

MALANGATANA

A GREAT AFRICAN ARTIST



Painting Details:

Rites of Friendship (Ritual de Amizade)

Materials: Acrylic on board.

Size: 3 metres x 3 metres (6 panels 1.5 x 1 metre, secured together with a bolt and nut fixing)

For Sale – Contact AFSAAP president@afsaap.org.au

The development of artistic links between Australia and Mozambique has exciting potential for the two countries. Contemporary African and Aboriginal art both draw on ancient heritage, and deal with common issues of oppression and cultural survival.

An exchange has been promoted in which Australian and Mozambican artists can explore together the way they employ their heritage.

A first step was taken in 1999 when one of the best-known artists in Africa and Mozambique's greatest painter, Malangatana Valente Ngwenya, visited Australia. As part of his contribution to a major international conference organised by the African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific (AFSAAP) in Perth, he painted a large panel entitled Rites of Friendship (Ritual de Amizade). Aboriginal artist and author Sally Morgan gave a keynote address to the conference, while an associated cultural festival included an exhibition on comparative Aboriginal-African art.

Malangatana proposed to sell Rites of Friendship, and to use the proceeds to strengthen African/Australian links still further. They will be divided among cultural exchange activities between Australia and Mozambique, in particular a visit by an Aboriginal artist to Mozambique; the Matalana Cultural Centre in Mozambique. He wanted the work to find a permanent home in Australia.

"As we enter the new millennium, issues of the environment and the relationship between people and country will be crucial ones. Aboriginal and African artists have been most perceptive in raising awareness of these issues and in examining the necessity for a global change to a more holistic way of thinking, living and being."

*Sally Morgan, Director, The Centre for Indigenous History and the Arts,
University of Western Australia, 1999*

"Our communities on either side of the Indian Ocean are becoming more deeply engaged in defining their sense of place and the work of Indigenous artists helps us to know ourselves in new ways. They are shaping and refining our societies, reinforcing our values of multi-culturalism and anti-racism."

*Professor Deryck Schreuder, Vice Chancellor, The University of Western
Australia, 1999*

Malangatana saw this painting, like so much of his work, as a contribution to peace and international understanding. His art, while deeply rooted in Mozambique and Africa, aims to reach and communicate with peoples and cultures anywhere in the world. He said: **"I was thinking about the vast dimension of the human being, and about reconciliation between aborigines and non-aborigines. The content of the painting is in the title!"**

"Malangatana is much more than a creator, much more than an artist – someone who demonstrates that there is a universal language, the language of art, which allows us to communicate a message of peace, a refusal of war."

*Federico Mayor, Director-General of UNESCO, at award ceremony naming Malangatana
UNESCO Artist for Peace, 1997.*

“Conflict between current tragedy and past tradition is a characteristic of the work of Valente Malangatana Ngwenya of Mozambique. His powerful imagery weaves together the strands of indigenous culture with those of an imposed one, so that they still retain all of the stresses and strains of their inherent dichotomies.”

Jean Kennedy, New Currents, Ancient Rivers: Contemporary African Artists in a Generation of Change. Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992.

“He seems able to avoid making those distinctions that exist so painfully between cultures and one senses in him the crosscurrents that must cause daily conflict to so many people. His paintings are for him the means of resolution, of showing things ... that integrate and belong to all”.

Julian Beinart, Malangatana. Black Orpheus, Nigeria, 1961



A FULL LIFE

Malangatana was born in the village of Matalana, in Mozambique’s Maputo Province, in 1936. His father was a migrant worker in the mines of South Africa, and as a boy he was a herder of cattle and an apprentice to a traditional healer. At the age of 12 he went to the capital city (ex-Lourenço Marques, now Maputo) to look for a job, working first as a child minder and then as a ball boy and a waiter at a private club, while also attending night school. He began to draw and paint.

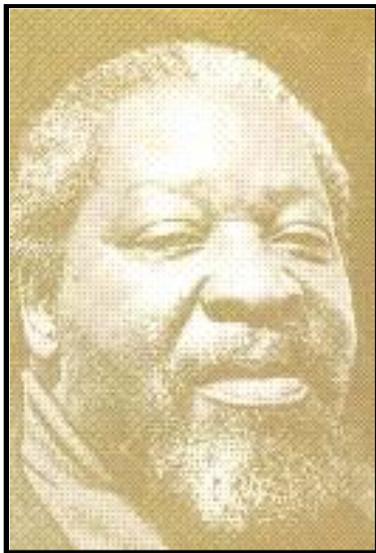
In 1959 Malangatana exhibited publicly for the first time as part of a group exhibition, and two years later, at the age of 25, he held his first solo exhibition, thanks to the support of a Portuguese architect, Miranda “Pancho” Guedes. Mozambique was a Portuguese colony, and in 1964 Malangatana was accused of ties with the embryonic Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) and detained for over 18 months. On release he continued to paint, and had gained an international reputation by the time FRELIMO won independence in 1975. For some years after independence Malangatana’s painting career took second place to national priorities, and his civic sense keeps him active on many fronts. He was one of the creators of the National Art Museum, worked in the north for some years to develop the National Anthropology Museum, was a guiding light in

reviving the Maputo Artists' Centre after independence, developed art projects with children, was a member of Parliament and helped found the Mozambican Movement for Peace. He is currently a member of the Maputo City Council.

During the 1990s he spearheaded the founding of a cultural project for his village, Matalana – an integrated development programme including artistic work and ethnographic, anthropological and ecological collections, as well as opening up training and work opportunities for local people. Today, the Matalana Cultural Centre is firmly established in the Mozambican cultural landscape.

Sadly, Malangatana died at 74, on 5 January 2011 in Matosinhos.

ARTISTIC ACTIVITY



As an artist Malangatana has been renowned for his public art, with murals and large panels adorning various cities and institutions in addition to Maputo. He has exhibited in over 100 cities on four continents, and his paintings, drawings, watercolours, prints, ceramics, tapestry and sculpture can be found in museums, galleries and private collections all over the world.

Career highlights:

1961 – First solo exhibition in Lourenço Marques, Mozambique

1963 – First joint exhibition in London, UK (ICA)

1964 – Solo exhibition of drawings at the UN headquarters in New York

1969 – Joint exhibition in London, UK (Camden Arts Centre)

1970 – Joint exhibition, Musée de l'Homme, Paris, France

1974 – Joint exhibition "Contemporary African Art", Museum of African Art, Washington, USA

1977 – Joint exhibition at II Festival of Black and African Arts, Lagos & Kaduna, Nigeria

1984 – Joint exhibition "Artists of the World against Apartheid" begins 2-year European tour

1986 – 50th birthday retrospective in Maputo; a small-scale version later exhibited in Germany, Austria, Bulgaria, Portugal, Sweden and Italy

1989 – Major iron and cement sculpture (25m high) completed in Mozambique, later

designated by UNESCO as World Heritage; solo exhibition at Greenwich Citizens' Gallery, London

1992 - Collective exhibition "Africa Explores" travels through the USA and Europe for 4 years

1993 - Mural for the Africa Pavilion at Expo 92 in Seville, Spain

1996 - Joint exhibitions in Termoli (Italy), Finland and Copenhagen ("Container 96")

1997 - Mural for UNESCO HQ in Paris

2001 - Participation in "Century City: Art and Culture in the Modern Metropolis", Tate Modern, London; "Encounters with the Contemporary", National Museum of African Art, Washington DC; and "The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa", Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, P.S.1, New York, Villa Stuck, Munich, the Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin.

2008 - Individual exhibition, Vivências - Galeria Valbom, Lisbon, Portugal

2008-2009 - Joint travelling exhibition, -Lusofonies/Lusofonias - Dakar, Senegal; Maputo, Moçambique; Luanda, Angola; S. Vicente, Cape Verde; Lisbon, Portugal.

Museums and collections

Malangatana is represented in many museums and galleries, including:

-The National Museum of African Art, Washington DC, USA

-The National Gallery of Contemporary Art, New Delhi, India

-The Contemporary Art Museum, Lisbon, Portugal

-The M'bari of Oshogbo, Nigeria

-The National Art Gallery, Harare, Zimbabwe

-The Modern Art Centre, Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, Portugal

-The Robben Island-Mayibuye Archives collection of artworks, South Africa

Main prizes and honours

1959 - Honourable Mention, "I Art Competition", Lourenço Marques, Mozambique

1970 - Diploma and Silver Medal as member Honoris Causa of the Tomase Campanella Academy of Arts and Sciences, Italy

1984 - Nachingwea Medal, for his contribution to Mozambican culture, Mozambique

1990 - International Association of Art Critics Prize, France

1990 - Order of the Southern Cross, Brazil

1995 - Officer of the Order of Infante D. Henrique, Portugal

1997 - Prince Klaus Prize, Holland

1997 - UNESCO Artist for Peace

2006 - Eduardo Mondlane Order, First Class, Mozambique

2007 - Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters, France

2010 - Honorary Doctorate, University of Evora, Portugal