnipresent single, *Everybody's Free (to feel good)*, was released. It was surprising to see a Zimbabwean song at the top of international music charts," he recalls.

Some of the most recurring creations in Halter's oeuvre—maps of his country made from yarn, book strips, and telephone books, in plots that involve expressions, aphorisms, and popular sayings—date back to 2005, with *I don't know what to believe anymore*.

The cartographical series continues in the following year. The map of Zimbabwe is coupled with name lists of inhabitants of the former British colony and new phrases: in *More Fire*, "Many millet grains do not make porridge"; in *My Last Resort*, "When days are dark, friends are few." The saying "Never say never" features in the work by the same name, including Zimbabwe currency bills sewn up; and "Yes Boss" appears in a homonymous work, comprised of bills from the former Rhodesia.

In 2007 and 2008, the names of thousands of Londoners and the telephone book of the capital of Zimbabwe, Harare, the artist's native city, provided the raw material for new cartographies, such as *Space of Aids*.

The disease—which is estimated to affect 15 percent of the Zimbabwean population—is present in other recent creations. In *HIV (Henry the Fourth)*, carriers of the virus who receive treatment at a clinic in Cape Town glue beads

to a portrait of the British king whose name serves as a local nickname for the virus. Also in 2007, in *safe as fuck*, Halter showcases red laces and needles against a black background.

In 2009, Halter represents Zimbabwe at the 10th Havana Biennial, presenting installations involving plastic bags used by illegal immigrants worldwide, in a

reference to "illegal aliens and the xenophobia that results from an invasion of foreigners," as he puts it.

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