

Maine Durieu

Maine, you left us so suddenly, on tiptoes, almost without warning. A devastated, deeply moved, and contemplative crowd gathered the other day at the Church of Saint Roch, to say farewell at your final departure.

You began your travels in the 1960s, with trips first to Niger, then to Zaire, and finally to Côte d'Ivoire. You began your career as a dealer in Abidjan.

You found a path among the Lobi that resonated with you, one that took you off the beaten path of African sculpture as defined by Western tastes. You wrote of their statuary: "Lobi sculpture is above a sculptural truth. It is not an aestheticized art—man is always present with his faults and his deformations, but he is always gazing into the distance and his demeanor is infinitely dignified." I wonder if your aunt, Germaine Richier, somehow influenced you with her philosophy of sculpture.

In the 1980s in Paris, you opened a gallery on the Quai des Grands



Augustins, on the fringes of the tribal art neighborhood of Paris. You shared your unique and wonderful personality and taste with many collectors there for many years, and they delighted in your finds. In 2005, you brought the Can and their art to light with a sublime exhibition entitled *La Spirale du Serpent (The Spiral of the Serpent)*.

You were part of that group of dealers who pass things on, whether knowledge, dreams, or emotions.

Rue Visconti, your last professional address, was the scene of many wonderful shows, including *Au Fil de l'Eau (Along the Water)*, *Salon de Beauté (Beauty Salon)*, *Presque Rien (Almost Nothing)*, and *Sacrés Baoulé (Sacred Baule)*.

Good-bye, my lovely lady from Marseilles. May the hills of Vercors, at whose feet you now rest, protect you forever.

Serge Le Guennan

Pierre Langlois

Pierre Langlois has died. He left as he had hoped to, discretely and quietly. His departure marks the end of the era of tribal art dealers who collected in situ and returned with pieces to offer.

Born in Lille in 1927, Langlois didn't care for school, and the Second World War made life difficult. He joined the army, which sent him to Indochina, where the situation was relatively calm. When he returned to France, he worked for a while with his father, a sales representative in the liquor industry, and concurrently began to associate with young people interested in art: Evrard the book dealer, Dodeigne the sculptor, and Leroy the painter. These relationships opened new horizons to him.

One of these friends spoke to him of a remarkable book about the Dogon of Mali, *Dieu d'Eau (God of Water)*, by Marcel Griaule, the head of the Dakar-Djibouti Expedition. Pierre's interest was piqued, and he boarded a ship for Abidjan, from where he traveled by truck to the Dogon area. He quickly established friendly relations with young people there, who took him to the cliffs where there were tombs replete with sculptures. Upon his return, his friend Evrard pushed for organizing an exhibition and a catalog. Evrard sold the collection Langlois had put together to a collector and the works were exhibited at La Hune in November of 1954. Now equipped with a better understanding of the art market and having become interested in early travel accounts, Langlois decided to make more collecting expeditions.



He departed for the New Hebrides, where he collected magnificent fern-root ancestor figures. It was around then that Henri Kamer and

I first heard of him. We met in Lille, and then in Paris, having purchased his most beautiful figures. These pieces were sent to New York, where we were established, and were quickly acquired by Robert Goldwater, then the director of the Rockefeller Museum, and by Douglas Newton, his advisor for Oceanic art. Pierre then made a quick exploratory trip to Mexico and then asked us to come with him on a second trip to participate in buying. I joined him and we made many acquisitions. I returned to New York, while Pierre went on to Paris, having made the acquaintance of Denise, the young lady who would later become his wife. They joined us in Cannes for some boating adventures in San Remo, which were wonderful vacations.

Our business together was successful, and after the landmark Helena Rubinstein sale in New York, Pierre and Denise moved in with us. Shortly thereafter, they had a son. I thought that Henri, Langlois, and I should open a gallery in Paris, and we did just that on October 11, 1966. Pierre had brought back magnificent posts from the Solomon Islands, and they were very successfully shown at the inaugural exhibition of Galerie Kamer earlier that year in New York. He next set his sights on Madagascar, where he found some wonderful statues.

Around the time of my divorce from Henri, Pierre and Denise began

to spent more and more time in the country. They received both friends and clients there, having renovated a building next to their main house for their collection of paintings (mostly by Eugène Leroy), sculptures by the Surrealist Benoit, and many other objects, including ones he had collected in the course of his travels. He chose not to come to Paris any more, preferring to stay with his parrot, Coco, his four cats, a few sheep, and a donkey. He was especially preoccupied with his outstanding library.

My husband, Philippe, and I went to see them every month. We talked at length about everything and nothing, including death, and he was very clear about not wanting any ceremony upon his passing. “May I be forgotten,” he said. Sorry, Pierre, but that can’t happen. You have left us with all of the objects you found and collected on your expeditions, objects that you loved, and that we can now see and admire in many museums and private collections. Thank you for the wonderful memories.

Hélène Leloup

Dr Monni Adams

Dr. Monni Adams passed away on December 24, 2014, at age ninety-four. Born Jeanne Marie Grozanich in Portland, Oregon, on October 27, 1920, Monni rarely spoke of her childhood or her life before entering academia in the early 1960s. She earned a doctorate under the direction of Douglas Fraser in 1967 from Columbia University in what was then known as the field of primitive art. Her 660-page dissertation, “System and Meaning in East Sumba Textile Design: A Study in Traditional Indonesian Art,” was based on extensive ethnographic field research in Indonesia. Riding the wave of Lévi-Straussian structuralism in the 1970s, Monni published a seminal essay on the anthropology of art and the relationship between the compositional principles of textile design in East Sumba and patterns of social organization (“Structural Aspects of a Village Art,” *American Anthropologist*, 1973).

Shortly after joining the faculty at Harvard University in the mid 1970s, Monni shifted her primary research focus from Indonesia to sub-Saharan Africa. For almost four decades, Monni served as curator at the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, where she oversaw the museum’s vast collection of African art and artifacts.

Throughout her distinguished career as a scholar and educator, Monni routinely taught courses in African art and aesthetics at various institutions in the Northeast, including Columbia, MIT, Wellesley, Tufts, and the Harvard Extension School. She also curated several important exhibitions, including *Threads of Life: A Private Collection of Textiles from Indonesia and Sarawak* (1981), *Designs for Living: Symbolic Communication in African Art* (1982), *Heads and Tales: Adornments from Africa* (1999), and *Masked Festivals of Canton Bo (Ivory Coast), West Africa* (2011).

Beginning in the late 1970s, Monni was a regular contributor to *African Arts*, publishing more than twenty articles and reviews on a wide range of topics, from her now-classic essay “Kuba Embroidered Cloth” (1978) to her last publication, “Locating the Mano Mask” (2010), which she authored at age eighty-nine. In her mid sixties,



Dr. Monni Adams speaking in 2011 at her exhibition *Masked Festivals of Canton Bo (Ivory Coast), West Africa* at the Tozzer Library, Harvard University.

Monni embarked on a new fieldwork project among the Wè (Guéré) in western Côte d’Ivoire, where she documented masked festivals and interviewed men and women about the changing role of masks in the re-

gion of Canton Bo. The results of that research were published in “Women and Masks among the Western Wè of Ivory Coast” (*African Arts*, 1986). The following year she wrote what remains the last comprehensive historiography of the field of African art history, “African Visual Arts from an Art Historical Perspective” (*African Studies Review*, 1987).

Monni will be remembered for her significant contributions to the anthropology of textile arts (Indonesian ikat, Kuba embroidered panels, Fon appliqués, and Dida woven raffia skirts); for her scholarship on the relationship between gender and masquerades in western Côte d’Ivoire; and for her extensive research on the Liberian masks collected in the 1930–40s for the Peabody Museum by medical missionary Dr. George W. Harley.

Cutting a tiny figure at less than five feet tall, Monni was a giant in her discipline. Her high spirit, affable quiriness, and lightning-fast creative mind will be sorely missed by those fortunate enough to have studied and worked with her. In a letter from Monni, sent to me while I was conducting my doctoral field research in Abidjan during the late 1980s, she concluded by saying, “Off to give two papers in Denver. So next time I should have lots of news—whether suburban banalities or new gratte-ciel notions I cannot say.” Her next letter was of course filled with insights about cutting-edge anthropological theory and radical new approaches to the study of African art. There was, in the end, no room and no time for suburban banalities in the universe of her towering intellect.

Christopher B. Steiner