Ernesto Shikhani  
(1934-2010, Mozambique)  
“Untitled”, Oil on canvas,  
80 x 100 cm, 1973 - ref a S102

Cover detail from Ernesto Shikhani  
(1934-2010, Mozambique)  
“Untitled”, Mixed media on platex,  
121 x 47 cm, 1972 - ref a S326
Perve Galeria exhibits for the first time at Frieze Masters’ Spotlight section with a project about the Mozambican artist Ernesto SHIKHANI (1934-2010) who is one of the major artist from the Modern and Contemporary art scene of the Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa and will be the first African artist, living all his life in the country of origin, to have a highlight at this Spotlight section.

The curator Toby Kamps said, ‘Spotlight continues to reveal extraordinary, under recognized figures and, in the process, to question traditional canons and shed new light on recent art history’. The importance of presenting this artist come at a time when the art world is on a massive increase of interest in the work of modern and contemporary African artists. However, on a deeper reflection it becomes evident that the most explored geographies of African art are focused towards an Anglophone and Francophone perspective of modern and contemporary African art.

Portuguese-speaking artists from Africa are still poorly represented. This absence tells us that there is being built an erratic African art cartography and is urgent to have an embracing perspective from the various existing “Africas”. This artist is included in The Lusophonies Collection, owned by Perve Gallery (Lisbon). A collection that has been built precisely on the idea of contribute to expand the possibilities, the limits and the borders of African Art as we see it nowadays. This collection intends to represent the Lusophone art in the bases of its historical evolution. For this reason, it includes modern works of their representative artists, especially those who made the pioneering steps that have determined the Lusophone artistic production since the dictatorship and colonialism system. This artists made possible, with their artistic work, the success of the independences of those African Portuguese-speaking countries in 1974/75 and among them we can find Ernesto Shikhani.
Ernesto Shikhani  
(1934-2010, Mozambique)  
“Untitled”, Oil on canvas,  
69 x 93 cm, 1973 - refº S103
In Frieze Masters’ Spotlight section, Perve Galeria presents a core of artworks which emphasize, politically speaking, the interventional character of Ernesto Shikhani’s artwork before and after the independence of Mozambique (the war of liberation and the post-independence civil war). In an initial section there will be art works in which became evident that the artist clearly tries to transmit a message against the Portuguese colonial regime and dictatorship, representing them, most of the time, through monstrous beings. In this context, the human figure is practically nonexistent or appears distorted and brutally oppressed. In the works linked to the final period of the Portuguese political regime, which ended on April the 25th, 1974, this type of representation remains but this time in a more surrealistic and colored way (mainly the drawings on paper and paintings on canvas made in 1973), reflecting hope in the upcoming victory.

A second section will reflect the post-independence period, when the author often represents the human figure with disproportionate hands, fingers and heads. His work again has a strophe of political and social intervention that is strongly related to the civil war, which began in 1977. Here the works frequently reveal two human figures linked by the same body representing his country’s population in conflict, like a bicephalous entity with the 2 heads fighting each other. This type of composition is mainly made on paper and the usage of such also reflects the time when there was a profound social transformation and an economic decay in the country with a lack of all sort of products. For the artist, materials such as oil inks, brushes and canvas became very rare and expensive, due to the constraints imposed by the civil war arised after the independence of his country in 1975, therefore he had to develop his work using other supports and he used more and more the paper for paintings and local wood as Santalum for sculptures. This sort of limitation and the political confrontation in his country made him start a new series of works moving away from the previous series in terms of narratives and iconography but keeping his visual language and the artist’s touch in such a way that we are able still to identify his artworks even if his signature is absent.

Curatorial program made for Frieze Masters 2018
with the greatest support of Mr. Toby Kamps
by Carlos Cabral Nunes
Ernesto Shikhani
(1934-2010, Mozambique)
“Untitled”, Mixed media on paper,
44x15 cm, 1975 - ref # S015
Ernesto Shikhani  
(1934-2010, Mozambique)  
“Untitled”, Mixed media on paper,  
60 x 43 cm, 1979 - ref.  S238
Ernesto Shikhani  
(1934-2010, Mozambique)  
“Untitled”, Mixed media on paper,  
35 x 48 cm, 1976 - ref.º S017
Ernesto Shikhani
(1934-2010, Mozambique)
“Untitled”, Mixed media on paper,
47 x 34 cm, 1976 - ref “S242”
Ernesto Shikhani  
(1934-2010, Mozambique)  
“Untitled”, Mixed media on paper,  
38 x 38 cm, 1977 - ref. S279
Ernesto Shikhani  
(1934-2010, Mozambique)  
“Untitled”, Mixed media on paper,  
61 x 43 cm, 1977 - ref 9° S278
Ernesto Shikhani  
(1934-2010, Mozambique)  
“Untitled”, Mixed media on paper,  
60 x 43 cm, 1978 - ref « S276
Ernesto Shikhani
(1934-2010, Mozambique)
“Untitled”, Mixed media on platex,
121 x 47 cm, 1972 - ref° S326
Ernesto Shikhani
(1934-2010, Mozambique)
“Untitled”, Oil on canvas,
43 x 60 cm, 1979 - ref ° S255
Ernesto Shikhani  
(1934-2010, Mozambique)  
“Untitled”, Mixed media on paper,  
61 x 43 cm, 1979 - ref.º S245
Biography

Born in 1934, in the Marracuene District, Ernesto SHIKHANI was part of a prominent group of artists in Mozambique who played a key role in broadening aesthetic reciprocity across Africa, Europe, and the USA. He began to devote himself to sculpture with the Portuguese master Lobo Fernandes at Núcleo de Arte, in Maputo, Mozambique. In 1963, he became Professor’s Silva Pinto assistant. One of his first plaster sculptures, made at that time, is part of Perve Galeria’s collection. His work is bold in scope, making reference to Mozambique’s artistic traditions while pushing the boundaries of formal conventions. His work is not subsidiary of any specific style: more than its roots, there are signs of a very original and unique approach to the modern and contemporary African art. Presenting himself as strongly nationalist, Ernesto Shikhani faced many obstacles, always pursuing ideals of freedom. His latest drawings and paintings show traces and colors sometimes aggressive but also vibrant and radiant. Shikhani first began exhibiting his work in 1968 in Maputo, Mozambique, and in 1973 a scholarship from the Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon, Portugal, allowed him to conceive his first solo exhibition abroad. It is important to mention that the art grant was taken from him after the Political Police of the dictatorship found the exhibition to be subversive, which forced him to leave back those artworks in Portugal with a close friend until they were found by Perve Galeria, more than 30 years later, in 2005. In 1976, he moved to live in the second most important city in Mozambique, the city of Beira, where he remained for a few years doing some of his most important large-scale public artwork’s monuments such as the bas-relief mural about the Portuguese colonialism in Mozambique, installed in the Weddings Palace. Until 1979, he has also directed drawing classes at the Auditorium-Gallery.
In 1982, he received a scholarship to study in the former USSR for 6 months, a move which notably contributed to his artistic progression. In 2004, Perve Galeria held a retrospective exhibition of his 40 years of painting and sculpture. The exhibition also included a video documentary directed by Cabral Nunes between 1999 and 2004. This short 15 minutes film addresses his plastic art and his existential path in a very personal level and is a rare document about Shikhani who was, in fact, a very shy artist. The documentary also shows interviews with him and a few critics along with images of his amazing public art. Ernesto Shikhani died on 31 December 2010, in Maputo, Mozambique. Five years after his death, marking also the 40th anniversary of independence of his country, Perve Galeria made a solo exhibition, showing five decades of his artistic production. More than 50 works (paintings, drawings, and sculptures) were displayed, highlighting an unusual sculpture patinated and a set of original paintings on paper that reports to his initial creative phase (1960's decade). Also in 2015 Perve Galeria shown his artworks in Art Dubai, India Art Fair and India International Centre (New Delhi). In 2017, Perve Galeria presented again his artworks in Art Dubai and for the first time in London, in 1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair with a great success. At the end of that year, the French auction house Piasa choose one of his oil paintings, made in 1973, for the cover page of their African Art auction catalogue. His work has since been exhibited widely in Portugal, Switzerland, Spain, the UAE, among other countries, and is held in the collections of the National Museum of Art, Mozambique; Culturgest, Lisbon and Fundação Cupertino de Miranda, Vila Nova de Famalicão, Portugal, among many other public and private collections. His work is also represented in the Lusofonias Collection held by Freedom's House - Mário Cesariny, from Lisbon, Portugal.
Solo exhibitions

1969 Lourenço Marques (current Maputo) and João Belo (current Xai-Xai), Mozambique.
1970 Inhambane and Beira, Mozambique.
1971 Nampula and Beira, Mozambique.
1973 Lourenço Marques, Mozambique; Casino Estoril, Portugal.
1988 Maputo, Mozambique; Lusaka, Zambia.
1992 Galeria Barata, Lisbon, Portugal; Sandro Gallery, Harare, Zimbabwe.
1995 Three exhibitions in Maputo, Mozambique.
1997 Maputo, Mozambique; Lisbon, Portugal.
2001 Instituto Camões, Maputo, Mozambique.
2009 Instituto Camões, Maputo, Mozambique.

Collective exhibitions

1968 Matalana and Lourenço Marques, Mozambique.
1969 Núcleo de Arte, Lourenço Marques, Mozambique.
1970 City hall of João Belo and of Inhambane, Mozambique.
1971 City hall of Nampula and Auditório-Galeria de Arte da Beira, Mozambique.
1972 California, USA.
1973 Estoril, Portugal; Galeria Chissano, Mozambique.
1974 Lusaka, Zambia; Salão da Coop, Mozambique.
1976/80 Club100, Beira, Mozambique.
1981/2 Travelling exhibition in Maputo, Mozambique; Berlin, Germany; Luanda, Angola, Moscow, USSR; Sofia, Bulgaria; Lisbon, Portugal.
1986 With Carlos Beirão, Harare, Zimbabwe; Salão do Entreponto Comercial, Beira, Mozambique.
1987 Cuba, United Kingdom, Italy, Nigeria and Zimbabwe.
1988 Washington, USA; Loja Galeria, Maputo, Mozambique.
1991 Galeria Barata, Lisbon, Portugal; Sandro Gallery, Harare, Zimbabwe.
2000 Musart, Maputo, Mozambique; Festival de Artes Plásticas da SADC, Windhoek, Namibia.
2003 “Razões de Existir III”, Perve Galeria, Lisbon, Portugal; Coleção de Arte Contemporânea da Caixa Geral de Depósitos, Lisbon, Portugal; Museo Extremeno e Iberoamericano de Arte Contemporâneo, Badajoz, Spain.
2005 Transitions, Brunei Gallery, London, United Kingdom.
2008 African Contemporary Art Gallery, Lisbon, Portugal; Art Madrid, Feira de Arte, Spain.
Ernesto Shikhani
(1934-2010, Mozambique)
“Untitled”, Oil on canvas,
70 x 140 cm, 1973 - ref. S098

Ernesto Shikhani
(1934-2010, Mozambique)
“Untitled”, Tempera an Indian ink on paper,
46x58 cm, 1978 - ref. S014
SHORT BIBLIOGRAPHY:
(A few highlights)


Ernesto Shikhani’s Movie

N.O.M.A #2 - Ernesto Shikhani is video documentary made by Cabral Nunes. Recorded between 1999 and 2004, this short 15 minutes film addresses his plastic art and his existential path in a very personal level and it is a rare document about Shikhani which was in fact a very shy artist. The documentary shows also interviews with him and a few critics along with images of his amazing public art.: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6P904OHyAO8&feature=youtu.be
Ernesto Shikhani on TV and Press

TV reporting made by Portuguese National TV Station on the work of Ernesto Shikhani during the exhibitionspatent at Perve Galeria in 2013:
https://youtu.be/eBCqjzZtm4Y

TV reporting made by Portuguese National TV Station on the work of Ernesto Shikhani during the exhibitionspatent at Perve Galeria in 2015:
https://youtu.be/mKWkVT12hil
Participation in Art Dubai, modern art section, with works by Ernesto Shikhani and Manuel Figueira. The masterpiece of the image was transferred to the Serralves Collection in 2016. Visit of HE Sheikh Hamdan Bin Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum and an article on the visit to the Emarat Al Youm newspaper in the United Arab Emirates. March 2015.
ART DUBAI
18-21.3.2015

ART DUBAI MODERN 2015

Now in its second year, Art Dubai Modern, sponsored by Mashreq Private Banking, is a unique programme that grows in 2015 to include 15 solo and two-person shows by masters from Africa, the Middle East and South Asia.

Selected by a committee of renowned curators and historians, galleries feature artists who proved influential in the twentieth century, particularly through the vibrant modern period of the 1940s to 1980s.

Read the full list of modern galleries participating in the 2015 fair, and more about the Advisory Committee, here.

Newsletter of Art Dubai 2015, mentioning Perve Galeria and the artist Ernesto Shikhani.
Ernesto Shikhani in art fairs

Perve Galeria images at the Dubai Art Fair, with its artistic director, Carlos Cabral Nunes and HE Zaki Nusseibeh Cultural Advisor, Abu Dhabi Culture and Heritage Authority (ADACH), with works by Ernesto Shikhani.
Participation at 1:54 London, with works by Ernesto Shikhani and Reinata Sadimba. Below images of the Perve Galeria stand.
Participation in Art Dubai | Modern, with works by Ernesto Shikhani, Reinata Sadimba, Manuel Figueira and Cruzeiro Seixas. Below images of the Perve Galeria stand.
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