

## IN TRIBUTE



### Gustavo Gili

The memory of my dear friend Gustavo Gili's extraordinary personality is so vividly anchored in me that writing a portrait of it would be an easy task for me. But here I prefer to evoke experiences built on our common passion for tribal art.

Amsterdam, Berlin, Brussels, and his beloved Paris were the venues for a tireless quest for objects and unforgettable discussions on a mask's patina, a Songye fetish's outrageous expression (of which he was particularly fond), or the pose struck by a Djenne figure. Lengthy research in the books in our respective libraries always ensued after such trips. Our adoration of books was shared, as were our professional lives: one of us was an editor (you, dear Gustavo) and the other a publisher.

Deeply saddened by his loss, all of us who had the privilege of knowing him in Barcelona or elsewhere wish to honor his vital engagement in the validation of art, and specifically of tribal art, which he saw with such intelligence, vision, and humility, all qualities that enabled him to assemble an exceptional collection.

Put together with his wife Rosa Amorós, herself an outstanding sculptural artist from whom he was inseparable, Gustavo's and her collection included a group of now rare Himalayan masks which were exhibited in Cuenca, Spain, in 2005 and illustrated in a beautiful catalogue titled *Enigmes des Montagnes. Masques Tribaux de l'Himalaya (Enigmas of the Mountains. Tribal Masks of the Himalayas)*. Other areas of predilection for them were African terracottas—and they had a particularly eclectic ensemble of them—and ritual axes of pure and sculptural form. Gustavo's talent for photography was the basis for an intimate and poetic project, one designed to offer a view of his own vision of his collection. He compiled these photographs in a volume that is as imbued with sobriety and moving beauty as the objects they illustrate.

Gustavo, my irreplaceable friend, you will always be among us, in each of your Songye, Fang, Kusu, and Dogon objects, and indeed in all of the extraordinary art works with which you chose to surround yourself. We have been moved by your elegant example and privileged to have known it, and your companionship and affection is beyond value.

Have no fear, Gustavo, I will not forget to tell you of the details of our exploits in our "vocation" as impassioned collectors, so I can keep you close to us forever.

Antonio Onrubia



### Françoise Calmon

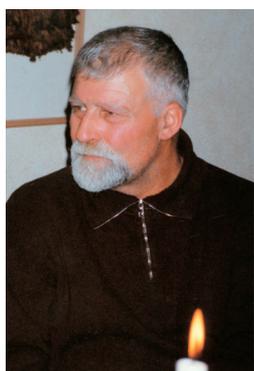
Françoise Calmon left us on the first of last September. A photographer by profession, her relationship with Africa which she maintained since 1975 led to collaboration with the most important galleries of tribal art.

Her love of objects as well as travel—she participated in an expedition in Papua New Guinea—did not stand in the way of other passions, of which fishing was a major one.

Those who knew her were confronted with a fascinating but sometimes abrupt person, although behind this façade of a strong, fiercely independent woman hid a being that was authentic, sincere, fragile, and deeply human.

Since she has gone, we feel her absence, more and more every day.

Agnès Woliner



### Enrico Prometti

Enrico Prometti was a devout explorer of the arts. His life was devoted to his ever-evolving development as a painter and sculptor, but was touched profoundly by his encounter with tribal cultures, particularly that of the Dogon of Africa.

I knew Enrico as a fellow enthusiast of tribal art but befriended the man because of his dedication to all creativity. I came to admire him as a great artist because I could see the unremitting forms of expression that he created at every turn. Be it an abstract painting or collage, a sculpture of granite, or a detailed and delicate watercolor, Enrico would pursue it. And his work was inspired by everything: primitivism, tribal art, and ultimately the art and cosmology of the Dogon.

As a collector, Enrico explored too. His first trip to Africa (Nigeria) was in 1962 and his first purchase an eroded hardwood head of an elephant, a highly unlikely choice for any tourist, albeit these were few at the time. Enrico visited Africa countless times and for some years drove his beaten-up Toyota Land Cruiser south from Bergamo on collecting trips. He acquired statues, masks, jewelry, bronzes, and other artifacts with the voracity of a true collector. At the same time, he used his abilities as an artist to recreate the sacred images, to clean, restore, and even rebuild them.

The world of Enrico Prometti was infinite indeed. Inspired by the Dogon people and their ancestral connectivity, Enrico created an important corpus of sculpture in wood, stone, clay, and iron.

While his many accomplishments as an artist may never be recognized as fully as they deserve, his realization as a devotee of tribal art most definitely is.

Alex R. Arthur