

Efiambelo

C. 1925 - 2006, Androka, Mahafaly Land, Madagascar
Lived and worked in Androka, Madagascar

Working in Southwestern Madagascar, Efiambelo is deeply rooted in the Mahafaly culture of his ancestors. The origins of the art and funerary rites of Mahafaly society go back to the early sixteenth century when the royal Maroserana clans settled in Mahafaly country. Their traditional art funerary steles called aloalos that serve as grave markers at tomb sites is considered the most prestigious of the island, and has been transmitted from father to son, since the times of Soroboka, a forbear of Efiambelo's. Aloalos are planted in a square pattern around the three-dimensional rectangle of stones that makes up the tomb's superstructure. They represent particular memories of the deceased for whom the aloalo was erected, as well as reminders of a particular era.

Efiambelo both honors and extends the ritual of the aloalos. One of the first sculptors to have painted aloalos for decorative purposes only, Efiambelo has also introduced acrylic colours and new imagery into the genre. Typical of the traditional aloalos, Efiambelo creates carved posts of hardwood (Mendorave), roughly seven feet in height. Depending on the different interpretations of the Mahafalaly myths and legends, varying meanings are given to the conventional motifs which decorate the support as well as to the figures on the tableaux on top. The lower part can be described as a succession of stacked figure eights (the number for abundance and a symbol for the full moon), which are alternately abstract and geometrical. On top of the post is a more representational scene, usually a zebu and his herdsman. (The zebu, humped cattle, are a symbol of wealth; a child is similarly a sign of prosperity). As a result of his deep ties to a Westerner who is inducted as Avisoa (The Welcome One) by Soroboka (Efiambelo's forbear) into his Temaromainte clan, Efiambelo has modified the traditional tableaux: cattle thieves, bush-taxis, wrestlers, airplanes, motorcycles, tales of healing, fantastic legends, and personal anecdotes animate his repertory. Aloalos honour the dead, but also assert life. Through his sophistication and resourcefulness, Efiambelo has continued and developed this vital art.

SOLO EXHIBITION

2018
Aloalo, Mahafaly sculptures of the Efiambelos, Galerie Perrotin, Paris & New York

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2018
Madagascar, Arts de la Grande Île, Musée du Quai Branly Jacques Chirac, Paris, France

2012
Africa / Africa, Centre d'art contemporain, Meymac, France

2011
Art Paris, Just Art! Grand Palais, Paris, France

2010
African Stories, Marrakech Art Fair, Marrakech

2009 - 2010
Africa - Una nuova storia, Complesso del Vittoriano, Roma, Italy

2006
100% Africa, Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, Spain

2005
Arts of Africa, Grimaldi Forum, Monaco

2005
African Art Now : Masterpieces from the Jean Pigozzi Collection, Museum of Fine Art Houston, Houston - USA

2004
Je m'installe aux abattoirs, La collection d'art contemporain d'agnès b., Les Abattoirs, Toulouse, France

2003
Sculpture 2003, Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney, Australia

1998
La Piste des Totems dans le cadre de la manifestation « Trésors d'Afrique », Foire Internationale de Bordeaux, MC2a, Bordeaux, France

Diadji Diop, Efiambelo, Alain Séchas, Galerie Perrotin, Paris

1994-1995
Otro país: escalas africanas (travelling exhibition) :

* November 15, 1994-January 15, 1995

Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderno, Las Palmas, Spain

* February 15-April 16, 1995

Fundacion La Caixa, Palma de Mallorca. Spain

* May-September, 1995

Palau de la Virreina, Barcelona, Spain

1993

La Grande Vérité, les Astres Africains, Fine Arts Museum, Nantes, France

1992

Out of Africa, Saatchi Gallery, London, Great Britain

1991

Africa Hoy / Africa Now (travelling exhibition) :

Atlantic Center of Modern Art, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain

Groningen Museum, Groningen, Netherland

Contemporary Art Cultural Center, Mexico City, Mexico.

1989

Magiciens de la Terre, Georges Pompidou Center, Grande Halle de la Villette, Paris, France

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

2018

Galerie Perrotin, Aloalo

2006

100% Africa, Exhibition catalogue, Published by TF Editores & FMGB Guggenheim Bilbao Museum

2005

African Art Now: Masterpieces from the Jean Pigozzi Collection, Exhibition catalogue. Published by Merrell

2003

Otro país: escalas africanas, Exhibition catalogue by Simon Njami and Joëlle Busca

2000

Madagascar -Memorial Arts, Efiambelo by Monica Blackmun Vison, BookY: A History of Art in Africa, Edited by Prentice Hall & Abraams

1996

"Contemporary Art of Africa ", Efiambelo by Paul Rabibisoa Ravoy, Edited by André Magnin and Jacques Soullou, Published by Harry N. Abraams

1993

La Grande Vérité, Les Astres Africains, Efiambelo by Paul Rabibisoa Ravoy, Edited by The Fine Arts Museum Nantes

1993

KUNSTFORUM AFRICA IWALEWA International (122), Afrikanische Kunst heute book, Text by A. Magnin p.165, Efiambelo p.257-258

1989

"Magiciens de la Terre ", Efiambelo by Jacques Lombard, Editions Georges Pompidou Center