

PRESS RELEASE

DR. ESTHER MAHLANGU

EXHIBITION "THE BREATH OF CALLIGRAPHY"

CURATOR: RUZY RUSIKE

Exhibition from April 21st to June 2nd, 2023
Monday - Friday, 10am – 7pm, Saturday by appointment
75, rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, 75008 Paris

+33 (0)1 44 51 75 75
info@galerie75faubourg.com
www.galerie75faubourg.com



Galerie 75 Faubourg and Galerie Enrico Navarra present the exhibition *The Breath of Calligraphy* of South African artist Dr. Esther Mahlangu, showcasing a selection of acrylics on canvas created between 2010 and 2022. These works refer to the painter's Ndebele heritage and celebrate "the contemplation of space and colour, both abundant and accented: Africa's calligraphy. [...] She [Mahlangu] shares with us a distinctly clear tale of a lifetime, translated geometrically and colourfully into the language of art." (Ruzy Rusike, exhibition leaflet)

In the Ndebele community, the tradition of decorative mural painting is an age-old art reserved for women, with techniques passed down from mother to daughter, and done on the facades of houses during ritual ceremonies. From an early age, Esther Mahlangu learned to make pigments, to prepare the surface to be painted and to create decorative compositions mixing traditional geometric figures and invented motifs.

Dr. Mahlangu revolutionized this traditional art using new techniques. She is the first to transfer this painting practice to canvases and other contemporary mediums and has replaced natural pigments with even more vivid and contrasting acrylic paints. Using a feather, she paints freehand without prior sketching, on a variety of formats and media: canvases, walls, ceramics, cars (BMW Art Car Collection, 1991), motorcycles or sneakers (Eytys, 2015).

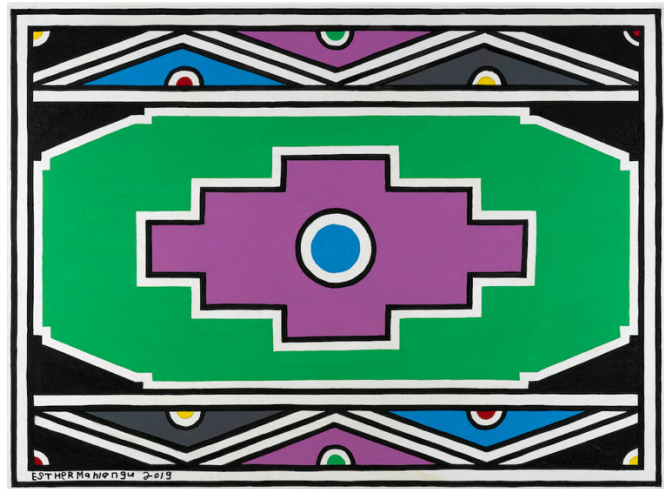
In the 1980s, while creating an outdoor work at the Botshabelo Village Museum (Orange Province, South Africa), she met the French gallerist André Magnin, who invited her to the exhibition *Les Magiciens de la Terre* (1989) at the Centre Pompidou, a turning point in her career, propelling her onto the French and European scene.

After numerous exhibitions around the world, her works have joined major private collections (Larry Warsh, Jean Pigozzi, Oprah Winfrey, Usher, John Legend, David Bowie, Alicia Keys...) and public collections (Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, Hirshhorn Museum in Washington D.C., Brooklyn Museum in New York, Iziko South African National Gallery in Cape Town...). In 2024, a retrospective will be dedicated to her work at the Iziko South African National Gallery before traveling to several prestigious museums around the world.

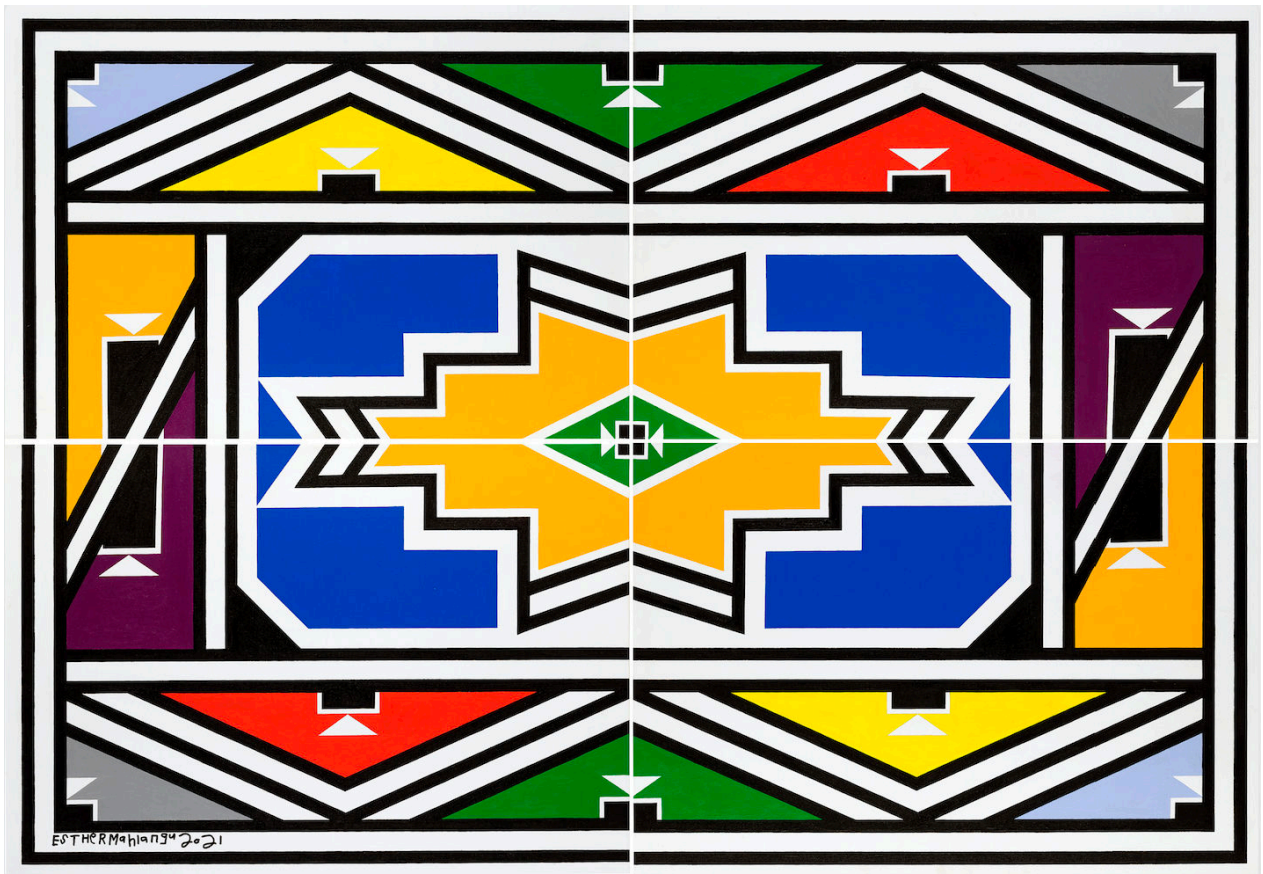
The exhibition is organized in collaboration with Almine Rech who will concomitantly present works by Dr. Esther Mahlangu in their Parisian showroom rue de Turenne, and a solo exhibition in their London gallery.



Ndebele Abstract, 2022
Acrylic on canvas, \varnothing 70 4/5 in



Ndebele Abstract, 2020
Acrylic on canvas, 29 1/2 x 30 3/8 in



Ndebele Abstract, 2021
Acrylic on canvas, 55 1/8 x 78 3/4 in

ABOUT DR. ESTHER MAHLANGU

Born in 1935 in Mpumalanga, former Transvaal province, South Africa, in the Ndebele community
Lives and works in Mpumalanga, South Africa

1945 Begins painting in the Ndebele tradition

1989 First group show, *Les Magiciens de la Terre*, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France

1991 First woman to participate to the BMW Art Car Collection project

1998 First solo show, Musée des arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie, Paris, France

2007 Heritage Award for Preservation and Promotion of South African Culture

2018 Honorary doctorates University of Johannesburg and Durban University, South Africa

2019 Officer of Arts and Letters, France

2024 Launch of the retrospective exhibition at Iziko South African National Gallery, South Africa (travelling exhibition)



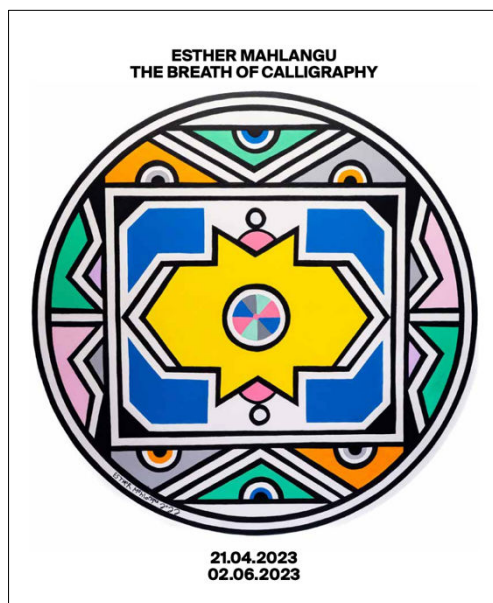
Copyrights images

Photo p.1 : Portrait Esther Mahlangu. Photo : Clint Strydom

Photos p.3 : © Esther Mahlangu

Photo p. 4 : Portrait Esther Mahlangu. Photo : Clint Strydom

LEAFLET OF THE EXHIBITION "THE BREATH OF CALLIGRAPHY"



32 pages

Texts by Craig Mark and Ruzy Rusike

Bilingual French / English

Available at Galerie 75 Faubourg

ABOUT GALERIE 75 FAUBOURG

Galerie 75 Faubourg is a contemporary art gallery mainly dedicated to the secondary market. It organizes personal exhibitions (Kenny Scharf, Enoc Pérez, Rafa Macarrón, Renk ...) as well as group exhibitions, and regularly collaborates with partner galleries or curators to bring its spaces to life through other eyes (Harper's, Galerie Eva Presenhuber, galerie frank elbaz, A.R. Penck with Vincent Fraikin...).

ABOUT GALERIE ENRICO NAVARRA

Galerie Enrico Navarra organizes numerous exhibitions of contemporary art and also has an important publishing department with more than a hundred published art books and catalogs.

The gallery has dedicated more than 15 exhibitions to Jean-Michel Basquiat around the world, each accompanied by a catalog, from Taiwan in 1996 to Château La Coste in 2019.

Other exhibitions and monographs have been dedicated to Keith Haring, Yue Minjun, Zao Wou-Ki, Bernar Venet, César, Arman, Ron Arad, Claude Viallat, Chu Teh-Chun, and architects such as Tadao Ando, Rudy Ricciotti and Jean Prouvé; and the gallery has organized various group exhibitions such as *l'art à plage*, *80 artistes autour du Mondial* or *Le Corps Mutant*. Since 2001, the gallery has been working on the collection of books *Made by* which offers a postcard of the contemporaneity of a geographical area, through its art and more generally its culture.

Most recently, the gallery has organized the exhibitions *Résonance : Jean-Michel Basquiat et l'Univers Kongo* at Galerie Gradiva (2022), *Jean-Michel Basquiat* at Saint Laurent Rive Droite (2021) and *Keith Haring at the Citadelle de Saint-Tropez* (2021).