

ESTHER MAHLANGU

BID NOW

1. *untitled*, 2017

Acrylic on canvas
31.5 in. x 38.38 in / 80 cm. x 100 cm.

2. *untitled*, 2017

Acrylic on canvas
31 in. x 39 in. / 78.74 cm. x 99 cm.

Dr. Esther Mahlangu (b. 1935) is the globally acclaimed visual artist and much-loved cultural ambassador of the Ndebele nation. Now 89, she has made a valuable contribution to contemporary art for over seven decades.

Arguably South Africa's most globally known visual artist, Esther Mahlangu's innovative and disruptive spirit, and willingness to travel and collaborate with celebrities, global brands, museums, and the like, has resulted in a large following that extends way beyond the art sector.

Esther Mahlangu is one of a few visual artists who has successfully managed to bridge the "traditional" and "contemporary" art worlds. While remaining deeply rooted in her traditional Ndebele culture, she is also a "woman of the world" who has spent considerable amounts of time working in many of the world's greatest cities. Taught the design principles of the Ndebele nation by her mother and grandmother when she was only 10 years old, she reimagined these designs, which were typically reserved for the decoration of houses, to more contemporary platforms.

This has allowed her to expose her artworks to large global audiences, which in turn has generated extensive exposure resulting in an almost pop icon-type status, which few visual artists have been able to attain.

Dr. Mahlangu's valuable contribution has not gone unnoticed. She has received multiple commendations, including three honorary doctorates; the rank of Officer of the Order of Arts and Letters, France's prestigious cultural distinction; recognition as a Living Legend and induction into South Africa's Gallery of Legends; and numerous others.

Her artworks grace many of the world's most respected museums, corporate, and private collections, and many experts believe that no serious African contemporary art collection can be considered complete without one of her artworks. Even at this advanced stage in her career, Dr. Mahlangu continues to reinvent her practice with a willingness to explore new collaborations and new media. Dr. Mahlangu's global success is a powerful inspiration to us all of what can be achieved through talent, commitment, and determination despite enormous challenges.

Courtesy of Larry Warsh

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