INTRODUCTION

There is an extraordinarily rich archive of publications about Malangatana Ngwenya, Mozambique’s most celebrated artist. Most of this archive is in Portuguese. There is a fairly even spread of these texts between those produced for Mozambican and Portuguese audiences, but there are also texts produced in Brazil, and to a lesser extent, Macau and Angola. In comparison, there is a far less substantive body of literature in English, produced principally for publics in the USA, the UK, as well as Nigeria, South Africa, Zimbabwe and India. There are several texts in German, as well as in Spanish, Italian, Bulgarian, Czech, Swedish, and Finnish.

Overall, the most numerous types of publications featuring Malangatana are exhibition catalogues, as well as items in the popular press. There are a modest handful of items that can be considered academic studies. Notably, there is not a single monograph whose text can be unequivocally considered to be book-length. In this sense, the state of publications on Malangatana bears similarities with other notable African ‘pioneer’ modernists, although few of his peers, if any, can match the sheer volume of items published on the artist.

Malangatana’s catalogues are not only numerous, they are a major source of information on the artist. Catalogues for solo exhibitions provide an almost complete record of individual expositions, of which there were at least 60 during his lifetime.1 Several of these catalogues include significant essays about the artist. International group shows are fairly well represented through catalogues, although, in general, they provide little substantive commentary about the artist.2 From the perspective of a study of Malangatana, the principal value of these international catalogues is in highlighting his dominance of Mozambican art in global contexts. In contrast, comparatively few group exhibitions in Mozambique produced catalogues and many group shows are poorly documented.3 Apart from providing an incomplete record of exhibitions, the production quality of catalogues for national group expositions is noticeably below that of the other categories of catalogues identified here.

Despite what may initially appear to be the limited intellectual value of Malangatana’s Mozambican group catalogues, an analysis of this unassuming body of texts introduces

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1. There are numerous published lists of Malangatana’s exhibitions. None can be considered comprehensive and most, perhaps all, contain inaccuracies and unclear information. If one excludes additional venues for touring exhibitions the number drops to at least 50. The overwhelming number of solo exhibitions were held abroad, mostly in Portugal.

2. Malangatana featured in at least 120 group exhibitions internationally during his lifetime. Excluding touring exhibitions, the number exceeds 100.

3. Malangatana participated in at least 80 group shows in Mozambique, or at least 70 if one excludes touring exhibits. Just over one third of these exhibitions appear to have produced catalogues.
observations that are harder to discern from the vast body of literature on the artist. Through a close reading, where book design and omissions are accorded as much emphasis as recorded statements, a very particular account emerges of the artist and his relationship to his peers as well as to his Mozambican public. More than other sources, catalogues for national group exhibitions provide direct evidence of major sources of patronage and support for the visual arts in Mozambique. Notwithstanding their incompleteness as a record, existing catalogues enable one to chart exhibition trends in Mozambique over five decades. By scrutinising these publications it becomes possible to identify critical positions assumed by and assigned to Malangatana in the framing of Mozambican art.

**THE COLONIAL PERIOD**

Malangatana’s participation in national group shows during the colonial period was infrequent. It seems that only two of these exhibitions produced catalogues. Their timing, in 1962 and 1969, brackets periods of limited visibility for the artist in Mozambique, both in terms of exhibitions and press coverage.

The two colonial catalogues are modest productions, offering no introductory essays or remarks. The first, in 1962, does little more than list awards and winners, record the titles of works exhibited, and supply short biographies of artists. The second, a more substantial document, was produced to commemorate colonial history in 1969 and featured a benign, child-like image of Vasco da Gama on the cover. Here the contents, produced with the active cooperation of (the local art association) Núcleo de Art, elaborate on the earlier template. The exclusivity of the event is stressed by boldly declaring details of the number of artists and works accepted from the total number of submissions, and the jury, comprising mostly of local architects, is identified. Each artist received two pages, one for a brief biography and listing of their works, the other for an image in black and white. Malangatana’s biography is useful for providing information on international exhibits that appear to have hitherto not been reported on in the local press. There is also a list of prices.

As will become evident in this analysis, from the outset Mozambican group catalogues, through both overt and implicit symbolic language, display signs that differentiate Malangatana from his contemporaries.
peers and associates. Most obviously, these include the acknowledgment of his award in 1962 for excellence in painting, *de facto* recognised by the initiated as the principal award.\(^\text{10}\) He is thus not one of four winners, but the real winner. Seemingly, this distinction came with limited effort on Malangatana’s part as he entered less works (one) than most other contributors, and he was the only artist to submit an untitled piece.\(^\text{11}\) In contrast, his biography is longer than most, as he was already able to claim several group shows\(^\text{12}\) and solo exhibits.\(^\text{13}\) In the second catalogue, over two thirds of works are offered for sale. This excludes the three by Malangatana, which we are told belong to an unidentified private collection.\(^\text{14}\) Thus, unlike artists who are exhibiting work at least partially with the intention to sell, Malangatana manages to communicate at a very early stage that he is operating at a more elite level. His presence adds value to the exhibition because he is not reliant on sales from local group exhibitions.

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\(^{\text{10}}\) The listing of the four categories of painting, sculpture, drawing and watercolour/gouache is neither arbitrary nor alphabetical. It reflects an unspoken consensus regarding the relative importance of these forms. Later, in post-independence revolutionary Mozambique, sculpture will be privileged, at least temporarily, with comparatively minor forms (never painting) listed last.

\(^{\text{11}}\) It is possible that the absence of a title was an act of self-censorship, given that his work was increasingly assuming a critical character.

\(^{\text{12}}\) Lourenço Marques, Cape Town, and Salisbury.

\(^{\text{13}}\) Lourenço Marques, Ibadan, and Oshogbo.

\(^{\text{14}}\) This suggests that Malangatana’s works were entered on his behalf, probably by Guedes.

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**POST-INDEPENDENCE**

Following independence, Malangatana’s exhibitions in Mozambique comprised almost entirely of group shows until his retrospective in 1986, at which point his participation in such exhibitions dropped noticeably.
From 1976 onwards, catalogues of Malangatana’s Mozambican group shows reflect three principal forms of patronage, namely that of the state/party; parastatal and corporate sponsorship; and international funding channelled through foreign agencies based in Mozambique. That these sources of patronage emerge sequentially reflects political developments in Mozambique, as well as changing perceptions of art’s place in society. A comparative analysis of the catalogues produced within these different regimes reveals much of the national context within which Malangatana was claiming space for himself as an artist, as well as of the process of his framing as a symbol of Mozambican art and culture.

**OFFICIAL EXHIBITIONS**

Official exhibitions were mostly commemorative, marking anniversaries of national independence,\(^{15}\) as well as events linked to the activities of Frelimo.\(^{16}\) The catalogues for these early exhibitions break from the colonial exhibitions by discarding the competitive character that was central. The 1975, 1976 and 1977 catalogues commemorating independence also dispense with artist biographies and at a glance are little more than lists of works with incomplete captions and prices. The non-competitive character of these exhibitions and non-individualist, no frills presentation of their catalogues communicate the new socialist politics, although a close reading serves to highlight tensions and areas of contestation.

The 1975 and 1976 exhibition is titled *Arte Popular.* The wooden sculpture on the cover of the 1976 catalogue resembles a genre commonly identified by its ethnic identity: Makonde.\(^{17}\) What we are witnessing here is a conscious attempt to link the visual arts to indigenous culture. Coming at a time when the revolutionary credentials of intellectuals, including Malangatana, were under scrutiny by the Frelimo leadership, it was necessary to legitimate visual arts expression as authentically ‘Mozambican’, ‘of the people’. Consequently, the supremacy of painting is challenged for the first time by sculpture, most of it by ‘unknown’ (Makonde) artists, and the popular agenda is realised through the sheer number of works exhibited, a clear departure from the exclusionary, adjudicated premise of the colonial exhibits.\(^{18}\) Notwithstanding this ideological repositioning of art, the autonomy of individual, established art forms is maintained, with separate categories listed, in order: painting, drawing, batik, sculpture, ceramics.

Interestingly, whilst bourgeois individualism and elitism was suppressed in revolutionary Mozambique, the potential for the artworks to function as commercial commodities was entertained. Pages are devoted to price lists, but there is not a single sentence to articulate an ideological position for art in the service of revolution, although the signs, evident in the choice of title and cover image as well as in the omission of biographical information, indicate that such a discourse was at work.

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15. Exhibition catalogues were produced for independence celebrations as well as for the first (1976), second (1977), and tenth (1985) anniversaries of independence.
18. The breakdown of genres in the 1976 catalogue is revealing, with functional art forms negligibly represented, in contrast to the 1975 exhibition.
Further evidence of a struggle to re-position art can be detected in the second catalogue (1977).\(^{19}\) Again, there is no bold proclamation of revolutionary intent and only a slight catalogue to interpret. This itself is significant. The state commits modest resources but, as a close reading reveals, a vital, critical discourse is taking place for those directly affected. The cover, with its undistinguished design (no image on the cover, only typed text, neatly ordered), understated title (Exposição de Arte), and identification of location as an official heritage site for art (National Museum of Art) marks a shift in framing from the first exhibition. It is particularly significant that, within the space of a year, the concept of popular art has been relegated from its overarching position to simply one of several art forms. Notably, its listing (on the cover) is grouped along with other categories that are typically not associated with the fine arts, namely arts and crafts, manual works and children’s drawings. There is what appears to be a deliberate spacing between these ‘non-specialist’ categories and those presented literally above them: painting, sculpture, drawing and batik.\(^{20}\) There is thus a deliberate attempt to present a broad, inclusive range of material as art, simultaneous to a process of differentiation and hierarchical order that quietly affirms a more conservative distinction between the work of professional artists and amateurs.

By 1981, this trend towards recognizing art as the work of a class of specialised producers becomes more evident. For the first time, there is a catalogue for an official exhibition that is not tied to a particular political event. Titled Artistas de Moçambique, the catalogue was produced by the Ministry of Education and Culture, where Malangatana was employed.\(^{21}\) The title crystalises a concept linking individual practitioners (artistas) to their national identity, and would become the standard concept and title for official exhibitions abroad for years to come. Consistent with this shift, we find biographies included for the first time since the colonial era. There are also illustrations and, another first for the new regime, a modest introductory essay (nota breve). No author is identified, suggesting a privileging of a collective consensus. The content to this essay makes clear some of the ideological debates about the role of art that were inferred in earlier catalogues. It begins with a strong affirmation of sculpture as the art form most appropriate for the new nation because of its links to earlier, indigenous traditions. However, in a sign of who was winning this battle, the essay ends with a strong validation of painting, for having played a critical role in the colonial period and for being the site of a current struggle to articulate a new Mozambican identity.\(^{22}\) Popular, functional art forms have receded from this space, not to return.\(^{23}\)

\(^{20}\) Batik occupies an enigmatic space, bridging easel painting and functional art. Sculpture has moved up the list, and ceramics has disappeared as a category, probably assimilated into one of the second tier categories.
\(^{22}\) The main points are: wood sculpture is the form of plastic art with the strongest links to popular culture, and thus the most relevant form in the contemporary context. Sculpture had its roots in magical and religious rituals, as well as decorative and functional objects. The colonials had negated and oppressed the existence of national culture but despite this, painting and sculpture developed as forms of resistance, satirising colonialism and portraying peoples’ suffering. With the commencement of the armed struggle for national liberation, culture began to play an important role in challenging traditionalism and colonial culture. Artists began to develop new forms to give expression to the values of a new society. Significantly, while the notes begin with a strong emphasis on sculpture, they end with a brief discussion of painting, affirming its richness and diversity and commenting on the predominance of social themes, reflecting the struggle between old and new values. Despite this emphasis on sculpture the catalogue groups art under two headings: paintings and drawings, with sculpture listed under painting. While most likely an oversight, it reveals the struggle for dominance fought at this time, typically personified as rivalry between two leading protagonists namely Malangatana (painter) and Chissano (sculptor), the two visual artists who were later issued with diplomatic passports.
\(^{23}\) A similar trend occurred in South Africa in the late-apartheid period, when ‘inclusive’ exhibitions curated as part of the culture of resistance featured ‘crafts’ and ‘media’ along with ‘fine’ arts, but by 1994 this trend had receded.
By the time of the tenth anniversary of independence (1985), we see the consecration of the victory of the professionals. In foregrounding the exhibition as ‘plastic arts’ (the term conventionally used by Portuguese speakers to denote what in English is usually called fine or visual arts), we have by now arrived at the dawn of a new era, trumpeted the following year by the official opening of Malangatana’s first retrospective exhibition at the National Museum of Art. Again, details are revealing: a painting graces the cover of an official catalogue and there are colour illustrations. The cropped, ‘artistic’ format of the catalogue, last seen in the colonial era, has returned.

That the 1985 exhibition heralds the normative framing of successive exhibitions as plastic arts is seen in the subsequent catalogues for commemorative expositions for the tenth anniversary of the National Organisation of Journalists (ONJ) in 1988, an event that falls between official, state funded exhibitions and that of civil society, and the fifth Frelimo congress (1989). The ONJ catalogue, with its overtly Africanised painting of big breasted African women on the cover, is notable for its inclusion of a carefully considered, essay (unaccredited, as per the convention) that links the intellectual work of journalists and artists. No specific examples are discussed, but in the wake of successive clampdowns on intellectuals, under colonialism and post-independence, this solidarity is significant and will re-emerge later in Malangatana’s career.

In contrast, the Frelimo catalogue (1989) resumes the earlier tendency to privilege wood sculpture on the cover, but in a noticeable departure from its precedents (1976, 1981) chooses the work of a well known Mozambican sculptor, Chissano. The fact that it took fourteen years for an official catalogue to feature a work by a prominent artist on its cover, as well as the location of this exhibition at an art centre, demonstrates professional artists gradually gaining ground in the years following independence.

A close reading of the representation of Malangatana in official catalogues is instructive in demonstrating strategies at play to boost his revolutionary credentials, along with processes of differentiation that set him apart from his fellow artists. As with many titles in the inaugural official exhibition catalogue of 1976 (Arte Popular) the titles of Malangatana’s paintings are noticeable for their overtly political slant, suggesting the relevance of these works for the revolutionary context. In most other respects Malangatana is set apart, assuming a presence that is both dominant and superior. In 1976, he exhibited more works than any other artist, and was the only one to exhibit in three categories. While he did not numerically dominate the painting and drawing sections, he did register his popular art status by exhibiting the most number of ceramics in an admittedly poorly represented section.

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27. The 1981 cover featured an untitled work by Tobias Maucha, whom we learn nothing about apart from his birthdate (1956).
28. Malangatana exhibited five paintings, five drawings and four ceramics.
29. Samate also shows five paintings and José Julio shows more drawings (six).
30. There were only two other ceramicists, including his early mentor Augusto Cabral.
By comparison, titles in 1977’s Exposição de Arte were less stridently political, although strongly narrative and poetic, and the number of works contributed by Malangatana was reduced to nine (four paintings, three drawings and two batiks). Once again, while not numerically dominating individual sections, he was the most visible artist and the only one to contribute in three categories. The switch from ceramics to batik is interesting, as it allowed him to sustain the projection of a semblance of applied, functional art as part of his repertoire.

The pricing of Malangatana’s works also signaled his seniority in these two early exhibitions. As with the colonial group shows, his paintings were not offered for sale, although only two were identified as belonging to private collectors. In contrast, four of his (untitled) drawings were priced in 1976, well above those of his co-exhibitors and at higher prices than most the 79 paintings on sale. In 1977, drawings (again untitled) were also offered for sale, their prices up by 50%, a dramatic increase unmatched by any of his fellow exhibitors. His batiks were perhaps less commanding, with one priced at a third of his drawings, lower than other batiks on sale, and the second batik listed as belonging to the artist’s own collection.

Malangatana’s domination of official catalogues continued in the 1981 Artistas de Mocambique catalogue, where he was also the oldest artist featured. With categories now limited to painting, sculpture and drawing, Malangatana was allocated nearly two pages, dwarfing his co-exhibitors with four works illustrated and a biography that listed exhibitions in no less than 19 countries. Notably, information asserting his revolutionary credentials was also included.

By the time of the 1985, 1988 and 1989 Artes Plasticas exhibitions there is a more measured representation of Malangatana. This decline is deceptive, as it is clearly linked to the emphasis placed on his international career, which was receiving official support. Numerically, he is one of the least prominent artists in the 1985 exhibition with only two works. Moreover, he received a standard one-page entry in the catalogue, dominated by a colour illustration of a piece provocatively titled Cale-te (Shut up). Four works are listed in the 1988 ONJ catalogue, where he received one page, without illustrations. In 1989, he was allocated two pages in the Núcleo de Art exhibition commemorating the Frelimo congress. There is no information on works exhibited, other than a full-page illustration of an unidentified painting. The biography in the 1985 catalogue is notable for proclaiming his proficiency in diverse media, a theme already evident in his domination of categories in the 1976 and 1977 catalogues and subsequently, a standard feature in biographies and profiles of the artist. However, what is most striking here is the claim of his prowess as a sculptor, a positioning that perhaps reflects the contemporary jostling for authority between painting and sculpture that was a feature of the post-independence period. But, in a telling twist, we are told that he works in metal, thereby sidestepping...
any clash of egos with Chissano and simultaneously positioning him as more modern than his ‘traditionally inclined’ rival.36

Another feature of the 1985 catalogue is a gradually developing comprehensive account of Malangatana’s international career. Whereas the biographical entry in the 1981 catalogue listed countries where he had exhibited, there is a general shift towards identifying cities, which introduces some new inconsistencies.37 While the 1988 biography includes a (by now) standard biography, the 1989 version introduces some subtle distinctions.38 The most important development is that more information is provided on what are presented as his “important exhibitions”. These include several names of exhibiting venues, as well as some festival names and exhibition titles.39

A later example of what can be considered an ‘official’ exhibition occurs with the 1996 exhibition commemorating the death of President Samora Machel ten years earlier, that was held at Musart.40 With a single image, that of Machel, and a listing of works, including two by Malangatana, the catalogue echoes the stoicism of early post-independence examples, although the quality of printing and brochure-like format brings it in line with the minimalist catalogues that were produced at this time, notably by the Camoes Institute (see foreign agencies discussed below).

A similar catalogue format, although at 14 pages more generous than the commemorative Machel catalogue, was used to celebrate political independence in 2000.41 Effectively, Musart has by now assumed the national mandate and with this comes a new discourse that blends artistic and political interests. This catalogue signals a formalisation of a trend that was increasingly evident – to separate older artists as ‘masters’ from the younger generation. Again, Malangatana appears as one among the collective (in this instance the senior artists) but his placement, along with Chissano literally at the top of the page, reveals yet again how protocols influence questions of layout and display.

State funding does continue to be a feature of later exhibitions, but in less direct ways than discussed above. As the following examples will show, state funding comes through the state owned national bank, parastatals, as well as the National Museum. However, all these introduce agendas that, while still tied to national interests, represent less directly political interests than the official exhibitions of the post-independence period discussed above. As will be shown, differentiating these sources does introduce new inflections in the kinds of publications produced, and the work Malangatana performs within them.

36. There are no subsequent claims of his prowess as a sculptor until he produced monumental work in the 1990s.
37. For the first time, reference is made to a group exhibit in Algiers. Beira and Nampula are seemingly not worth noting, but Maputo is. Also excluded are Cape Town, along with any Indian or Pakistani cities that he may have exhibited in.
38. The insertion of the village of Marracuene, along with the customary reference to the District of Matalana, is one of the earliest assertions of his local identity. While cities are named for group shows, Lisbon graduates to Portugal, presumably reflecting his increasing success in the former metropole. His growing status at home is reflected in the addition of the fact that he now has work in the National Museum of Art in Maputo. His colonial era Mozambican awards are left out, but his obscure Italian award is retained.
EXPOSIÇÃO DE ARTE POPULAR

CELEBRAÇÕES DA INDEPENDÊNCIA
31 A 29 DE JUNHO DE 1975

MOÇAMBIQUE

arte popular

1º aniversário da independência de moçambique

ARTISTAS DE MOÇAMBIQUE

1981

MINISTÉRIO DA EDUCAÇÃO E CULTURA
REPUBLICA POPULAR DE MOÇAMBIQUE
**PARASTATAL SPONSORSHIP**

Parastatal sponsorship becomes an important feature in the 1990s, principally through Telecomunicações de Moçambique (TDM), acting in partnership with the National Museum of Art (Musart). This new trend began in 1991 with the commemorative exhibition for ten years of TDM. TDM sponsored exhibitions at Musart subsequently took the form of a national *biennal* and since 1997, they have jointly organised these events. Malangatana participated in the first four of these exhibitions. An analysis of their catalogues shows how he used new, evolving conditions to consolidate his position as Mozambique’s leading artist. The organisers mobilised his stature to endorse the new format, which has since evolved into a platform for emerging and less established artists.

That a new set of rules was emerging can be seen in the covers of the first three TDM catalogues, which privilege the company logo. Unlike earlier catalogues, where there were either no introductory remarks or they were not attributed to an identifiable authority, here we have messages from the TDM president. These two signs of a new dispensation are modestly presented in the inaugural catalogue, and noticeably enlarged by the subsequent version.

The 1993 version, the first biennial exhibition, also includes a second text, from an unnamed “group coordinator”. The non-identification of the author echoes the earlier trend to privilege the collective voice, and indeed several similarities and differences between the form and content of earlier official catalogues and TDM catalogues can be noted. Like the first colonial catalogue (1962) and early postcolonial catalogues (1976, 1977), the inaugural TDM catalogue (1991) is not illustrated. As with all preceding catalogues, the TDM publications tend to not discuss the works featured in the exhibition, offering at best broad generalised statements about Mozambican art and artists. Following the established conventions, content centres on brief artist biographies and lists of works. A slight improvement in scholarship can be observed in that full details of works are supplied.

As with official catalogues, preceding and following independence, the early TDM catalogues demonstrate a gradual but steady improvement in quality. Colour images become a consistent feature in 1993. By 1995 the catalogue comprised 113 pages, an unprecedented length for a group catalogue in Mozambique. The most important intervention evident in these catalogues, since the 1993 publication, is the decision to feature invited artists. These were invariably senior figures, their inclusion introducing an elite component to an otherwise open format where artists submitted work for consideration by a jury. The effect of this strategy was to formally stratify the field, signalling that the future role of the biennial would be in giving exposure to emerging artists, whilst simultaneously affirming the masters.

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45. Artists’ names, titles of works and identification of media are consistently accompanied by dates and dimensions.
The evolution from TDM biennial exhibitions at Musart to an annual exhibition jointly organised by the two parties took place in 1997. The use of an artwork on the cover, alongside logos of the two entities, communicates this shift. Several features evident in the earlier TDM catalogues remain evident. The collaboration called for ‘official’ messages from the national museum and TDM. More importantly, the exhibition format that distinguished between works approved from submissions and works by senior invited artists was retained.

It can be observed that Malangatana’s art does not appear on any TDM catalogue covers and that between 1993 and 1997, he was allocated the same number of pages as his fellow invited artists. Despite this relatively low-key representation, his superior status is affirmed. In the first, unillustrated catalogue (1991), he dominates numerically, with twice as many works (eight) as the next best represented artist and through the comparative length of his biography. Between 1993 and 1997, he was the only participant who was consistently presented as an invited artist. At first he shared this honour with Chissano, effectively consolidating their position as leaders and rivals. In the following biennial (1995) the two acclaimed masters were joined by other senior figures jointly constituting an elite class, but Chissano is absent in 1997. With Chissano not featured in the 1997 exhibition, there is something of an echo of the earlier power struggle that was evident in the official catalogues, with Malangatana emerging as the singular giant of Mozambican art.

The space allocated for his illustrations and his biography, which becomes increasingly informative, although not without intriguing omissions, errors and unverified claims, capture Malangatana’s dominance. While assertions of the artist’s position as a leading African artist had been made earlier, notably by Guedes and Beier in 1961, the 1993 catalogue was the first semi-official publication to declare this dominance, although the

48. Idasse Tembe.
49. Painters Bertina, Naguib and Samate; and ceramic sculptor Reinata.
50. In the 1993 catalogue, all of Malangatana’s works are illustrated, in colour, with full captions. In the 1995 and 1997 catalogues, he receives two pages, the same as the other invited artists, with one of his works featured full page in colour.
51. The TDM catalogues progressively introduce new biographical content about Malangatana. The 1993 entry was the most comprehensive account to have appeared in a local group catalogue. It includes reference to his early years, before turning professional. The expanded 1995 version is identical to the updated version that appeared in the *Concurso* catalogue earlier in the year (see exhibitions sponsored by foreign agencies), apart from a short introductory narrative that included reference to sculpture along with his many other media. The 1997 version is even more substantial. It provides more detail on various childhood and adolescent roles, perhaps the first published biography to claim his apprenticeship to a healer. His political credentials are emphasised, with reference to his imprisonment by the colonial authorities and his political participation post-independence. His contributions to the art sector are also highlighted, including the founding of the National Museum and the revival of Núcleo de Art. His role in civic society is asserted by referencing him as one of the founders of the national peace movement and in developing a cultural centre at Matalana. Locations for his numerous murals are identified, and his command of multiple visual art forms are claimed, including sculpture. His poetic achievements are also cited, as well as his prowess in performing and making music.
52. In 1993, tapestries are included in his list of media but there is no mention of sculpture.
53. In 1991, there is an erroneous reference to his work being in the collection of “M’Bari de Osogbo”. This refers to his work being exhibited at the Mbari Club in Osogbo, there is no Mbari collection in Osogbo.
54. The 1991, biography refers to a solo exhibition in the USA. The 1993 version informs readers that he held a solo exhibit at the UN in New York, between 1962 and 1964. The UN exhibition is also listed in the 1997 catalogue, along with a solo exhibition in Washington, a claim I have not seen elsewhere. While it is possible that Malangatana has held a solo exhibition in the USA, this has yet to be confirmed.
interesting choice of description as a ‘painter’ was out of step with his horizontal domination of media in post-independence catalogues, and neatly sidestepped any need to compare his stature with that of Chissano.56

With his stature secured, and the TDM/Musart exhibitions increasingly taking on a developmental character, Malangatana’s absence in subsequent TDM catalogues might reflect his having outgrown the project. Indeed, it is only in 2007 – when TDM exhibits its collection – that he reappears in their catalogues.57 Once again, the representation of the artist balances an understatement of his seniority; he does not feature on the cover and like all the artists featured, he is represented by one work. Nonetheless, the double-spread reproduction of his painting in the centre of the catalogue signals his eminence. While this could be defended on purely aesthetic grounds, as the horizontal format of the work justifies this treatment, this practical consideration conveniently supports the tendency to distinguish Malangatana from his fellow Mozambican artists.

56. In the 1993 biography, readers are informed that many do not only consider him Mozambique’s greatest painter (my emphasis) but also Africa’s.

### BANKING SECTOR PATRONAGE

Two banks, with very different mandates, have funded exhibitions and catalogues to commemorate their own history. In 2007, BCI Fomentos Bank, Mozambique’s second largest bank, dominated by Portuguese capital, celebrated ten years of existence in collaboration with Musart. That the bank’s entry into art patronage was tentative can be seen in that many of the works featured were loaned from other collections. These included the painting by Malangatana that came from the Musart collection. The small booklet contains several noteworthy features, including a short essay by identifiable authors (national archivist Antonio Sopa and bank executive Magid Osman), and fully-captioned, colour illustrations. While Malangatana’s biography is not free of errors, it departs from the customary list of achievements, breaks new ground. Instead, Sopa presents an interpretative reading of the artist, arguing that his art is a weapon against colonial assimilation. This view of the artist as a ‘visual anthropologist’ will become important in subsequent claims for his position as a public intellectual.

Three years later (2010), Banco de Moçambique celebrated its 35th anniversary with an exhibition. A non-commercial bank responsible for the national economy, the catalogue included a historical essay that surveyed the development of an art collection by the Bank. Written by Mozambique’s preeminent art historian Alda Costa, who three years previously wrote on the TDM collection for its catalogue, the essay includes commentary on priorities that need to be set. Pointing out that many of the works exhibited were not from the Bank’s collection, Costa looked for pre-independence precedents, introducing a historical perspective generally lacking in Mozambican group catalogues. The biography on Malangatana, uncredited, was at two pages longer than usual. For the first time a work by Malangatana appears on the cover of a group exhibition catalogue, although it is remarkably small in size and accompanied by ten other images.

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59. There is a bizarre reference to a “Freedance Mandela” concert at Wembley, presumably “Free Nelson Mandela”, where the artist is said to have produced a mural.

60. Sopa claims that the artist is a repository for ancient cultural traditions and a profound authority on Mozambican culture and man, whose preoccupations and yearnings, anguish and uncertainties are reflected in his works, becoming a source of research (cultural, historical, ethn-anthropological). His art is an art of symbols, codes and graphic designs, to stir communication with the public where the real and fantastic unite to reveal an African reality, populated with superstitions, myths, legends, evil and blood, through ancient spirit protagonists and occult forces (Sopa, A. *Caminhos Convergentes*. Op cit, pp. 23-240).


62. Costa includes commentary on Malangatana’s murals in colonial era, especially for banks (Ibid. p. 31).

63. The biography in this catalogue is mostly original, except for the repetition of a paragraph on international exhibitions that appeared in the BCI 2007 catalogue, including the “Freedance Mandela” Wembley concert error. Malangatana receives a third page with two works illustrated in colour (titled, but with no other information).
Caminhos Convergentes
BCI Fomentos - 10 Anos

De 16 a 30 de Agosto de 2007

Exposição de Artes Plásticas
XXXV Aniversário do Banco de Moçambique

Museu Nacional de Arte
14 Maio a 30 Junho 2010
INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES

The gradual emergence of international donors as a principal source of funding for cultural events reflects the increasing influence of international agencies in Mozambique. In general, most of the catalogues produced during this period are little more than slickly produced brochures. They introduce little new content, but in their emphasis on artists as individuals, rather than on listing works, they take up a very different position to that found in the earlier official catalogues.

An early example (1994) of foreign funded exhibition catalogues was *Objectivo Linha Aberta*, an exhibition that promoted awareness of HIV/AIDS. Funded principally by international agencies, the catalogue features a wood sculpture on the cover but has nothing to say about art. Instead there is a lengthy text on AIDS, and a listing of works by 39 artists. With a single print included, Malangatana’s contribution was lower than most. This suggests that his inclusion was more significant to legitimise the exhibition than an indication of his interest in contributing to the project.

A key organiser of *Objectivo Linha Aberta* was a self-styled ‘promoter’ of art, Dutch citizen Mark Haertjens. His hand can also be seen the following year (1995) in *Descoberta*, a national survey at Casa da Cultura do Alto-Mae, Maputo. Of all the foreign funded exhibitions and catalogues this exhibition is arguably the most important, as it aimed to be inclusive of the country as a whole, and featured established and emerging artists, as well as various art forms. It was also intended to promote Mozambican art internationally. With financial support from several international governments, as well as the parastatal Petromoc, it is clear that a whole new terrain was being mapped out and claimed, distinct from the ideologically driven ‘official’ Mozambican exhibitions of the past. At 66 pages and in colour, with a print-run of 1,500 copies, this catalogue set, albeit briefly, new standards for group exhibitions in Mozambique. Almost one hundred artists were featured, with brief biographies and works illustrated.

Less ambitious productions, but more sustained support, has come through the Camões Institute, a Portuguese agency with a base in Maputo. Three catalogues (2000, 2003 and 2004) deploy small signs that consolidate implicit trends. No artworks are illustrated or listed, and artists receive short bios. By the 2003 version, photo-portraits of the artists are included.


65. The catalogue acknowledges the following support, most of which are foreign agencies: Missão Francesca Cooperação de Acção Cultural, União Europeia, Centro Cultural Franco- Moçambicana, Médicos sem Fronteiras – Suíça, Médicos Sem Fronteiras – Bélgica, MS, Action Nord-Sud, Centro de Formação Fotográfica, Associação Médica de Moçambique, PNC/SIDA-DTS, Handicap International, PSI – USAID, OMS, Museu Nacional de Arte, Associação Moçambicana de Fotografia.


67. The exhibition was funded by French Cooperation and the German and Brazilian embassies.

68. The catalogue is in fact ‘branded’ by its own logo, featured in colour on all pages.

69. Malangatana receives a full two pages, with two uncaptioned works illustrated. There is a brief discussion of how his works are increasingly being presented as solo exhibitions, and his curriculum is an updated version of the one that appeared in the TDM’93 catalogue.

evidencing the growing emphasis on artists as individuals and personalities. Alongside, there is a short, authored essay on art in Mozambique. The 2004 edition was slightly bigger, its respectable stature in keeping with its diplomatic function, produced to accompany the visit of the Portuguese prime minister. Its ceremonial character is underlined by the inclusion of short essays from officials of the Camões Institute and Musart.

While these details echo similar developments that were evident in both official and TDM catalogues, these similarities are not the only ones worth noting. Once again, in the 2000 catalogue there is a visible tendency to both under- and overstate Malangatana’s position. Typically, he does not dominate in any obvious way. On the contrary, his biography is shorter than some of his contemporaries. But the content of his biography affirms his elite status. The publication highlights his cultural activism, as well as his range in visual media, along with his prowess in other art forms. More boldly, Malangatana’s international profile is noted, and he is claimed as one of the most emblematic African artists. If this were not enough, his agency and authenticity is underlined through the debatable claim that he was a self-taught artist, possibly the first time such a claim was made in a Mozambican catalogue. This biography becomes standard, repeated verbatim in the 2003 and 2004 editions.

In addition to those published by the Camões Institute, there are a mixed array of catalogues funded by international sources that appear from 2002. Notably, all of these exhibitions assign a special role to Malangatana, over and above his inclusion as an artist. He was a consultant for a commemorative exhibition for the assassinated journalist Carlos Cardoso, organised by the ONJ and funded by the European Union. Cardoso’s murder was tied to questions of state corruption and nepotism, and Malangatana’s participation effectively signaled a principled position on the side of human rights as opposed to the political elite. Here Malangatana is exercising moral capital, commensurate with his senior status in Mozambican society, drawing on but exceeding his social position as an artist.

A catalogue for a three-person exhibition at the Centro Cultural Franco Moçambicano in 2007 crosses generations, with Malangatana cast as the elder, and crosses continents, with Malangatana signaling as both Mozambican and international. This catalogue is also noteworthy for interpretative commentary contained in a short introductory essay. Unlike the tendency to contrast the anti/colonial and postcolonial artist, the uncredited author makes the cogent observation that Malangatana’s art is a conversation with the nation’s past and its conflicts, claiming that through his work we get glimpses of the monsters of history that have not been extinguished. With this exhibition and catalogue, Malangatana signifies continuity across temporal and spatial constraints, he is timeless and universal.

71. Twenty-eight artists receive concise biographies. Those for Noel Langa, Jose Julio and Reinata are slightly longer than Malangatana’s.
During this period, there is also a catalogue for a tribute exhibition for Malangatana’s 70th birthday, organised by Nucleo de Art and funded by the Portuguese government. With twenty-five artists contributing work in honour of the Master (the exhibition is titled *Mestre Malangatana*), he receives five pages, with both his art and poetry represented. Here the artist is paid tribute, notably by his peers, facilitated by the former colonial power.

Not least, in 2003, Malangatana contributes, as author (not artist) to a group exhibition documenting a folk art form, *Pshikeledana*. It is perhaps contributions such as these that frame Malangatana as an anthropologist, although such arguments usually prioritise his art and not his writing.

This last assortment of catalogues, each in its own way, assigns roles to Malangatana that are seldom attributed to his peers in the plastic arts. Each instance builds on his standing as not only an artist of distinction, but also as a public intellectual.

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Plasticidades em Moçambique

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EXPOSIÇÃO COLLECTIVA DE ARTES PLÁSTICAS

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MOSTRA COLECTIVA DE ARTES PLÁSTICAS MOÇAMBICANAS
E DA COLECÇÃO DO MUSART DE PINTURA PORTUGUESA DO PERÍODO ANTERIOR À INDEPENDÊNCIA

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Mestre

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Homenagem
SONATA
A TRÊS MÃOS
De 06 a 23 de Fevereiro de 2007
No Centro Cultural Franco Moçambicano

ESTÁ MELHOR
DEFENDIDO
Uma Povo,
QUANDO É
CONHECIDO PELO
SEU CONTRIBUTO
CREATIVO
Carlos Cardoso

CATÁLOGO
Exposição de artes plásticas moçambicanas
22 NOV • 6 DEZ 2002 • SNJ • MAPUTO
CONCLUSION

A close reading of group exhibition catalogues in Mozambique that feature Malangatana reveals several patterns and insights. The narrative commences in the colonial era, when the exhibition model is a competitive one. The modus operandi comprises an open call, selection by a panel and awards by a jury. This pattern is radically interrupted with independence, when the emphasis moves towards inclusion and awards are dispensed with, although continuity is sustained by retaining the convention of offering works for sale.

The most significant change in the period following independence is the revolutionary intent to validate popular forms of visual production and to situate the fine arts as part of the broader rubric of popular arts. Catalogues in the post-independence period reveal that within ten years this trend is reversed, with the plastic arts and professionalism ascendant and popular arts quietly dropped from state sponsored art exhibitions.

Further, it can be observed that official exhibitions, a feature of both the colonial and post-independence periods, lose their pre-eminent role, with parastatals and foreign agencies becoming more prominent. This shift mirrors political changes in the country, in the two decades following independence. There is a shift as well from the relative anonymity of artists in the revolutionary period to a traditional Western art emphasis on artists as individuals. The award system that was rejected in 1975 (along with the conception of an elite class of Masters) returns by stealth, and becomes institutionalised in annual exhibitions at the National Museum that are sponsored by the parastatal telecommunications company.

The shift from state as sponsor is accompanied by a gradual improvement in the production quality of catalogues. Mozambican catalogues begin to assume the characteristic qualities of standard western catalogues where images are reproduced in colour and inventories of works, usually without prices stated, are accompanied by specially commissioned essays.

Concerning the representation of Malangatana, catalogues for national group shows contribute towards the construction of his public biography, and are in several instances responsible for distortions and misrepresentations that become established parts of his mythology. In their focus on biography, these catalogues offer few interpretative insights into the artist’s works, although the very conciseness required means that in rare cases we are treated to cogent insights that cut through much of the biography and hyperbole that dominates longer articles on the artist.

Critically, these catalogues provide graphic attempts to mediate the dominant position of the artist. It is noteworthy that Malangatana’s elite status is only occasionally claimed directly, through bold statements. Revealingly, he never appears prominently on covers of catalogues for Mozambican group shows, and there are clear efforts to downplay his dominance. These characteristics attest to concerns in presenting Mozambican culture as a rich, popular phenomenon. However, an analysis of the representation of Malangatana in these catalogues affirms his dominance. This observation emerges from consideration of numerical representation (artworks, illustrations and page count, along with the artist’s horizontal domination. Horizontal
dominance is established through Malangatana’s use of multiple media and art forms, as well as through the range of artistic and cultural spheres in which he is active.

Differentiation is further communicated through the pricing (or not) of the artist’s works. While prices are usually significantly higher than those of his peers, few of Malangatana’s works, less so his paintings, have been offered for sale on group exhibitions in Mozambique. This signals that his presence is more one of validation and solidarity, his ‘real’ work as a professional artist is reserved for the international market.

The longevity of Malangatana’s career further serves to cement his visibility. All of these elements complement each other in validating the artist, separating the Master from his colleagues. Through these subtle means, the catalogues communicate an image of the artist as distinct and elevated from his peers whilst simultaneously positioning him as immersed in a broad community of artists, indeed in the nation at large.

The coexistence of contradictory impulses in the framing of Malangatana reflects tensions arising from intense contestation about two related concerns: the nature of art in society, and the role of individuals in building a national culture. A close reading of these catalogues brings to the fore a concrete set of discourses located within a very particular, charged and evolving historical context.