FORT GANSEVOORT



Art Basel Miami Beach
Malangatana Ngwenya
Booth S15
December 2–6, 2026

- Fort Gansevoort's inaugural participation in Art Basel Miami Beach
- Solo booth of 1960s works by African artist Malangatana Ngwenya

Fort Gansevoort is pleased to make its debut at Art Basel Miami Beach 2026 with a solo booth of Mozambican artist **Malangatana Ngwenya** (1936–2011), a pioneering figure of modern African art. This presentation will bring together historically significant paintings and ink drawings from the 1960s, a period of intense artistic production and political engagement that coincided with Mozambique's struggle for independence from Portuguese colonial rule.

Comprising seven works, Fort Gansevoort's Art Basel Miami Beach presentation comes at a moment of renewed institutional attention to African modernism in the United States. **Malangatana's work was included in *New Humans: Memories of the Future*, the inaugural exhibition of the expanded New Museum in New York. In 2027, The Museum of Modern Art will present *Freedom and Futures: Emancipatory Art in Africa, 1956–1982***, a major exhibition examining African modern art during the era of independence and decolonization, with Malangatana among the artists represented in the museum's growing holdings.

Fort Gansevoort's presentation offers a timely reappraisal of Malangatana's contribution to global modernism, foregrounding the extraordinary synthesis of formal experimentation, spiritual imagination, and political consciousness that defines his oeuvre. Created at a pivotal moment in Mozambique's history, the featured paintings and drawings demonstrate how Malangatana transformed the pressures of colonialism, imprisonment, and liberation into an intensely personal and unmistakably modern visual language.

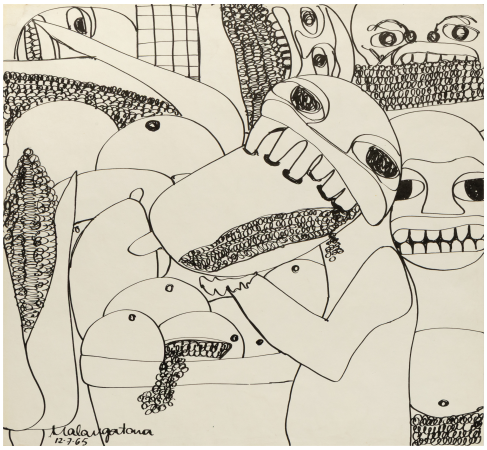
Booth Highlights



***Mau Olho (Evil Eye)* (1961)** is a significant early example of Malangatana's distinctive visual language. The painting reflects the artist's position between different cultural and social worlds: he lived and worked in the capital city of Lourenço Marques (now Maputo) dominated by Portuguese colonial influence while remaining connected to the traditions and spiritual life of his Ronga community. Set within a rural village environment, the composition incorporates references to Ronga cosmology, ritual, and communal life. The title, *Mau Olho*,

or “Evil Eye,” evokes ideas of Ronga folklore while also inviting broader readings of colonial oppression and surveillance. Formally, the work demonstrates the artist’s early engagement with uncanny visual elements and distortions associated with European Surrealism, though he did not identify himself as a Surrealist. Naturalistic figures coexist with hybrid forms in a compressed pictorial space, anticipating the themes of mysticism, violence, and liberation that would become central to his mature work.





In 1965, Malangatana was detained by the Portuguese secret police (PIDE) and imprisoned for 18 months at Machava Central Prison for his suspected involvement with the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO). **Drawing became an especially urgent form of expression during and following his incarceration**. The ink drawings from this era are populated by distorted figures rendered with remarkable immediacy. Some of his subjects appear vulnerable and often emaciated, while others are presented as monstrous beings bearing sharp teeth. Moving between his observations of prison life and phantasmagorical visions, they convey the psychological intensity of a period marked by confinement, violence, and political upheaval.

About the Artist

Malangatana Ngwenya (1936–2011) was a pioneering Mozambican artist whose work stands as a powerful expression of anticolonial resistance and the emergence of modern African art. His work has been the subject of recent institutional exhibitions, including *Malangatana: Mozambique Modern* at the Art Institute of Chicago (2020), and has been featured in major group presentations such as *Surrealism Beyond Borders* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Tate Modern (2021–22), *The Short Century* at MoMA PS1 (2002), and *New Humans: Memories of the Future* at the New Museum (2026). His work is held in numerous prominent museum collections, including the Art Institute Chicago, Chicago, IL; Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH; Contemporary Art Museum, Lisbon, Portugal; National Art Gallery, Harare, Zimbabwe; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; National Gallery of Contemporary Art, New Delhi, India; Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of African Art, Washington DC; and Tate Modern, London, UK, among others.

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Caption and courtesy information:

Malangatana Ngwenya
Guerrilheiros: momentos de decisão (Warriors: moments of decision), 1968
Oil on wooden board (platex)
51.5 x 27 x 2 in

Malangatana Ngwenya
Mau Olho (Evil Eye), 1961
Oil on wooden board (platex)
31.5 x 47.25 in

Malangatana Ngwenya
Untitled, 1968
Ink on paper
14.5 x 20 in

Malangatana Ngwenya
Untitled [Prison Series], 1965
Indian ink on paper
16.25 x 17.25 in

All works: © Malangatana Ngwenya. Courtesy of the artist and Fort Gansevoort, New York.