



**DR LILIAN
MARY NABULIME**
EMBODYING SOCIAL BEING

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FOREWORD

Our inaugural publication highlights the artistic practice of Dr Lilian Mary Nabulime, often described as the “Mother of Ugandan art.” I was first introduced to Lilian’s work eight years ago during my travels around East Africa and have been captivated ever since. Walking through her studio, I experienced the deeply personal stories expressed in each piece. Witnessing such powerful works and the way Lilian utilises her art to tackle incredibly complicated social issues — a key feature of her practice — inspired me to work towards the promotion of African and African diaspora artists. And so, I am incredibly grateful to Dr Lilian Nabulime for accepting our invitation to take part in this volume.

Born in Kampala, Uganda, Dr Lilian Nabulime trained at the Margaret Trowell School of Industrial and Fine Art (MTSIFA) at Makerere University. There, she was guided by Francis Nnaggenda who is regarded as one of the greatest educators and sculptors the African continent has ever produced. Lilian obtained her PhD at Newcastle University, United Kingdom, with her dissertation on “The Role of Sculptural Forms as a Communication Tool in Relation to the Lives and Experiences of Women with HIV/AIDS in Uganda.” She is currently a senior lecturer at the Department of Fine Art in Makerere University alongside her busy artistic studio, giving back to the institution and the community that she emerged from.

Her accomplishments and accolades are far-reaching and Almas Art Foundation is proud to present the works of Dr Lilian Nabulime through the first issue of our monographic series.

We are grateful to Andrew Burton, professor of fine art at Newcastle University, for his moving essay that unpacks Nabulime’s practice. We would like to thank Martha Kazungu, who has curated Dr Lilian’s works into numerous exhibitions, for providing her in-depth perspective. Martha Kazungu also worked with Dr Lilian Nabulime to organise the works featured in this volume. Equally, we would like to thank Daudi Karungi of Afriart Gallery for providing context for Nabulime’s practice within the current artistic landscape in Africa.

Farah Jirdeh Fonkenell
Founder and CEO, Almas Art Foundation



A CONVERSATION WITH DR LILIAN

Dr Nabulime, could you please introduce yourself?

My name is Lilian Mary Nabulime. I am a practising artist and a senior lecturer in the Department of Fine Arts at the Margaret Trowell School of Industrial and Fine Arts, College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology (CEDAT), at Makerere University.

As a practising artist, I use sculpting as my predominant medium of expression, with wood being my primary material. I am passionate about the carving of wood but also use other materials like metal and soap, among others, in my sculpting practice. Occasionally, I paint and make appliqué forms using textiles and other materials. My artistic vision and expression are deeply embedded in the use of everyday and often discarded materials for art as a social practice. This enables me to communicate socio-political issues in a way that society can find more accessible.

Art forms the nexus of my academic training and practice. I majored in painting and sculpture for my Bachelor of Arts in Fine Art, which I obtained from Makerere University in 1987. I later obtained my master's degree in sculpture in 1993 from the same university, where I developed sculptures from tree roots, illustrating the interconnectedness between art and the natural environment. In 2007, I completed a PhD at Newcastle University in the UK. My thesis was on "The Role of Sculptural Forms as a Communication Tool to the Lives and Experiences of Women with HIV/AIDS in Uganda."

Can you tell us about your home and its influences it has had in the expression of your art?

I was born and raised in Nsambya, a suburb of Uganda's capital, Kampala. In my formative years, I benefited from both my parents being educated and lovers of all things related to art. My father was an artist himself, although he never had formal training in the subject. Despite growing up in a middle-class family, my surroundings offered me a window to look at the everyday struggles of the people in Kampala. I may not have realised it at the time but it ultimately impacted my artistic choices.

Who or what inspired you to become an artist?

I think I was inspired by a background of surrounding artists. My father was one, though not a fine artist. Both my father and mother were creative individuals, and I was lucky that I attended schools that taught arts. I first went to Schuman Primary School and continued my education at Christ the King Secondary School Kalisizo in Masaka. After the wars, my father brought us to Kampala where I joined Makerere University. Whilst I was there, I would see students carrying their art boards and it inspired me. On top of that, I had very good teachers and I enjoyed art as a subject.

For some time, I have been teaching at the School of Fine Arts in Makerere. I finished school in 1987 and joined teaching in 1988. I remember when my father was dying of HIV/AIDS around 1987, he had not supported my studying fine arts until I achieved an Upper Second in class. After he heard the news, he called for me and said that he was dying. Firstly, he said 'Oh, you've done so well,' and next, 'can you go back to the School of Fine Arts and ask for a job?' I walked back to the school and told the head of the department at the time, Musango Gwantamu, 'I would like to work here.' He said, 'Fantastic! You have a job. If you are going to teach, though, you'll have to do a master's.' I responded, 'I'll do it in painting,' to which he followed with, 'No, you are strong in sculpture.' I had not realised this. My father died the following day.

While I was working on my diploma in education, I could not work out what I wanted to do for my master's. Every topic had already been done. Gwantamu asked me whether I'd looked at tree roots, so I started looking. I would look at roots that had come up to the surface, draw them, take photos, make markings and develop sculptures. One day, we had a heavy storm at the university and many trees fell. For the first time, I looked at what was under the ground and realised there were many interesting forms. I was able

to cut them and bring the sculptures in a lorry to the School of Fine Arts. I started working on my master's on the theme of sculptures developed from tree roots. I was first taught by Professor Musango Gwantamu and then by Professor Nnaggenda.

It was exciting! I remember exhibiting my sculptures in the gallery. It was filled and all the works were done by hand. Some of them were big works. At that exhibition, somebody challenged me by saying that my sculptures were not all that good, as if it was not a big deal. And I replied, 'Me, having filled up the gallery with all these heavy, big sculptures?!'

Can you describe the happiest moment you've experienced in your career as an artist?

Doing my PhD in Newcastle was one of the happiest times in life, especially as I was able to produce sculptures that could explain and communicate HIV/AIDS. I was not a scientist and at first I made mistakes. My supervisors told me that I needed to take courses in social methodologies and have a pilot project with people living with HIV/AIDS. I went to the NHS and found a pamphlet that was in Luganda. Can you imagine having a pamphlet in the medical facility of the UK, in Luganda? This meant there were Ugandans living in Newcastle with HIV/AIDS. I rang one of them and told them to come.

I think what you'll see through my journey of going into fine arts is being able to work on issues that I could solve or could find answers to through art. Art is a social practice and developing artworks can address issues in society. HIV is tough, but people who are living with HIV/AIDS connect through art as they hold my soap sculptures. They smile and open up. Even my husband Edward, who never mentioned anything to do with his illness, asked his friends to help me when he saw the soap sculptures. This was a moment to remember in my life.

If I were to cite a particular time, there was this one day I spent with our local priest. I had just lost my husband Edward to HIV/AIDS. I knew that as an artist I had something to say and do about the scourge... the effect it had on me and the effects I knew it had on the community around me. I got up and went into my studio, returning shortly with miniature soap sculptures that signified the male and female genitalia, embedded with objects. I was apprehensive at first as I showed the sculptures to the priest. He looked at them and said, 'This is fantastic.' He asked, 'Can you bring them down to my rural



Male and Female Soap Sculptures, 2003-04,
soap embedded with cowrie shells, seeds,
Male 8 x 8 x 4 cm, Female 6.5 x 5 x 5 cm

area in Katikum?’ which I was able to do. I had a focus group discussion with men and women. When they looked at the penises and vaginas in the form of soap sculptures embedded with objects, they laughed. It was a terrifying subject, but people were holding them and laughing. When I started the focus group discussion, I said, ‘Yes, we are talking about HIV/AIDS.’ and one woman asked how they could talk about these vaginas and penises amongst their relatives and in-laws. I answered, ‘How many of you have lost your relatives? Maybe those in-laws will infect you with the disease.’ So many issues opened just because of the art and the soap sculptures, which led to talking about issues and taboos. The sick people could openly talk about how the disease was affecting them and for me it was powerful. Developing those sculptures was one of the most successful moments in my life.

You mentioned Professor Francis Nnaggenda, who is regarded as a legendary sculptor and educator. Do you feel his work impacted you in any way?

Oh, a great deal! Francis Nnaggenda was a great teacher. There were times I faced challenges and hurdles in my career as an artist. Francis would give me time, advice, critique, praise and lots of encouragement.

I was taught wood carving by Professor Nnaggenda. The way he worked inspired me. He is not big in stature — we might be of the same height — but he used to make huge sculptures. If you’ve read about Professor Nnaggenda, you’ll know he is one of the best wood carvers we have in Uganda and maybe on the continent of Africa. I am proud that I was taught by him.

When I saw him working on big projects, I was also inspired to work on big pieces myself. Those I have done in the past were all inspired by Professor Nnaggenda. But I have also looked at great artists like Henry Moore in the UK and have admired their huge works.

You know, whenever I make a big piece, I name it after myself, ‘Lilian.’ Once, when I was a student at Makerere, a tree fell and split into two huge pieces. Nnaggenda took one and I said, ‘I’ll take the other one.’ He said, ‘Try to finish yours.’ But I had so many issues and challenges at the time that I was not able to, although he finished his.

I had challenges and this work came to a standstill. But I kept working on it for a long time — I am still working on it after 20 years. When it’s not a commission, it can take

years. Finally, when I got to it, he had made a man and I had made a woman. For me, I look at women. We are powerful but sometimes we are let down by society. I am pushed to make big sculptures so that we can elevate women to feel proud of themselves.

I won’t say much when somebody challenges me, but all my energy goes into my work and usually I come up with big pieces. It’s only during COVID-19 when there was a lot of uncertainty that I worked on some smaller pieces. I thought I could not work on such big pieces with a power saw and grinders when the world was so quiet and everybody was at home.



Dr Lilian with Lilian, 2022.

What has been a particularly difficult experience you have had as an artist?

We are social beings; I am a social being and get affected by issues. I encountered HIV/AIDS first with my father and later on through other relatives. Then the other closest person to me with HIV/AIDS was my husband. When my husband fell ill, I thought we were both done for but fortunately I tested negative. I was still very affected though. What hurt me most was that those whom we thought were our friends disappeared and I was left alone to take care of Edward. Fortunately, he had a good job and we had good treatments by then. But the fact was still that I was alone with my husband and a kid and I had been shunned off. I remember before, every weekend we used to go and socialise with friends and family. But after Edward's diagnosis, on the weekends we would not get a phone call. For four years, I cared for Edward and it was tough. I told his family, 'We have an issue.' They didn't get back to me to ask how they could help. Maybe it was too tough for them. And then I remember three friends in particular.

One was a medical doctor. I told him Edward was suffering and crying. He said 'Well, if the sick man has not come to me, there's no way I can help.' Another was a family friend, whom I told that I needed counselling for Edward as I needed support. He said, 'I cannot help you; that's a family issue.' And the third friend was working at the city council. When I told him we had a problem, he said 'I know, I knew. Uganda had brought antiretrovirals and I thought about you.' So I said, 'Yes, and then what happened?' He just kept quiet. Finally, I realised this was a personal issue for our family: me, Edward and my daughter. The three of us.

The problem was too stressful and I began to fall sick. At the same time, I was the head of the department. I told Edward that I was tired and needed a break. A colleague who knew I was stepping down as head of department suggested I do a PhD. So, I walked out of the school and to the British Council and told them I wanted to find a school where I

could do a practice-based PhD. I picked Newcastle because I think it was the first one to accept my proposal. But then I realised I didn't have enough funding. The British Council didn't provide funding and the school didn't have money either, so I spoke to somebody I had talked to four years prior to that. They said they had money for me. I thought they were joking. Edward said, 'go for it.' He believed in me and wanted me to excel.

When I arrived in Newcastle, I felt free. Two days after that, I went to the library and read a book about HIV/AIDS and about women who had been infected and affected. Then I realised I had been affected. My husband was sick, my father had died, and many relatives and friends had died. I realised I had left Edward.



My family, Edward, Lilian and Sharon, 1998
Oil on canvas, 69 x 61 cm

I couldn't go back to Uganda because a lot of money had been put forward for my studies, but I decided to do my PhD on HIV/AIDS. My supervisors questioned why I was going to focus on HIV/AIDS when I was not a medical doctor or a social scientist, but I replied to them, 'I've been affected.' I want to do sculptures that can help communicate HIV/AIDS.

I felt Newcastle was the right place for me to be. My supervisors accepted my proposal and didn't challenge me on it thereafter.

How has that difficult experience helped you to develop your artwork and expression?

Having been affected and stigmatised by HIV/AIDS, I grew a tough skin in order to speak up. And which would be tougher and more eloquent than sculpture? I developed a series of sculptures which resulted in transparent soap sculptures that communicated issues regarding HIV/AIDS and sex.

Despite most of HIV/AIDS infections within Uganda being a result of unprotected sex, issues regarding diseases and their transmission through sex are regarded as societal taboos.

Sex and genitalia are never discussed openly. My artwork seeks to change that narrative.

Do you think your work would have changed if you lived somewhere else?

Absolutely. As a Muganda and an African, I am essentially a social being bound by Ubuntu. I am interconnected with my family, my community and the society in which I live. When someone in my family and community have issues affecting them, it affects my creativity and my creative process as well. It also affects my resources as I am obliged to support and take care of their needs such as medical bills.

When I was away in Newcastle for my PhD, I missed my family back at home. I did worry about them a great deal. When I found a pamphlet available at their medical centre in my mother tongue, Luganda, one of the most predominantly spoken languages in Uganda, I realised that HIV/AIDS was not only affecting the people and communities back home but also affecting the Ugandan community in the United Kingdom.

My societal and communal upbringing, alongside this newfound knowledge, motivated me to pursue my PhD with renewed energy. Regardless of where I lived, I wanted to communicate the effects of HIV/AIDS. But it's the sense of community that was pushing me to research, assess, experiment and develop diverse and in-depth sculptural concepts that are community-centred and directly tailored to the local needs and social problems of Ugandan women.

Your exhibitions "Wood: Artistic Exploration" and "Art in the Office" feature wood being predominantly used as a material as well as exaggerated faces. Is there a reason you have chosen wood, as it appears to be a predominant feature in your artwork?

I love working with wood. It is abundant in Uganda and is one of the reasons Uganda is known as the "Pearl of Africa." Moreover, materials such as roots are wasted. This is something I discovered and highlighted when completing the research for my master's: "Sculptures Derived from Tree Roots." Often, roots of various sizes are considered unsuitable for timber and usually burnt or discarded. It is these pieces of wood that I pick and bring to my studio and classrooms. I study forms of wasted wood and try to salvage them.

Exaggerated features are steeped in conceptual art, which drives my art as a social practice. Exaggeration becomes a metaphor, a symbol, a statement. My sculptures attempt to push the meaning of art beyond its visual quality, to instead raise awareness about issues facing society and promote discussion among viewers.

You stated earlier that you use other materials. Tell us more about those.

Yes, I incorporate wood with other materials, especially metal sheets, copper, printing plates, aluminium beer and soda cans, car and bicycle parts or nuts, and so forth...

I also use ordinary household objects such as soap, sieves, clothing, mirrors, cans and other found materials to bring subjects like disease, gender and the environment closer to home. The use of various metal sheets, their unique colours and accessorial richness enhances the natural beauty of the wood. The use of metal bands further serves an additional purpose — preventing wood from cracking.

Having held several solo and group exhibitions in the US, UK, Denmark, Belgium, and Germany, can you tell us about your first solo exhibition? Which exhibition was the most memorable and why?

My first solo show was in 1993 at the Sheraton Hotel in Kampala. It was exciting but nerve-racking, this being the first time my art was exhibited as a stand-alone. My most memorable show was curated by Daniel Swadner within the Promega Exhibition in the state of Wisconsin, US.

Two HIV/AIDS exhibitions, held in both Newcastle, UK and in Kampala, Uganda were memorable too.

Alongside your artistic practice, you are currently the Senior Lecturer at Makerere University.

Are you inspired to teach because you are an artist, or do you do it because of your art?

I am inspired to teach knowing that I am training future artists. There is an unexplainable joy that encapsulates me when I teach. It is an opportunity to inspire and teach others like those who have come before me, sharing the lessons learnt from my teachers to the future of Ugandan artists as they learn, grow and become independent artists.

If my art doesn't sell, the fact that these artworks communicate, that people open up, is rewarding. And this has transformed the way I teach as a lecturer. Every year, we have new students. None of my colleagues talk about HIV/AIDS issues as openly as I do.

Are you currently working on anything new for an exhibition?

As an artist, you never stop creating. I am currently producing work, although I don't expect any exhibitions soon. An exhibition cannot be the only source of inspiration for an artist. Your work inspires others, your work may not sell immediately, but it can have an effect on those around you. It can communicate with others and evoke emotions within them. That, in and of itself, is worth more than any sale of artwork. My advice to young artists is when an opportunity comes your way, make an effort to respond.

One of the pieces I am preparing to work on is a portrait of a well-known African writer, **Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o**, from a historical mvule tree that was cut from Makerere University's Freedom Square.

How do you begin a piece of work? Can you walk us through a favourite piece that you made recently?

When I have issues affecting me and those around me, the materials speak to me. They invite me to work with them. I find that a piece of work is finished once I have attained the ideas and forms I wanted to explore. A work of art will tell you when it is done, when the story and the message you intended to convey comes out.



Keeping Safe from COVID-19, 2020, Terracotta, 15 x 10 x 10 cm

My most recent favourite pieces are the terracotta pieces with and without face masks. They present characters that pretend that they are wearing masks for the prevention and transmission of COVID-19, yet, as they talk, the masks are shifted below the chin or on the side of the cheek. The misuse of masks during the COVID-19 pandemic was common; people had to be reminded about wearing masks correctly.

Has the current COVID-19 pandemic affected your work?

During the COVID-19 lockdown, I lost hope. The world as we knew it shut down. It went silent and so did my studio as I did not do any wood carving. I was scared to run the power saw because all my neighbours and their children were in their houses. The silence around me was deafening. Seeing people around me dying was depressing and reminded me about the loved ones I had lost to HIV/AIDS.

Fortunately, the university hosted a Fulbright Fellow, Eric Blomel, in casting during the lockdown and I took the opportunity to work with him. I was able to channel my emotions into the development of small clay portraits with and without masks, alongside metal casting, showcasing the world we lived in and the world we are currently living in. I was also able to cast my own portrait that was done by Prof. Tuck Langaland in the US. When an opportunity presents itself, respond.

How do you want people to feel about your work?

I enjoy producing work that can involve people or draw them in, as well as discussing and engaging with issues that affect them and the societies in which we live.

Producing transparent soap sculptures engaged with people to openly discuss HIV/AIDS amongst the vulnerable communities, especially those who had limited access to information and little or no formal education.

The transparent soap sculpture of male and female genitalia overcame the taboos of discussing disease among those infected and affected publicly. The same can be said about my terracotta and metal casting sculptures.

What are your plans for the future?

I am 60. And at 60, you are supposed to be retiring. I have made these great pieces. Many artworks go abroad and they are sold off. I would like to have a foundation. I have started the development stage of the L. M. Nabulime Foundation that would serve as an art gallery in Kampala.

Besides hosting some of my various art pieces and sculptures as a permanent collection for educational purposes to young artists, the facility will serve as an art space providing art studios and workshops to artists in the region, particularly underrepresented artists such as women. It will pick up young artists who have not had the chance to go to university and train them. It will invite international artists and work with them as well. Whenever I go abroad, I teach woodcarving. So, I can also teach woodcarving in my space.



Dr Lilian Mary Nabulime with *Kavuyo* and *Empowered*.

LETTER FROM ANDREW BURTON

Visiting Kampala over many years, and often working alongside and collaboratively with the distinguished sculptor Lilian Nabulime, I am always struck by the deep respect and affection in which she is held. This extends beyond the fellow artists, curators and the visual art community of which she is a part to embrace those artisanal workers alongside whom she often works. Representing an essentially democratising force, Nabulime is an artist who values and appreciates both those practising in their creative or academic field and those whose day-to-day work, if apparently more humble sometimes enables artists to make work.

Lilian has worked with a huge range of artisans: with the banka yekka 'moneybox' makers; with metalworkers who skilfully turn metal stripped from wrecked cars into barbeques and suitcases; and with workers in clay wire and rubber. Collectively known as jua kali ('under the hot sun') workers, these people often operate on the margins of Kampala society.

Nabulime is distinctive as an artist whose practice is concerned with traditional and contemporary sculptural values, but who also engages directly with pressing social issues. Since 2001, she has been developing a body of work that addresses taboos and stigmas around HIV/AIDS — a project that began during her doctoral studies at Newcastle University. Her understanding of the value and importance of art within society is subtle and profound. At a moment in time increasingly dominated by

technological innovation, Lilian emphasises the value and universality of making by hand and of artists engaging directly with and communicating through materials. Lilian's practice is characterised both by its integrity and determination, but also by its frequently radically experimental nature. She is not an artist in thrall to the art world or diverted by artistic fashion. She returns regularly to a constant working method in her practice, wood carving. Perhaps because of the level of skill and commitment involved, wood carving has not re-entered contemporary art practice in the same way as other traditional materials such as clay. And yet, Lilian brings a freshness, inventiveness and relevance to wood carving.

Her work can be both confrontational and abrupt — at times almost literally stopping the spectator in their tracks. But she is also lyrical and persuasive in her use of



Kavuyo - Chaos, 1991
Wood, 148 x 177 x 157 cm

material and highly expressive in her use of vivid colour and exaggerated form. She learnt to carve as a student at the Margaret Trowell School of Art and Industrial Design at Makerere University, one of the longest established art schools in East Africa. Here, she was taught by Francis Nnaggenda, known as an exponent of neo-traditionalist carving. But whilst Nabulime's large-scale carving is set in the context of the African historical tradition of wood carving, her work — in its deployment of monumental scale, its carefully judged approach to formal composition, balance and symmetry, and her sensitivity to responding to the specific qualities and character of the chosen piece of wood — can be seen also to be rooted in the western canon.

Nabulime acknowledges a debt to Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth, artists to whom she was introduced at Makerere University, where British sculpture has remained an important strand in the teaching.

Allowing the original material to have a presence and resonance is strongly felt in works such as *Kavuyo-Chaos* (1991), where the intertwining roots of a ficus tree are used to symbolise the political chaos Ugandans lived through in the 1980s. For Nabulime, the process of working with the wood is partly intuitive, responding to what the artist finds in front of her, but she also develops ideas through making small models or maquettes in clay and through drawing. She emphasises the importance of recovery and reuse, producing a series of carvings using timber from some of the huge, ancient trees growing close to the art department at Makerere.

These had to be felled because of disease and required a painstaking process of removing the rotten material. Nabulime also uses wood used in combination with other materials. Metal sheets from the bodywork of salvaged cars suggest protection when nailed or strapped across horizontal surfaces. Metal also has a strongly decorative sense, with recycled pop and beer cans used to represent clothing in the series of carved reliefs depicting young women. Other reliefs in this series sport manes of vividly coloured pink hair. To create these, Lilian worked with veteran artisan brush and broom maker Nantongo Alex to adapt the process of making domestic brushes so that the fibres could be incorporated into sculpture.

Lilian has lived through the HIV/AIDS epidemic by which her life has been fundamentally affected. She is brave and forthright in her public accounts of her experiences and how this led to profound shifts in her artistic practice. In 2001, she began to make work that related to her personal experience of caring for people

living with HIV/AIDS. Her work focussed on the stigma and taboos that relate to HIV/AIDS, particularly amongst women. Lilian organised workshops of Ugandan women living in London which resulted in the idea of incorporating highly suggestive everyday objects into sculptures of penises made from soap. Embedded objects included razor blades, tacks and nails. If on one level this work had an educational purpose and served to stimulate conversation and debate, it also represented a highly personal and expressive way of speaking to a journey through an individual life through art.

In formal terms, where the emphasis of Lilian's earlier work had been on the free-standing object, the new work moved towards more fluid installations where the work could be configured differently and composed of different elements depending on the setting of display. The move towards installation also led to Lilian beginning to incorporate new materials into the work, including jute, barkcloth and treacle, as well as handmade artefacts and vessels distributed around the gallery space.

The effect is visceral and undermines conventions of the aesthetic display of baskets and handicrafts. Lilian has commented that her purpose in these works has been to invent a language for sculpture that bypasses ethnic differences and cultural divides in a way that draws people together in common cause. There is a fascinating implication here that in Africa, art can be seen to belong and impact firmly within society in ways that are much less apparent in the west.

Andrew Burton

Andrew Burton is a Professor of Fine Art at Newcastle University. His sculptures and installations using clay and other materials have been exhibited internationally and are often produced in collaboration with artisans and other makers. Since 2017, he has worked with artists, curators and art professionals in East Africa and the UK on a series of projects that aim to build capacity and employability in the visual arts. His work has won international prizes and major awards of grant funding.



Jolly Girls, 2015
Wood, aluminium cans, raffia and dyed sisal, 139 x 39 x 53

LETTER FROM MARTHA KAZUNGU

In 2013, art historian Sidney Littlefield Kasfir was explaining why Uganda, despite hosting one of the oldest art schools in Africa, Margaret Trowell School of Industrial and Fine Art, remains under the radar of international collectors and institutions. One of the three reasons she gave was the fact that Ugandan artists preferred to tackle topics that are central to their immediate surroundings, but difficult for outsiders to comprehend or relate to. Now, a decade after Kasfir wrote that essay, it is not surprising that Lilian Mary Nabulime, despite being one of Uganda's greatest women sculptors, is hardly known on a global scale.

Nabulime is a Senior Lecturer at Margaret Trowell School of Industrial and Fine Art at Makerere University, principally teaching sculpture. She joined the Margaret Trowell School of Industrial and Fine Art in 1984 for her bachelor's degree and later her master's degree, which she completed in 1993. As a student there, Nabulime was incredibly inspired by her professor, renowned artist Francis Nnaggenda. Nabulime later joined Newcastle University in the UK for her PhD, graduating in 2007. She is famously known for her PhD project titled *The Role of Sculptural Forms as a Communication Tool in Relation to the Lives and Experiences of Women with HIV/AIDS in Uganda* (practice / theory-based research in Fine Art).

Nabulime's PhD project has gained popularity for several reasons. In 2001, prejudices and stigma among HIV/AIDS victims and close relations was still rampant. And as a wife nursing a husband suffering from HIV/AIDS, Lilian was not spared.

The Rumormongers (Series 2), 2018, Terracotta

Consequently, she used everyday objects in her art to speak about the epidemic. Another reason for her PhD project's popularity was the ability to bring the sculptures back to Uganda after graduation. As an artist predominantly working with wood, she has always found it difficult to bring her work back home. Although collaborators have, in some cases, taken advantage of the weight of the works to hang onto them abroad, it is practically very expensive to ship large sculptures across continents. As such, some of Nabulime's works still rest in public and private collections in the US, Germany, Denmark, Norway and Kenya .

The projects before and after Nabulime's PhD have received less attention and acclaim, which anchors the criticism that she did not supersede her PhD project. The ambivalence in such ungrounded criticism, without intending to, emphasises how the progress of any artist must be grounded in documenting and publishing, a conundrum which has left many artists in East Africa behind in international visibility because there is nothing written on them.

Even though she has been actively making work, exhibitions, workshops and residences the past 16 years, there has been barely any articles of Nabulime's work in mainstream art publications. In this essay, I do not dive deep into Nabulime's PhD thesis, but rather I focus on her work post-PhD, reflecting on overarching themes, nuances and resonances that are either visible or perceptible in her work.

Nabulime's work is a recording of her surroundings to monumentalise aspects of social being such as social interactions, emotions, dress code, Buganda cultural activities and perceptions as well as the everyday activities. Almost intuitively, she has embraced the head as the main body part of focus, not only because of what the head symbolically means in traditional narratives on the body composition (where the head is considered the custodian and the pinnacle of one's being), but also scientifically it's the place that hosts the brain, face and eyes.

For Nabulime, all the external, internal and symbolic components of the head work together to give off expressions that can be perceived in her subjects. From distortions to enlargements, omissions to exaggerations, the subject is in constant flux, depicting the fluidity and temporality of youthful being, which is an account of Nabulime's own interaction and observation of her students.

A visual distinction of Nabulime's art making rests on the portrayal of her subjects'

faces. She gives keen and special attention to the faces, making them elusive yet confronting at the same time. For instance, she has mastered the red pigment of the mouth of female subjects, something that always pronounces her figures with a dramatic mood of modernity. And in some cases, when applied to male subjects , she arouses questions around the LGBTQ+ society in Uganda. The faces embody her distinctive style so much that without them one could easily mistake her work. Nabulime's style can be seen in the work of Babirye Leilah, whom she taught sculpture to at Margaret Trowell School of Industrial and Fine Art.

In addition to adding colour, she occasionally distorts her faces with elongations, contours and uneven placement of key facial features. Within her daily life experience of teaching at the Margaret Trowell School of Industrial and Fine Art, Nabulime has observed numerous facial expressions, mostly from students on campus. She is occasionally mesmerised by the youthful energy of adulthood and coming of age, especially by the female students. It's a development which is also met by a fluctuation of emotions and feelings such as longing, desire, confusion, dissatisfaction, competition, rejection, beauty standards and so on. Observing the flux of these emotions, she has attempted to depict these emotions on the faces of her subjects through creating several corresponding series in her work and practice.

Relatedly, Nabulime's facial expressions sometimes transcend the face to portray other parts of the body, either in realistic or exaggerated forms. Here, works such as Mamma, Ssebo and Man are some of Lilian's masterpieces so far both in the perfect execution of wood carving and in the attribution to the themes she applauds. Her Mamma sculpture, for instance, is an ingenious applause and reward to mothers, who, in her context, carry numerous responsibilities regarding nurturing life but also keeping peace and tranquillity on Earth whilst constantly providing for others.

As a mother herself, she relates to the ingenuity and expectation of service, which in most cases is not accompanied by a direct reward, especially in the capitalist world we live in today. Mamma depicts a plump Muganda woman dressed in the gomesi, the traditional wear of the Baganda and several ethnic sects in Uganda. In a recent interview, Nabulime mentioned that she wanted to comment on the plump Baganda women in her society, a physical quality which is preferred amongst many women and their suiters.



Maama, 2011
Wood, 120 x 64 x 66 cm

Currently, she is working on a Keeping safe from COVID-19 series alongside developing the Lilian Nabulime Foundation, a resource centre and permanent home for sculptures in Uganda. Keeping safe from COVID-19 is a multimedia project made with terracotta, wood and metal, in which the faces are covered by masks around the mouth area. The works on the one hand are a response to the Ugandan government's unjust rules in the wave of preventing the spread of the virus; and on the other, they're a response to the introduction of a face mask.

For an artist whose greatest inspiration comes from the face, the response was organic. A direct obstruction of the face was a new invitation to work with faces that were covered with masks.

To conclude, Lilian Nabulime's work before and after her PhD project, although spread across the globe with the majority of it now resting at the newly founded Lilian Nabulime Foundation, renders a possibility with which local nuances and society recordings can be perceived. As a lecturer living in central Uganda, she has obtained inspiration from the people in her surroundings, especially female students.

Nabulime's sculptures with their distinct faces carry a visual language of her own style which has had a profound influence on her students. As a Muganda woman grounded by Baganda perceptions, being and norms, she finds herself at the crossroads of serving her own people and the rest of the world.

Martha Kazungu

Martha Kazungu is a Ugandan curator, art historian and writer living and working between Nairobi and Kampala. She is the founder of the Njabala Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation facilitating visibility for women artists. Kazungu holds a master's degree in African visual and verbal art with a focus on curating from the University of Bayreuth. As an independent curator, she is currently consulting for the Nairobi Contemporary Arts Institute and the German federal cultural foundation.

- i Kasfir, Sidney Littlefield. 2013. "Lacuna Uganda in a Globalizing Cultural Field." In *A Companion to Modern African Art*, edited by Gitti Salami and Monica Blackmun Visonà. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- ii Commonly known as Makerere Art School which was founded in the late 1930s by the British scholar and missionary called Margaret Trowell.
- iii Thesis can be accessed on <https://theses.ncl.ac.uk/jspui/handle/10443/1000>
- iv For example, in 2013, Nabulime received a Robert Sterling Fellowship at Vermont Studio Center, US, where she spent two months experimenting with various mediums and forms of sculpture. The resulting works remained in the US after they were exhibited by curator Daniel Swadener in Wisconsin in an exhibition titled *Celebration of Women through Art, Promega Spring Art*.
- v Buganda is a Bantu ethnic group occupying central Uganda. The people from Buganda are called Baganda in plural and Muganda in singular. Lilian Nabulime belongs to the Baganda ethnic group, referring to her as a Muganda within this essay.
- vi Especially when she inserts red pigment on male figures. In *Man* (2015), for example, she depicts a portrait of a man in which his lower lip is coloured. The work seeks to portray a rather contested theme of LGBTQ+ in Ugandan law.



Feminine, 2011, Wood and Copper, 50 x 55 x 165 cm.
Installation View, Dr. Lilian Nabulime Sculptures (1993-2018) Solo exhibition (2018), Courtesy of Afriart Gallery

LETTER FROM DAUDI KARUNGI, AFRIART GALLERY

Three words I would use to describe Dr Lilian Nabulime's sculptures would be abstract, nostalgic and craftsmanship — or in this case, "womanship." The size and complexity of some of these pieces will definitely get you rethinking formerly popularised stereotypes about sculpture being a manly trade. In addition, Lillian notably portrays a fond mastery with wood carving as a technique while adding metallic detailing to her sculptures in recent series as well. Much of her work is recognisably figurative. I would categorise it as abstract for the most part, owing to the fact that you usually can't quite make out obvious tangible meanings until you read about the work. From a perspective of thoughts that come along with the common idea of "African art," Lillian's sculptures give off the allure of typical tribal art; for instance, the tribal masks from much earlier art collections taken from Western and Central Africa during the colonial age.

This could be because it's primarily fashioned from wood and also of recent terracotta and clay. These are examples of media that is a vivid reminder of traditional techniques of sculpture like carving and moulding. The stylised manner in which she portrays human forms reverberates a kind of crude yet rather expressive way of execution.

The contemporary art scene today is undoubtedly jam-packed with fresh faces

and exciting new content that it's quite easy to get lost in the commotion. From the classical times to the modern art age to what finally metamorphosed into the twentieth century's contemporary sculptural movement, the art world has witnessed an interesting revolution over the years.

This current movement has allowed for the reinvention of art forms, characteristics and materials. Nowadays, sculptures can be made of anything and everything and with the introduction of installation art, many eager artists are taking advantage of this to produce mediocre art enveloped in heaps and heaps of "conceptual expressive narratives." In my opinion, the art world may be losing something. Craftsmanship is slowly being eroded and replaced by work that is too simplistic. However, Lilian hasn't strayed far from where she started off back in the early 1990s.

Aside from exhibiting an understanding of wood carving as a technique, Lilian's works manage to preserve an original sense of traditional sculptural forms from the time of her genesis. Walking into her studio definitely triggers feelings of nostalgia of an earlier form of sculptural rooting in Uganda. This could be attributed to the aesthetic conventions that prevailed at the time when she attained her art education. The discipline that comes with maintaining a particular style without succumbing to external pressures of "what is trending" or "what is selling" is another trait Lilian possesses as an artist. This also makes her work identifiable anywhere in the world. Although, it also makes us question whether growth is really about identifiability and consistency at the expense of physical evolution. But then again, evolution can surface in conceptual form rather than the obvious tangible evidence.

In comparison, her figurative approach of rendering faces notably shares a keen resemblance with sculptures by artist Babirye Leilah, who also happens to have gone to the School of Industrial and Fine Arts at Makerere University 20 years after Lilian started lecturing there. However, while Babirye exhibits a more adventurous character as an artist, Lilian tends to maintain a conservative nature. This could be attributed to the methodologies used. Whilst Babirye greatly utilises power tools, Lilian works primarily with manual tools such as the mallet and chisel to execute her works. It is important to acknowledge both artists because whereas one uses a futuristic, "modern" approach that reflects the technological change we have realised over the years, the other preserves the roots of the discipline whilst also bringing back appreciation for attention to detail.

Thematically, however, I must say that it has taken a gradual twist from years of doing "art for art's sake" to a more conceptual approach. Then, she made art that was indeed rich in aesthetic but somewhat lacking in depth. However, this was a time

when aesthetic was the prevailing order of the day. In those years, people bought art mainly for decorating spaces. Lilian's works today don't just stand out because she's a female artist who has managed to remain relevant while traversing male dominated spaces. The representation of societal issues has notably become of great importance in the art world. As we speak, collectors are buying stories as well as the actual art itself. Lilian remains relevant because of the decision to use art as an avenue for communicating social issues. Her HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns coupled with COVID-19 inspired miniature clay series that both kicked off from personal experiences earn her a position in today's contemporary art world mainly because of the expressionism and conceptualism.

My experience in the art world has taught me that being an artist is a gamble of sorts. As human beings, we often lean towards the familiar road because it seems safer or more reasonable. "We feel content and safe within the confines of the world we understand." It thus takes a certain degree of mental freedom to choose the unconventional road. That said, it is rare that a female artist not only creates but excels continually and consistently without succumbing to the weight of the almost inescapable gender-based responsibilities that come with family life at some point. I have had the opportunity to not only observe but mentor several female artists and I must say that women in art are constantly faced with the dilemma of choosing their responsibility as a caregiver and their either "nature-prescribed" or societal dictated roles over themselves. As if that isn't enough, being a female Black African artist is something else altogether.

Even though we have made significant strides here and there as a continent, Africa is still on the slow and strenuous path to open-minded thinking and acceptance of women in art spaces. Being a Black African female artist is surely something worthy of applause because for centuries Black people have had to scuffle for their place in the world, even though this is currently changing. Choosing to give back knowledge by being a lecturer at the university that formed her, whilst being all these other things, should be celebrated even more. It shows commitment. Lilian is one of those female Black African and indeed Ugandan artists that have beaten the odds beyond reasonable doubt.

Daudi Karungi, Afriart Gallery

Karungi studied at the Margaret Trowell School of Industrial and Fine Arts at Makerere University, Kampala and founded Afriart Gallery (AAG) in 2002. In 2007, he co-founded START — a journal of arts and culture criticism, Kampala Arts Trust (KART) — a coalition of artists and art appreciators in the country and elsewhere, working towards the dream of making art an integral part of Ugandan society.



*Dr Lilian Nabulime in front of Unity (2004), Devonshire Building, University of Newcastle,
Courtesy of Dr Lilian Mary Nabulime*

DR. LILIAN MARY NABULIME

Born 1963, in Kampala, Uganda.

BA, Makerere University

MA, Makerere University, "Tree Roots as Source of Inspiration for Sculpture"

PhD, Newcastle University, UK, "The Role of Sculptural Forms as a Communication Tool in Relation to the Lives and Experiences of Women with HIV/AIDS in Uganda"

Artist and Senior Lecturer, Department of Fine Art, Makerere University

Lives and works in Kampala, Uganda

Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 2022** UNSETTLED, Zwartzusters Monastery, Antwerp, Belgium
- 2020** Sculptures inspired by domes in Jerusalem, African Gallery, Tel-Aviv, Israel
- 2018** Sculptures (1993-2018) by Dr Lilian M Nabulime, Afriart Gallery, Kampala, Uganda
- 2018** Sculpture exhibition, Vernissage, Skulptur at Kulturhuset Fregatten, Sweden
- 2017** 'Dreams and Consequences' Makerere campus girls' views of womanhood and HIV/AIDS. Makerere Art Gallery, Kampala, Uganda

- 2015** Art in the Office, KfW Office, Kampala
- 2014** Wood: Artistic Exploration, Makerere University Art Gallery
- 2014** Arts in Public Health for Global Benefit, Candy Land Gallery, Stockholm, Sweden
- 2011** Sculptural Figures Reflected on Daily Experiences, Makerere University School of Fine Art Gallery
- 2009** Sculptural Expressions: Women and HIV/AIDS, Makerere University School of Fine Art Gallery
- 2006** Sculpture and HIV/AIDS, Heddal Welfare, Norway
- 2006** Sculptures, Samisk Kultursenter, Hattfjelldal, Norway
- 2004** Letters to Women, Bergen Museum, Norway
- 2004** Lilian Nabulime Sculpture, The English Martyrs Art Gallery, Hartlepool, UK
- 1997** Sculpture, Glasgow School of Art, Scotland
- 1994** Sculptures, Gallery of Contemporary East African Art, National Museum of Kenya

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2021** N'ezikookolima Christmas Collective Exhibition, Seyna Artgallery
- 2021** The Art of Bronze Casting, The Makerere Art Gallery, Kampala, Uganda
- 2020** My Mother Is Forgetting My Face, Entrée, Bergen, Norway
- 2019** Seniority First, Afriart Gallery, Kampala, Uganda
- 2019** Embodiment of Reason, Uganda Museum
- 2018** Africa Now: Contemporary Art by African Women, Trenton Museum Society, USA

- 2016** Reproduction, Uganda House, Uganda High Commission, London
- 2015** Spirit Africa: Films and Art Festival, Reginald F.Lewis Museum, Baltimore, USA
- 2013** 2 ND International Exhibition, The Institute of National Museums of Rwanda
- 2013** Celebration of Women Through Art, Promega Spring Art, Wisconsin, USA
- 2012** KLA ART 012, Kampala Contemporary Art Festival, Kampala, Uganda
- 2010** Change their World Through Art: Contemporary African Women Artists Use their Artistic Voice to Mobilise Their Communities, University of Maryland, USA
- 2007/08** East African Exhibition, travelling exhibition through multiple spaces in Denmark
- 2005** Multiple Project, City Library, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK
- 2004** The 2004 Postgraduate Fine Art Degree Exhibition, Hatton Gallery, Newcastle University, UK
- 2002** Rhythms Dots, Stories and Skylines Exhibition, The Beacon Whitehaven, Cumbria, UK
- 2001** Art as Communication, Promega BioPharmace Centre Madison, Wisconsin, USA
- 2000** Progress of World's Women, United Nations, NY, USA
- 1998** Global Reflections: Nine Women Artists, United Nations Art Gallery, Bonn, Germany
- 1997** Celebrating Scotland Africa 1997, Royal Scottish Academy, The Mound, Edinburgh, UK
- 1995** Africus, Johannesburg Biennale, South Africa
- 1994** Sculptures, Gallery of Contemporary East African Art, National Museum, Kenya

Selected Writings and Papers

McEwan, C., Nabulime, L.M., and Szblewska L. (2022). The meaning of masks in the COVID-19 pandemic: A comparative study of depictions of mask-wearing. In: Public Visual Arts in Sub-Saharan Africa and the UK. British Academy. (Manuscript submitted for publication)

Burton, A., Nabulime, L.M., Newbery, R., Richter, P., Tibaingana, A., and Wilkinson, A. (2021), Making a living through and for visual artists in East Africa. In: Hracs, B.J., and Comunian, R. (Eds.), Developing Creative Economies in Africa Spaces and Working Practices. Lauren, England.

Scoping New Opportunities for Artists by Prof. Andrew Burton Newcastle University and Dr Lilian M Nabulime, CEDAT, Makerere University, Conference on Understanding and Supporting Creative Economies in Africa, 14 November 2019 at the Anatomy Museum, King's Collage London, UK.

Nabulime, L.M. and McEwan, C. (2017). Using art to fight HIV/AIDS in Uganda. In: Polly Stupples, P. and Teaiwa, K. (Eds.), Contemporary Perspectives in Art and International Development. NY: Routledge Studies in Culture and Development.

Sculptures Developed from Found Materials in Relation to HIV/AIDS (Environment and Natural Resources Management), Mbarara University of Science and Technology, 12th Annual Research Dissemination Conference 2016. Theme: "Research and Innovation: A Global Need for Sustainable Development", Uganda.

Nabulime, L.M. (2014) Bypassing Literacy Using Sculptural Forms/Household Objects as a Communication Tool in the Fight against HIV/AIDS – Practical Manual Guide (<http://cedat.mak.ac.ug/publications/bypassing-literacy-using-sculptural-forms>)

Sculptures That Fight Taboos to Communicate HIV/AIDS Awareness to Women with Low Levels of Literacy. Arts in public health for global benefit, Art as medium – A pedagogical method to promote global public health and active learning. At Karolinska Institute, Sweden, 14 May 2014

McEwan, C. and Nabulime, L.M. (July 2011). Art as social practice: Transforming lives using sculpture in HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention in Uganda. Cultural Geography Journal, 18 (3): 275 – 296.

Nabulime, L.M. (June 2011). Sculptural forms as strategy for HIV/AIDS education inspired by women living with HIV/AIDS. Contemporary Africa Review (Pan-African Analytical Monthly), Thirty Years of African Struggles against HIV/AIDS (16).

Nabulime, L.M. (2007). Sculpture as a tool in the awareness of HIV/AIDS among Ugandan women. In: Motherhood – Imagining Ourselves, International Museum of Women, USA.

Residencies and Awards

Artist's residency, Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Tel-Aviv and Codudi Center Dec 2019-Jan 2020

Residency Award Mind Power Projects – MICA (Maryland Institute College of Art).

Commonwealth Fellowship, Durham, UK, 2012

Robert Sterling Fellowship, Vermont Studio Center, USA, 2011

African Stones Talk Sculpture Symposium, Kenya, 2011

British Academy Visiting Fellowship, Durham, UK, 2009

Royal Overseas League Travel Fellowship, UK, 2008

Commonwealth Fellowship, Glasgow School of Art, Scotland.



WORKS



Ancestors, 1991
Wood, 150 x 100 x 80 cm





Ancestors, 1991 (Detail)



Byalimana, 1991
Wood, 40 x 40 x 60 cm



Thoughtful-mask, 1992
Fogged copper, 26 x 31 x 14 cm



Musicians, 1996
Wood, aluminium and copper, 200 x 50 x 50 cm

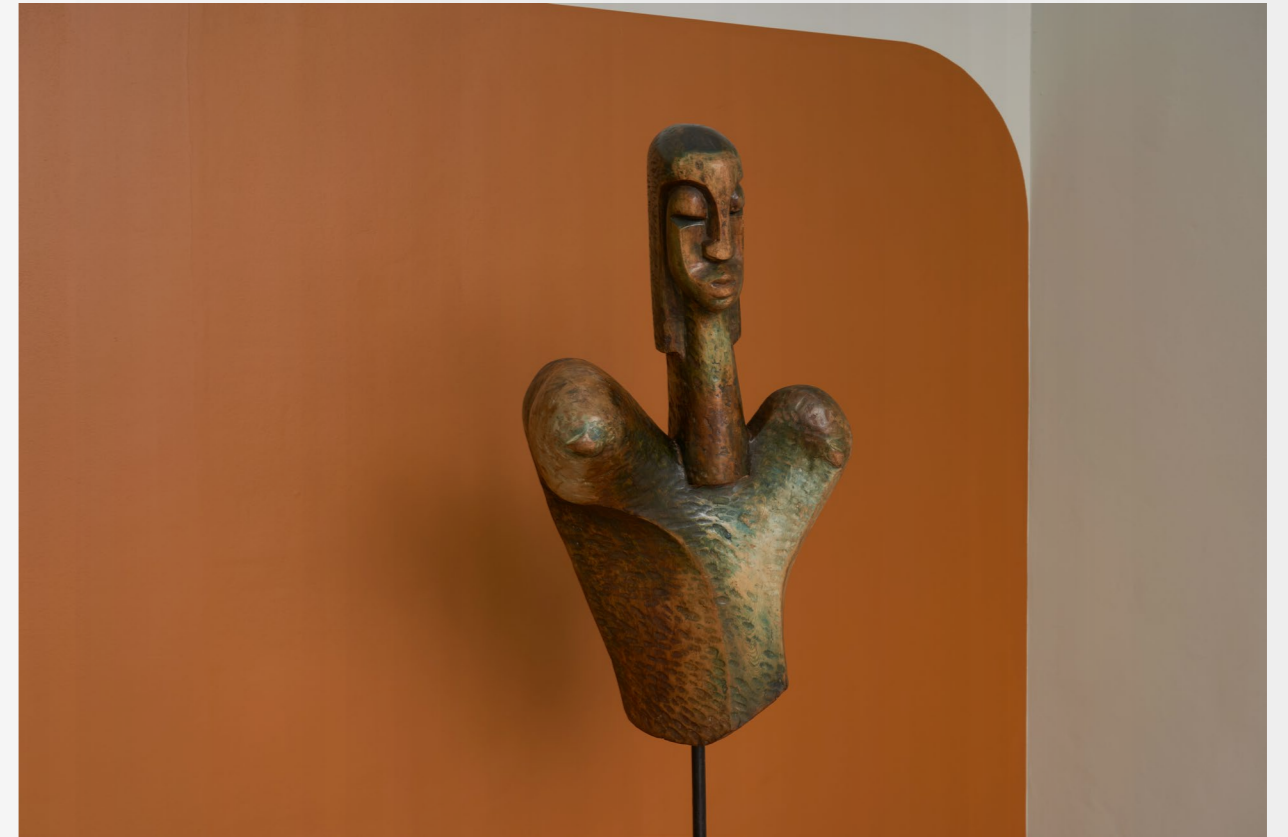


Love, 1998
Oil on canvas, 64 x 39 cm





Angel, 1998
Installation view from exhibition *My Mother is Forgetting My Face* at Entrée (2020), Photo Entrée, Bent René Synnevåg.



Angel, 1998 (detail)
Installation view from exhibition *My Mother is Forgetting My Face* at Entrée (2020), Photo Entrée, Bent René Synnevåg.



The Struggle To Live, 2002-04
Wood, steel, copper plates, rope and nails, 177 x 35 x 11 cm.



The Struggle To Live (Detail), 2002-04



Male and Female Soap Sculptures, 2003-04
Soap embedded with cowrie shells, seeds
Male 8 x 8 x 4 cm, Female 6.5 x 5 x 5 cm



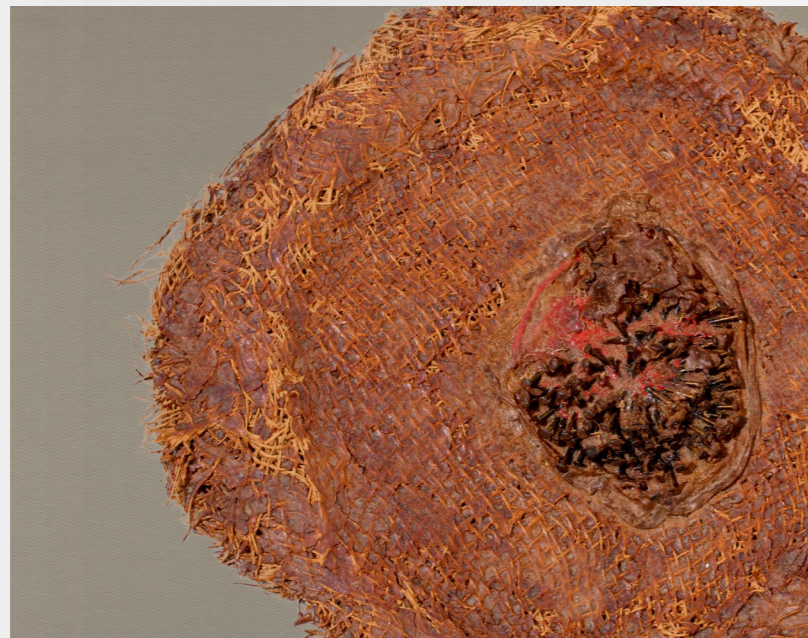
Shattered Lives (Detail), 2003



Shattered Lives, 2003
Wooden table, copper boilers, mirrors, broken glass, 122 x 122 x 60 cm,
Courtesy of Martha Kuzungu, photo Miriam Watsemba

Winnowing, 2002-2004
Scrim, wood, cowrie shells, latex, broken mirrors, groundnuts,
168 x 125 x 125 cm





Winnowing (Detail), 2002-04





Vulnerability (installation) – The Rumormongers, 2003-2004
Basketry made of scrim, colour, nails, latex, foil and food wrapping, 30 cm wide each



Drip, 2002-04
Plastic tubes, papier-mache, cord, wood, modelling stand, 70 x 70 x 70



Twisted Woman, 2008
Wood, 150 x 50 x 50 cm, Courtesy of Dr Lilian Mary Nabulime



Mortar and Pestle, 2002-04
Wood, Copper plates and nuts, 57 x 50 x 150 cm

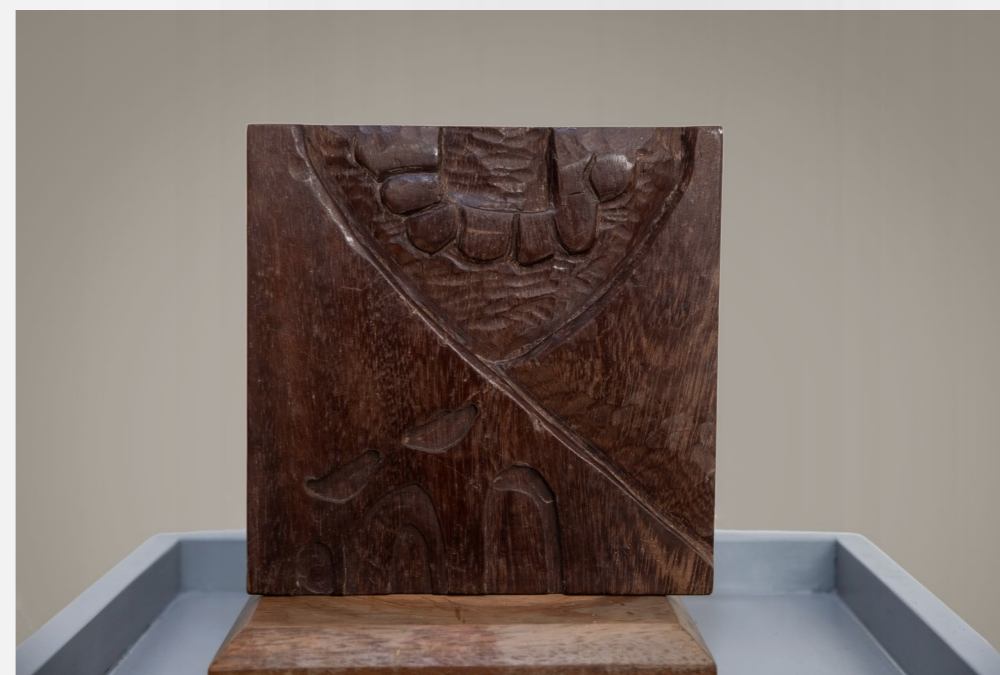


Sunshine (In memory of Edward Kitaka RIP 2005) 2010
Oil on canvas, 84 x 64 cm





Silent Music, 2010
Wood, 20.5 x 20.5 x 2.3 cm



Landscape, 2011
Wood, 20 x 20 x 3 cm

Feminine, 2011
Wood and Copper, 50 x 55 x 165 cm



Masculine, 2011
Wood, 31 x 61.5 x 185 cm



Maama, 2011
Wood, 120 x 64 x 66 cm

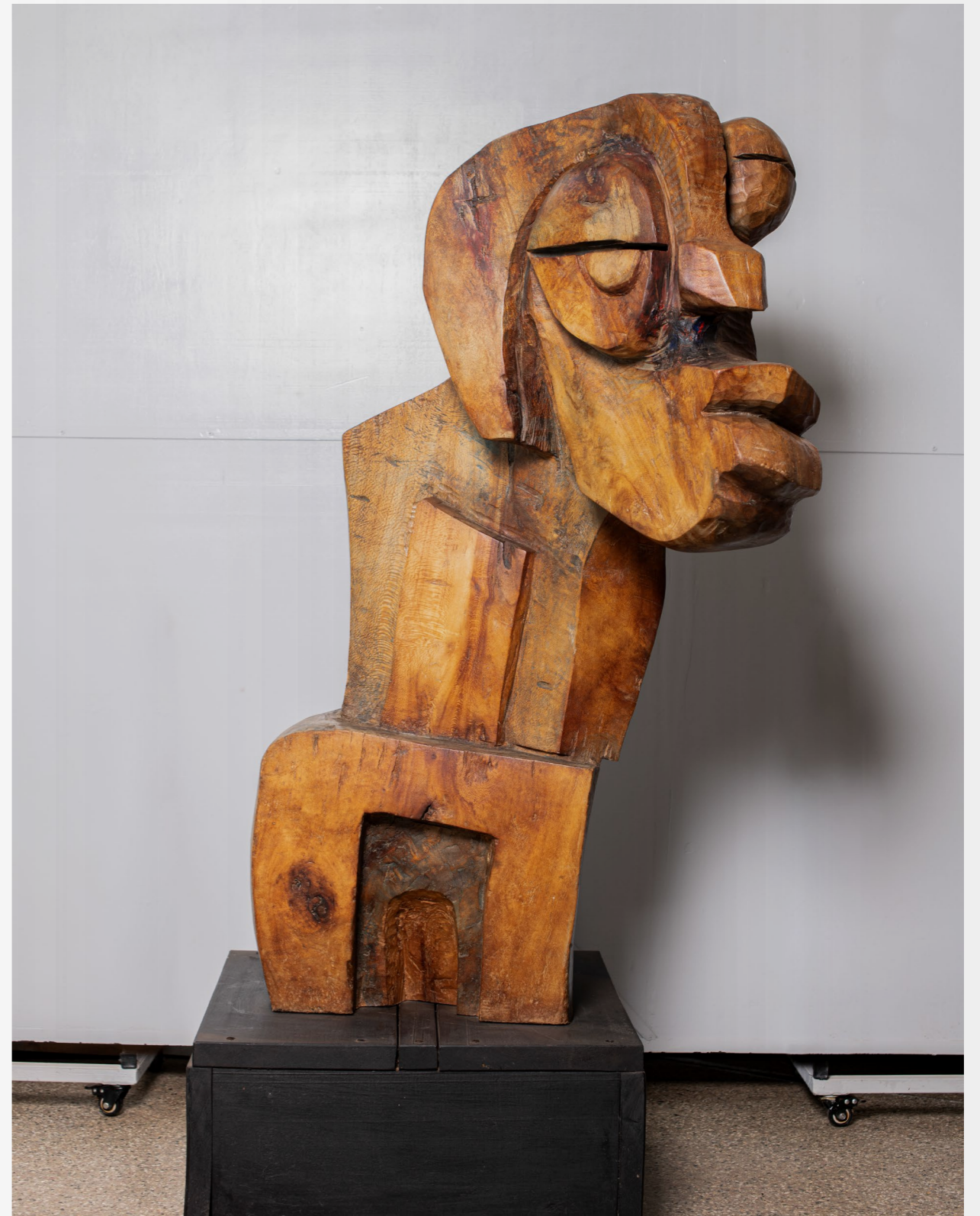




Torch, 2014
Wood, 120 x 69 x 67 cm



Ssebo, 2011
Wood, 156 x 210 x 90 cm



Guardian, 2014
Wood and Metal, 69 x 136 x 153.5 cm



Women in Discussion, 2014
Wood, 153 x 24 x 15 cm; 133 x 23 x 14 cm; 145 x 22 x 12 cm





Bulime (Hoe), 2015
Wood, 55.2 x 8.5 x 30 cm



Eavesdropping, 2015
Wood, 43 x 30 x 8 cm



Dialogue, 2015
Wood, 43 x 35 x 8 cm



Discussion, 2015
Wood, 93 x 41 x 11 cm



Beauty, 2015
Wood, aluminium,
130 x 40 x 20 cm



Madam, 2015
Wood, aluminium,
140 x 40 x 10 cm



Youthful, 2015
Wood, aluminium,
125 x 30 x 10 cm



Sharon Namubiru (my daughter), 2015
Wood, aluminium,
150 x 35 x 15 cm



Namata, 2015
Wood, aluminium,
145 x 35 x 10 cm



Beauty, 2015
Wood, aluminium,
120 x 34 x 10 cm

Three Gossipers, 2015
Terracotta, 19 x 8 x 6 cm



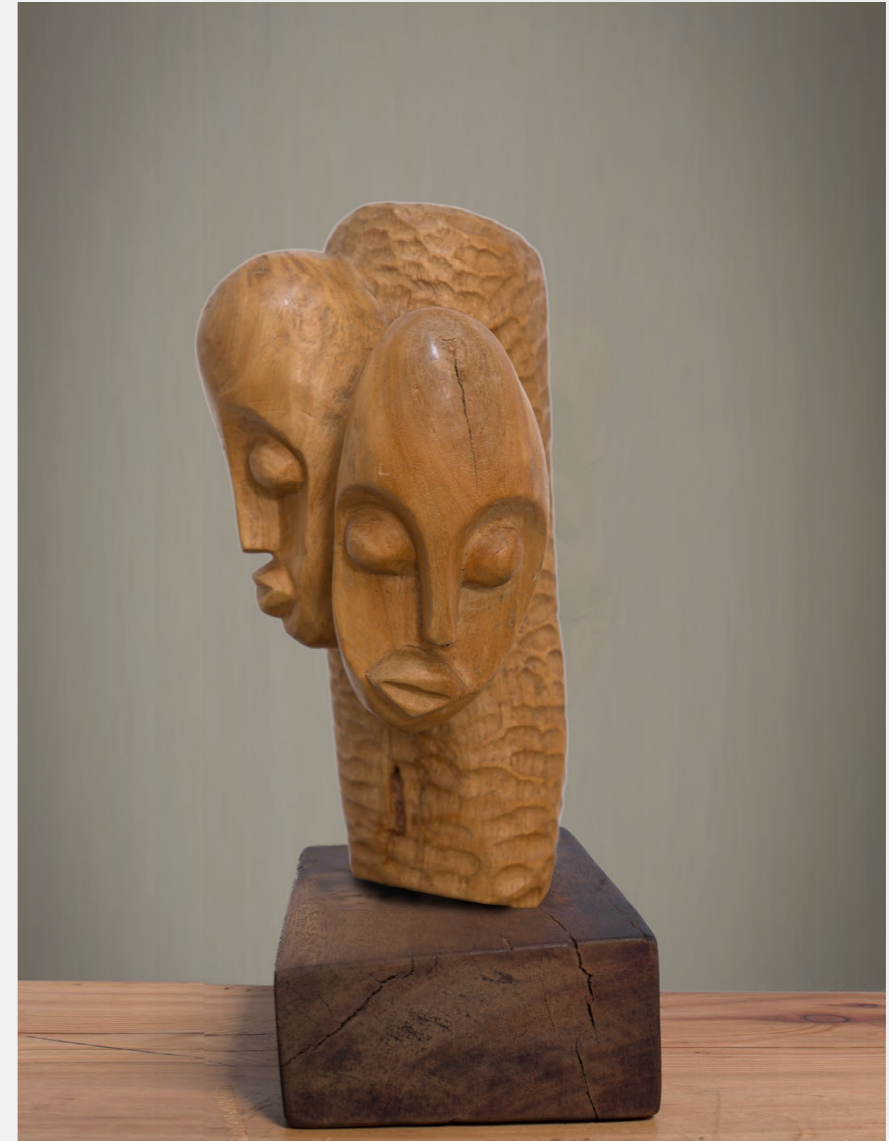


Three Gossipers, 2015
Terracotta, 19 x 8 x 6 cm





Humble, 2017
Coffee tree root, 46 x 24 x 12 cm



Friendship Double, 2017
Wood, 30 x 20 x 20 cm



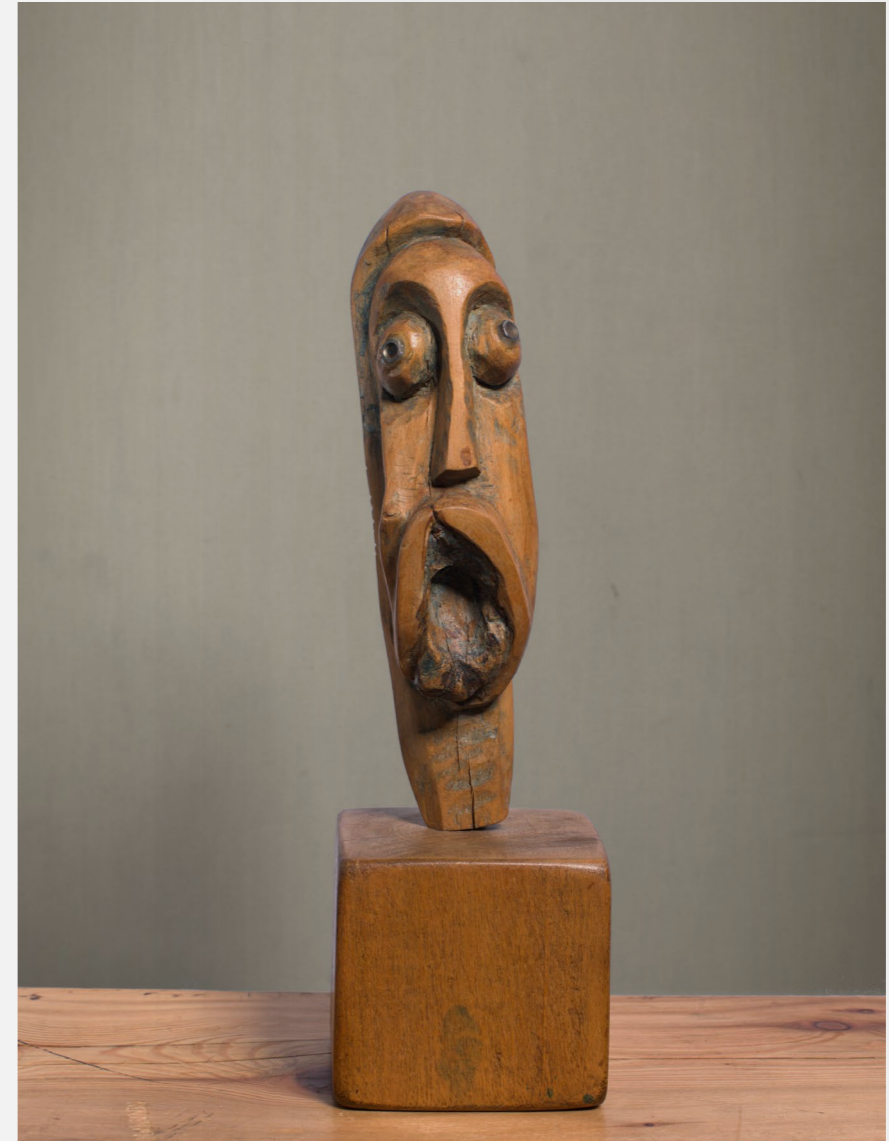
Struggle, 2017
Wood, 40 x 15 x 15 cm



Happy Soul, 2017
Wood, coffee stumps, 30 x 15 x 25 cm



Elegance, 2017,
Wood, 40 x 10 x 10 cm



Gossiper, 2017,
Wood, ink, 30 x 10 x 10 cm

Empowered, 2016-17
Wood, 36.5 x 66 x 133 cm





Expression series, 2017
Terracotta, 15 x 10 x 10 cm





Expression series, 2017
Terracotta, 15 x 10 x 10 cm





Expression series, 2017
Terracotta, 15 x 10 x 10 cm

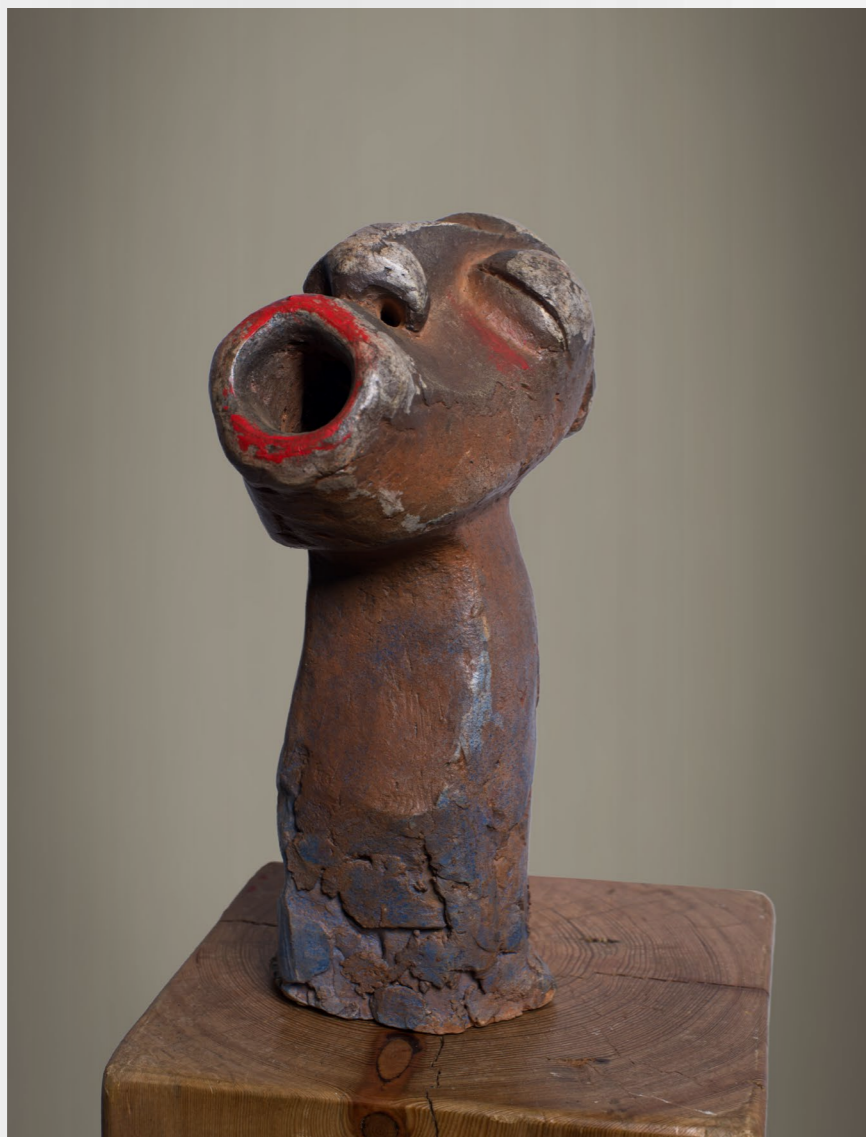


Confident, 2016-17
Musizi Wood, 31.5 x 41 x 131 cm

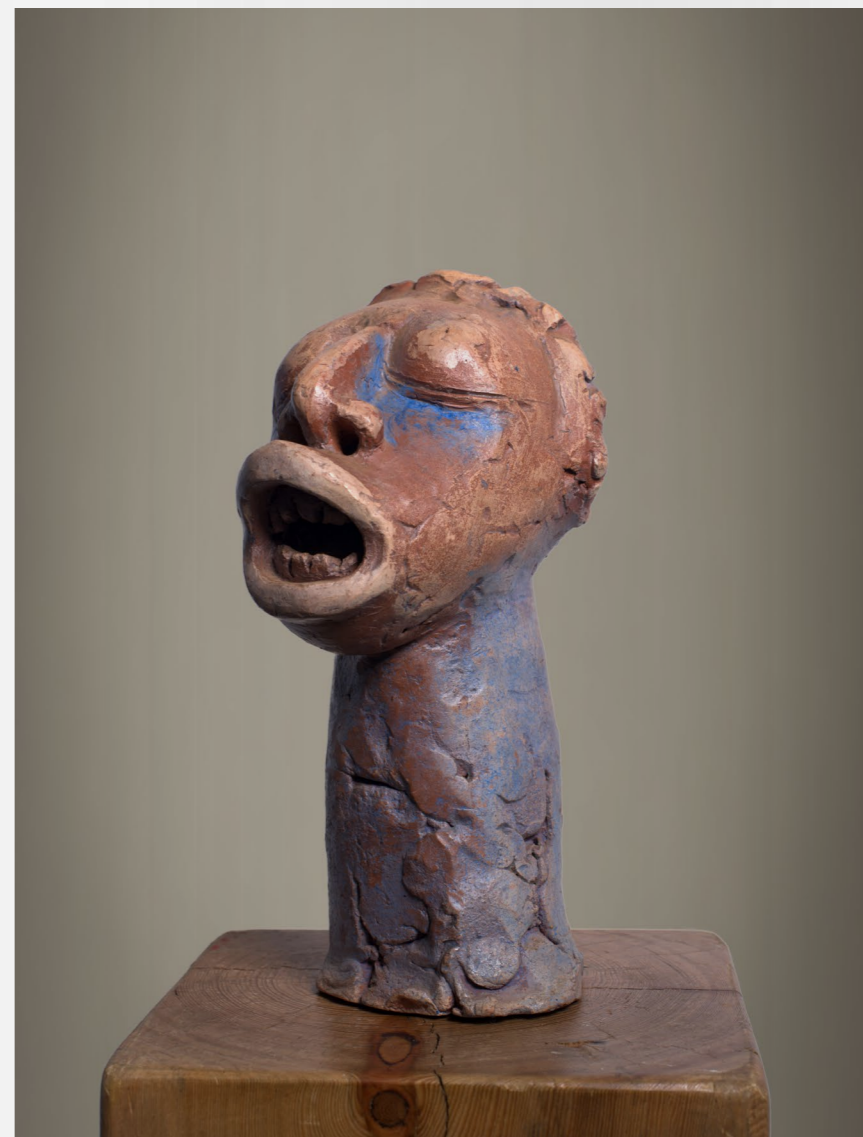


Mother 2016 -17
Wood and aluminum cans, 164 x 32 x 11cm





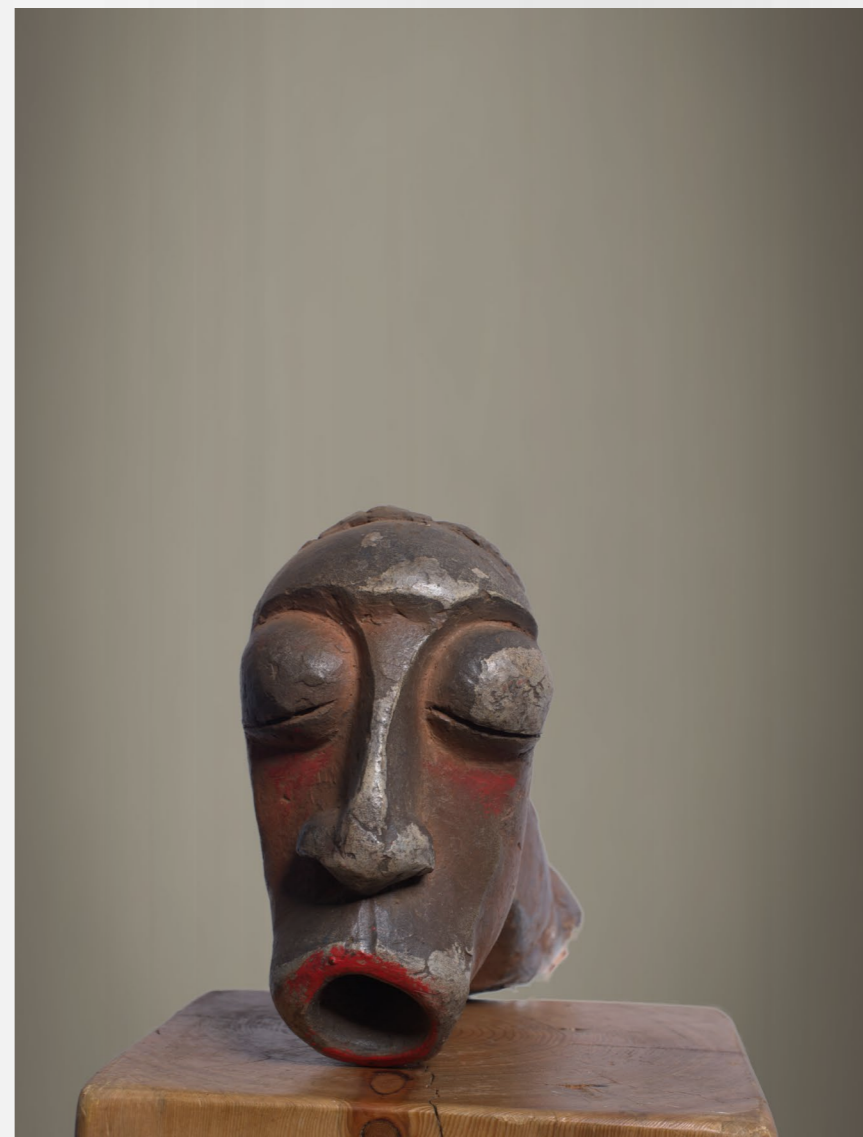
The Rumormongers (Series 2), 2018
Terracotta, 25 x 20 x 10 cm



The Rumormongers (Series 2), 2018
Terracotta, 30 x 18 x 13 cm



The Rumormongers (Series 2), 2018
Terracotta, 30 x 10 x 10 cm



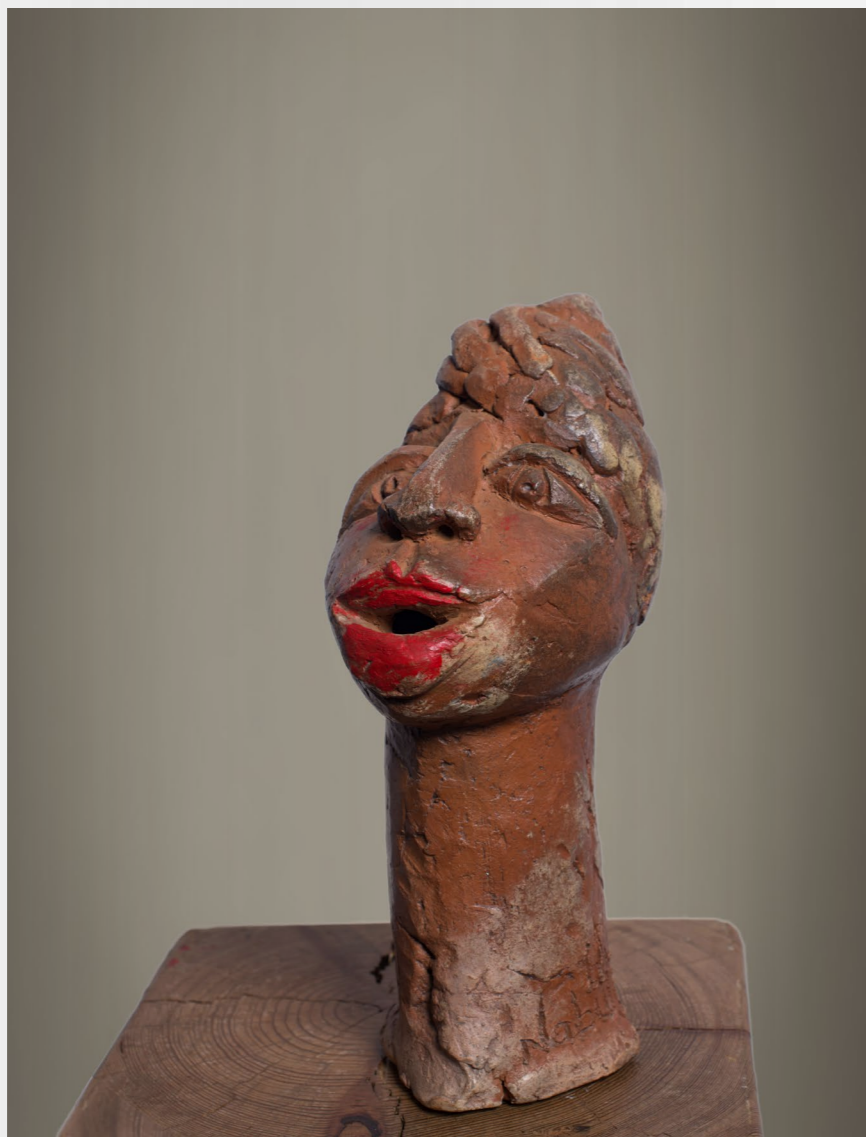
The Rumormongers (Series 2) 2018
Terracotta, 25 x 15 x 15 cm



The Rumormongers (Series 2), 2018
Terracotta, 25 x 10 x 10 cm



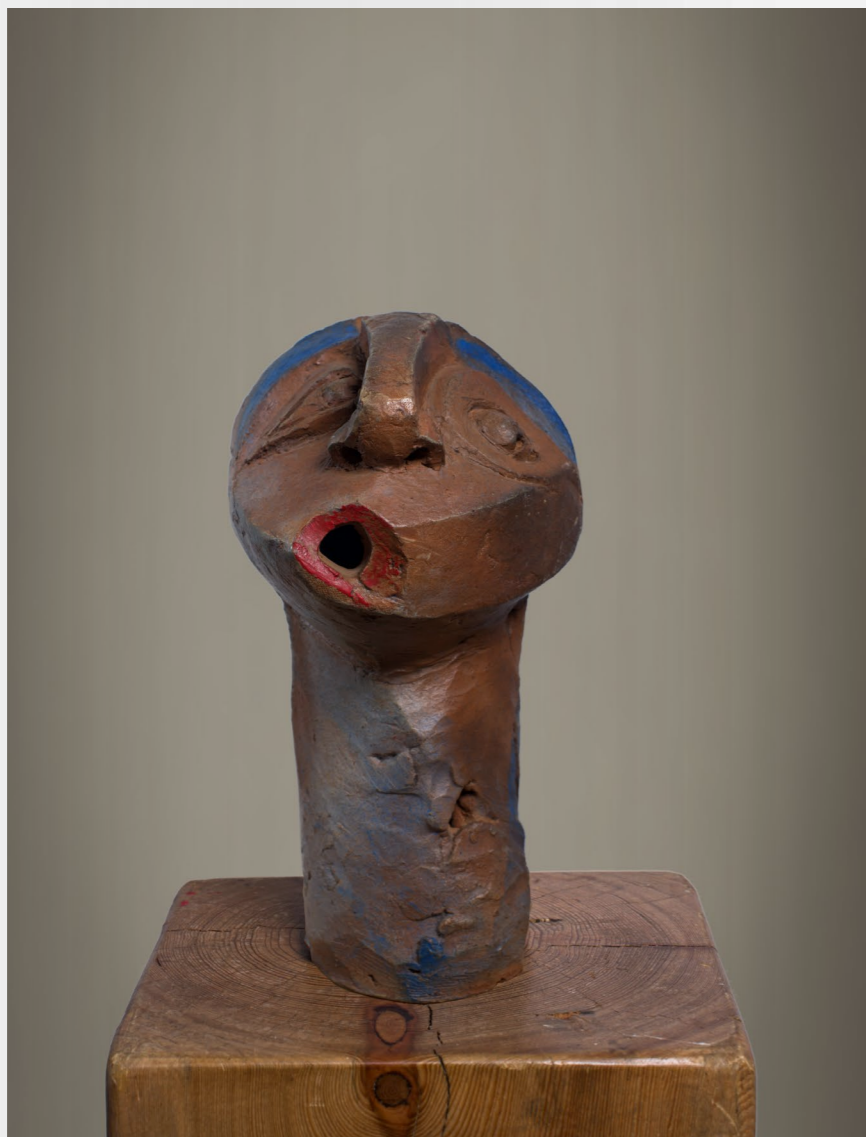
The Rumormongers (Series 2), 2018
Terracotta, 25 x 10 x 10 cm



The Rumormongers (Series 2) 2018
Terracotta, 25 x 15 x 15 cm



The Rumormongers (Series 2), 2018
Terracotta, 13 x 15 x 15 cm



The Rumormongers (Series 2) 2018
Terracotta, 25 x 15 x 15 cm



Fun, 2018
Wood and aluminium cans,
64 x 29 x 2.5 cm

Courage, 2016-17
Wood and Metal, 49 x 49 x 151 cm





Agnes, 2019
Wood, 71 x 20 x 20 cm



Pretty, 2019
Wood, 63 x 20 x 20 cm

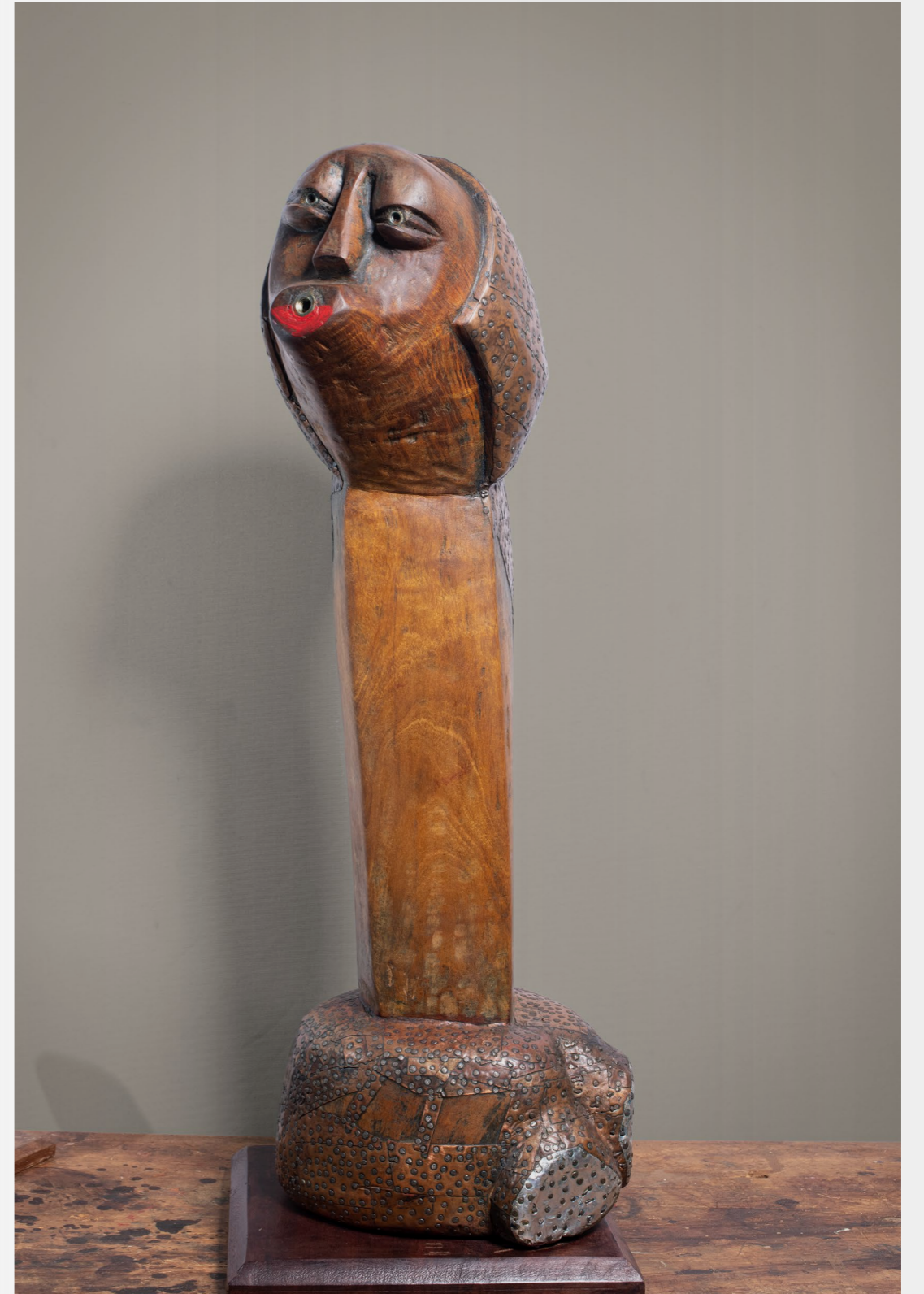


Edna, 2019
Wood, Aluminium, 70 x 70 x 20 cm



Toppie, 2019
Wood, 68 x 20 x 20 cm

Mob, 2019
Wood, aluminium and copper sheets, 78 x 27 x 27 cm





Banakyalo Villagers, 2019
Terracotta, 15 x 10 x 10 cm



Keeping Safe from Covid-19, 2020
Terracotta, 15 x 10 x 10 cm



Keeping Safe from Covid 19, 2020
Terracotta

Mother, 2020
Wood and Aluminium cans, 64 x 29 x 2.5 cm





Mzee, 2015
Wood and metal, 60 x 30 x 3 cm

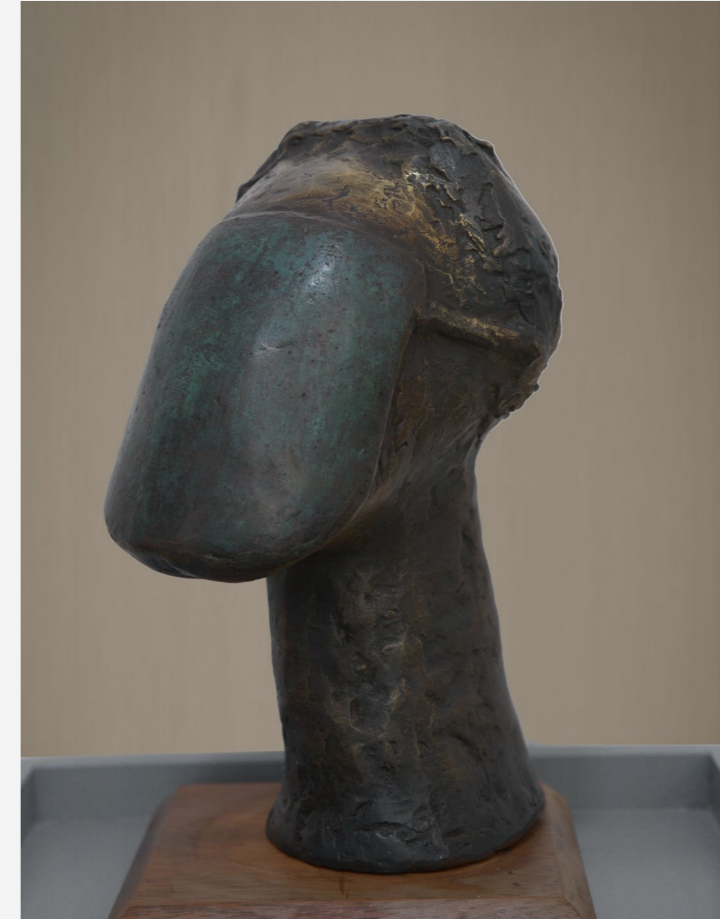


Whistling, 2010
Wood and metal, 60 x 30 x 30 cm

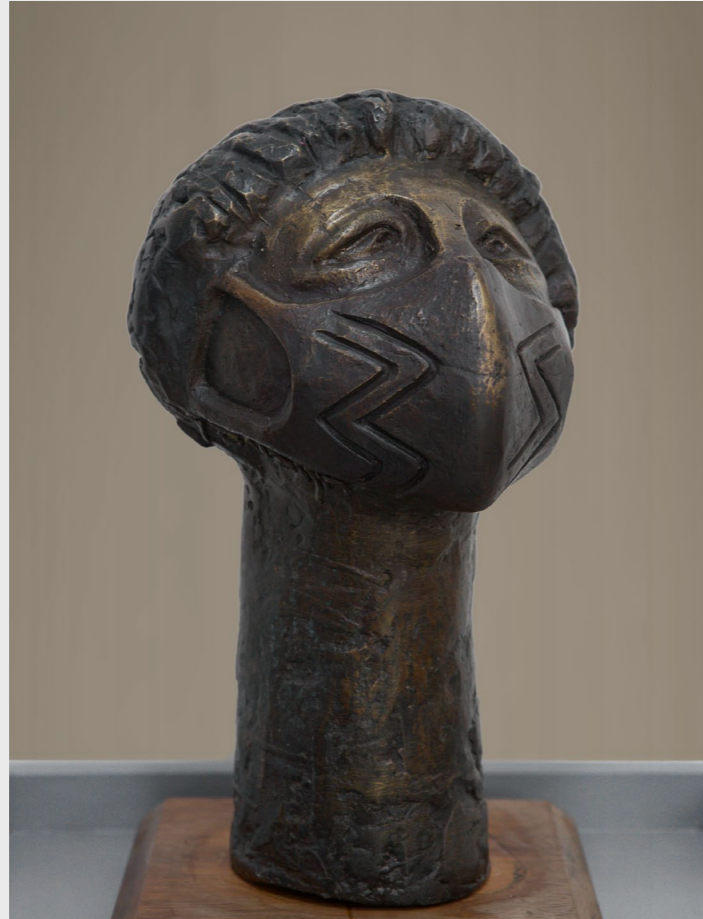




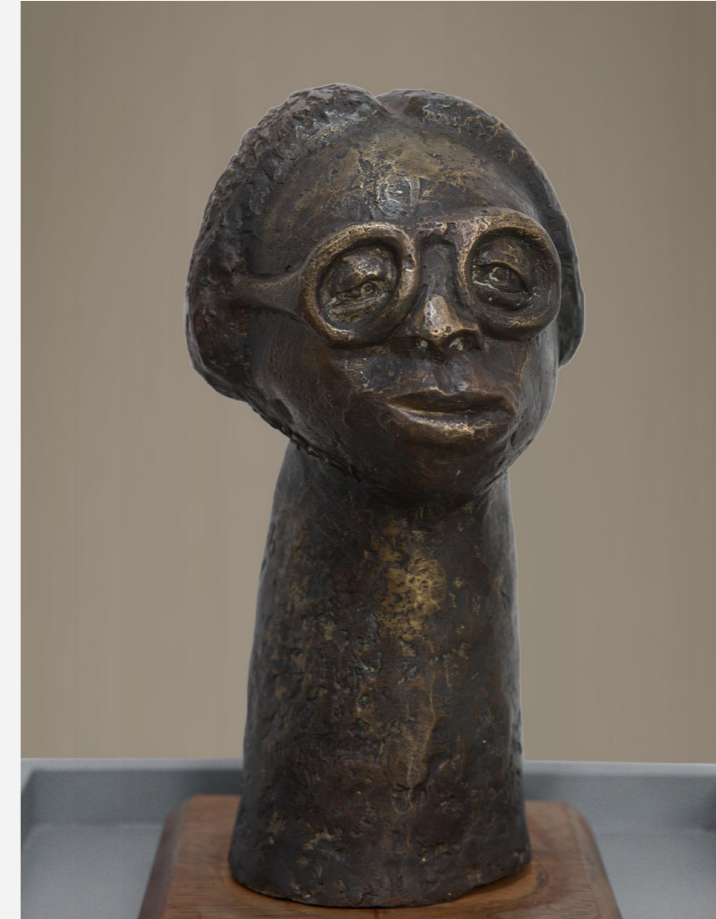
Relax with a Mask - Covid Series, 2021
Bronze, 32 x 23 x 18 cm



Protected - Covid Series, 2021
Bronze, 32 x 21 x 19 cm

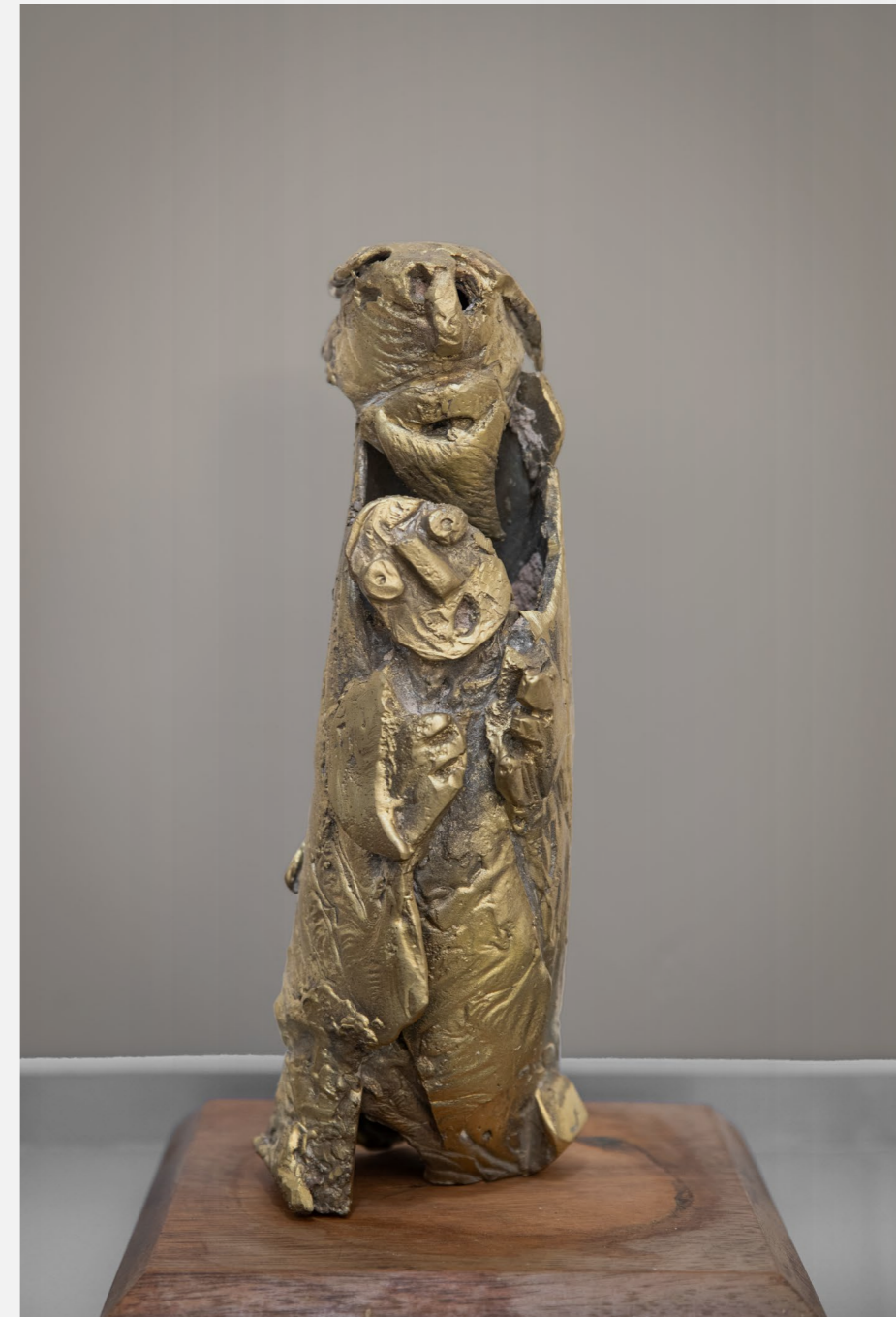


Masking - Covid Series, 2021
Bronze, 32 x 21 x 22 cm



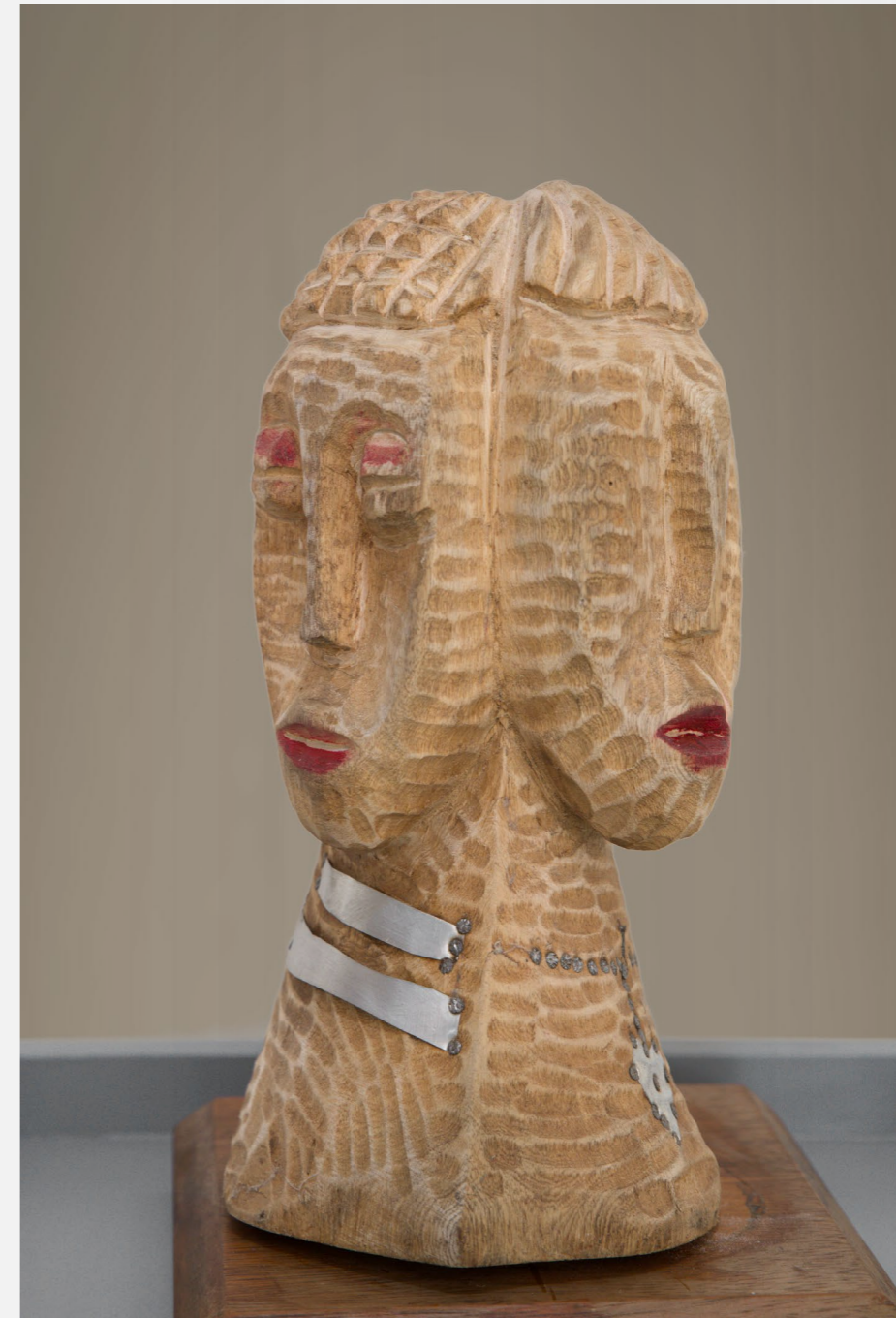
Mask Free - Covid Series, 2021
Bronze, 33 x 20 x 20 cm

Father and Son, 2021
Bronze, 30 x 12 x 11 cm





Mapengu triptych, 2022,
Wood, 153 x 41 x 7 cm



Friendship Tripple, 2022
Wood and Aluminium, 30 x 16 x 15 cm

Almas Art Foundation (AAF) is a London based non-profit organisation that is committed to celebrating the invaluable contributions made by African and African diaspora artists to Modern and contemporary visual arts.

AAF aims to present and create an awareness for the practices of established and mid-career African and African diaspora artists through a programme of publications, exhibitions and films, documenting these artists' practices for a new generation of African artists, scholars and the wider international art community.

AAF aims to foster collaborations with emerging artists, curators and writers to support the arts ecosystem in Africa and facilitate residencies through partnerships with universities, institutions and independent initiatives.





Nabulime is distinctive as an artist whose practice is concerned with traditional and contemporary sculptural values, but who also engages directly with pressing social issues. Since 2001 she has been developing a body of work that addresses taboos and stigmas around HIV/AIDS - a project that began during her doctoral studies at Newcastle University. Her understanding of the value and importance of art within society is subtle and profound.

- Professor Andrew Burton, Newcastle University

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