



Portrait of Efiambelo

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## Efiambelo

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## Biography

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

Efiambelo is exclusively represented by the gallery MAGNIN-A, Paris.

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 Tamaromainta 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 SHOW

2018

*Aloalo*, Mahafaly sculptures des Efiambelos, Galerie Perrotin, Paris et New York

GROUP SHOWS (SELECTION)

2018

*Madagascar, Arts de la Grande Île*, Musée du Quai Branly Jacques Chirac, Paris, France (curator: Aurélien Gaborit)

2012

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

2009 - 2010

*Africa - Una nuova storia*, Complesso del Vittoriano, Roma, Italy (curator: André Magnin)

2010

*African Stories*, Marrakech Art Fair, Marrakech, Morocco (curator: André Magnin)

2006

*100% Africa*, Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, Spain (curator: André Magnin)

2005

*Arts of Africa*, Grimaldi Forum, Monaco (curator: André Magnin)

2005

*African Art Now : Masterpieces from the Jean Pigozzi Collection*, Museum of Fine Art Houston, Houston, USA (curator: André Magnin)

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, France

1994-1995

*Otro país: escalas africanas (traveling exhibition) :*

Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderno, Las Palmas, Spain; Fundacion La Caixa, Palma de Mallorca, Spain ; Palau de la Virreina, Barcelona, Spain

1993

*La Grande Vérité, les Astres Africains*, Musée des beaux-arts, Nantes, France

1992

*Out of Africa*, Saatchi Gallery, London, UK

1991

*Africa Hoy / Africa Now* (traveling exhibition)

Atlantic Center of Modern Art, Las Palmas de Gran, Canaria, Spain ; Groningen Museum, Groningen, Netherlands; Contemporary Art Cultural Center, Mexico, Mexico

1989

*Magiciens de la Terre*, Georges Pompidou Center, Grande Halle de la Villette, Paris, France  
(curators: Jean-Hubert Martin, André Magnin)