



OUT OF AFRICA
The Ugandan North

Isaac Okwir and Peter Oloya

2026

Uganda was once described by Winston Churchill as the “Pearl of Africa,” yet it is also known for the brutal regime of Idi Amin. This dual history finds a powerful echo in the sculptures of Isaac Okwir and Peter Oloya.

Peter Oloya’s experience as an abducted child soldier by the LRA, forced to fight in the conflict in northern Uganda, first found expression in artworks created to exorcise the trauma he and his fellow abductees endured. Over time, Oloya has moved beyond these early works to develop a practice that bridges contemporary artistic themes with his role as a guardian of Acholi cultural traditions. His recent work also reflects deep concerns about rapid climate change and evolving notions of physical beauty and its representation in art.



Peter Oloya at a stone carving workshop at the Ruwenzori Foundation, Uganda



Isaac Okwir working in wax at the Ruwenzori Foundation, Uganda

Isaac Okwir creates animals and human figures in dynamic poses that capture the essence of movement and behaviour. Working with sheets of wax that he cuts and twists, and using tree resin and wax harvested from beehives to formulate the perfect modelling wax, Okwir shapes forms that he later casts in bronze, giving permanence to the fluidity that inspires his work.

Both artists have collaborated with the Ruwenzori Foundation, whose foundry in western Uganda has cast all their sculptures. Gallery Pangolin is delighted to showcase the poignant artworks and exceptional craftsmanship emerging from the foundation, which we have supported since its inception.

We remain committed to fostering new generations of artists and strengthening the community surrounding the foundation’s site in western Uganda.

Gallery Pangolin



Isaac Okwir b.1983

Isaac Okwir was born in 1983 in a small village in Northern Uganda to a family of nine children.

Whilst a Fine Art student at Makerere University, he took part in several workshops sponsored by the Ruwenzori Sculpture Foundation. His distinctive style and beautifully-perceived animal sculptures have led to regular invitations to undertake residencies with the Foundation.

Isaac Okwir works directly in wax, elegantly describing form, movement and volume in his sculptures of animals and figures deftly constructing them with sheets of wax. Through this chosen medium, he eloquently and fluently translates his most instinctive and deepest observations.

'I am a self-motivated artist since time immemorial because despite the soothing nature of art, it is also one of the best languages I can express myself fluently for others to benefit from.'



Buffalo with Egrets & Oxpecker, 2024
Bronze
Unique
34 x 35 x 23 cm

Jackal, 2024
Black Granite
Unique
27 x 12 x 7 cm



Australopithecus, 2022
Bronze
Unique
38 x 26 x 18 cm



Seated Giraffe, 2025
Bronze
Unique
24.5 x 18.5 x 9.5 cm





Gecko, 2021
Crystal Quartz
Unique
1.7 x 7 x 5 cm



Ankole Bull, 2024
Bronze
Unique
33 x 29.5 x 14 cm



Woman and Child, 2024
Bronze
Unique
58.5 x 23 x 10 cm



Running Warthog, 2024
Bronze
Unique
28.5 x 39.5 x 21 cm



Land Snail, 2025
Moroto Marble
Unique
14.5 x 24 x 12 cm



Pangolin, 2024
Bronze
Open Edition
9.5 x 12 x 13.5 cm



Turaco, 2025
Bronze
Unique
95 x 55 x 50 cm
Image Courtesy Clearwell Caves





Peter Oloya b.1979

Peter Oloya was born in war-torn Northern Uganda and abducted from his family aged eleven by the Lords Resistance Army. He was brutally forced into being a 'boy soldier' but managed to escape after being wounded in a bush battle. He chose art as a way to educate himself and to heal the emotional wounds such violence creates.

Carving curios and working as a DJ to pay first his school and later his university fees, Oloya graduated from Makerere University and is now a successful sculptor. He has participated in a number of residencies and workshops sponsored by the Ruwenzori Sculpture Foundation and his sculpture of a Crowned Crane was the gift of the Ugandan people to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at the 2007 meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government.

As one of the rising stars of Ugandan Sculpture, Peter Oloya was awarded the PJLF Pangolin London Sculpture Prize in 2019. The prize has enabled Oloya to work unencumbered on a body of work that explores issues pertinent to the modern African cultural experience. With the decline in traditional cultural activities in Africa, it is the contemporary artist within the continent that articulates the complex and rapidly shifting cultural response to modern issues.

Culture and Modernity: Figure Playing the Adungu, 2019
Bronze
Edition of 8
40.5 x 19 x 14 cm





The Dialogue, 2019
Bronze
Edition of 8
10.5 x 28 x 15 cm



Culture and Modernity: Man Playing Lukeme, 2019
Bronze
Edition of 8
31 x 23 x 24 cm





Gorilla Mountain, 2019
Black Volcanic Stone
Unique
10 x 5 x 6.5 cm



Culture and Modernity: Phone Dress, 2021
Bark cloth and phone pieces
Unique
174 x 70 x 50 cm



Culture and Modernity: Groom Mask, 2023
Mixed Media
Unique
58 x 23 x 8 cm





Culture and Modernity: Mask, 2023
Wood
Unique
32 x 15 x 14 cm

Culture and Modernity: Face Mask, 2023
Mixed Media
Unique
56 x 15 x 17 cm



Aspects of Beauty: Karamojong Bride, 2021
Bronze
Edition of 8
53 x 22 x 25 cm



No Love No Glove, 2007
Bronze
Edition of 9
75 x 25 x 25 cm





Aspects of Beauty: Bride, 2020
Bronze
Edition of 8
62 x 25 x 7 cm

Aspects of Beauty: Groom, 2020
Bronze
Edition of 8
42 x 25 x 6 cm





top left: Opoko: Jack Rabbit, 2023
Burned gourd
Unique
30 x 13 x 13 cm

top right: Opoko III, 2023
Burned gourd
Unique
28 x 13 x 13 cm

left: Opoko I, 2023
Burned gourd
Unique
18 x 11 x 11 cm

top left: Opoko IV, 2023
Burned gourd
Unique
14 x 12 x 12 cm

top right: Opoko II, 2023
Burned gourd
Unique
18 x 11 x 11 cm

right: Opoko: McDonalds, 2023
Burned gourd
Unique
16 x 11 x 11 cm



Silent Queen, 2025
Iron Impregnated Slate
Unique
78 x 38 cm
Image Courtesy Clearwell Caves



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Sculpture measurements are height x width x depth

Front Cover Image: wall 'Culture and Modernity: Groom Mask' 2023, Peter Oloya
plinth: 'Ankole Bull' 2024, Isaac Okwir

Back Cover Image: Rwenzori Sculpture Foundation Art Centre, Uganda



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