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Joël Andrianomearisoa Turns Emotion Into Art

Madagascan artist Joël Andrianomearisoa reflects on the emotional and poetic foundations of his work, and why surprise is at the heart of his creative process.



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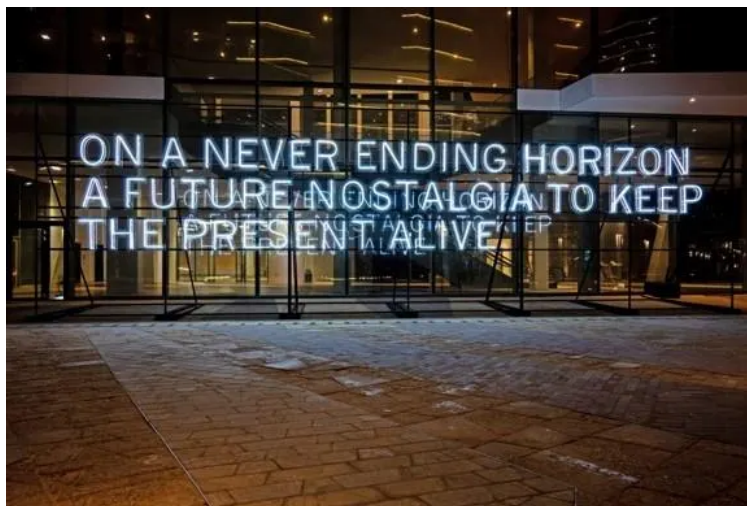
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Installation view of Joël Andrianomearisoa's solo show "Miracle" at Almine Rech New York
PHOTO DAN BRADICA

From the streets of Antananarivo in Madagascar to the halls of Venice and Paris, [Joël Andrianomearisoa](#) has carved out a singular path as an artist who doesn't just work with materials – he works with emotions. Trained as an architect but driven by poetry, he builds atmospheric worlds that pulse with longing, memory, desire, hope or melancholy from his studios in Paris, Antananarivo and Magnat-l'Étrange. Whether layering delicate textiles, shaping sculptural installations from raffia and paper or weaving words into space, he blurs the lines between the visual and the emotional, the intimate and the monumental. His work speaks in whispers and declarations, always searching for the invisible architecture of the soul.

Following his historic representation of Madagascar at the 2019 Venice Biennale and his works entering the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Smithsonian in Washington D.C. and the Zeitz MOCAA in Cape Town, Andrianomearisoa continues to forge a deeply personal yet universal language of art across continents. This summer, his evocative vision takes center stage in “Looking at Horizons”, a group exhibition exploring contemporary manifestations of landscape painting at [Almine Rech Monaco](#), on view through September 19, 2025. This will be followed by a presentation of his creations by [Primo Marella Gallery](#) at the [Also Known as Africa](#) art and design fair at [Carreau du Temple](#) in Paris from October 24-26, 2025.



Joël Andrianomearisoa, ON A NEVER-ENDING HORIZON, A FUTURE NOSTALGIA TO KEEP THE PRESENT ALIVE, 2022
PHOTO AMMAR ABD RABBO. COURTESY OF JOËL ANDRIANOMEARISOA STUDIO AND NOOR RIYADH FESTIVAL

What’s most important when starting a new work?

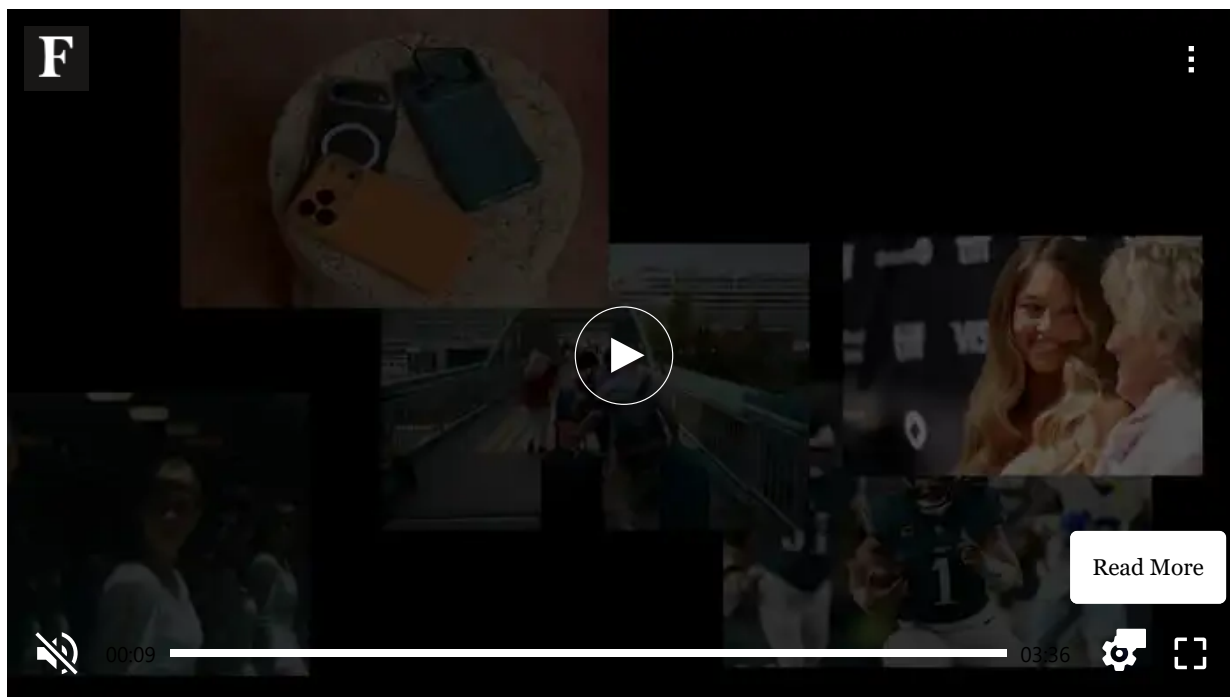
There are two starting points. Sometimes it’s a commission or an invitation, but for me, the context and the space are very important. When I say space, it can be a lamp, a room, a wall, a ceiling, the beach, a mountain – anything. And then there’s the context with everything: the taste of the food, the texture of the carpet, the eyes of someone. That can be the starting point. From there, it’s writing, not as a writer, but sketches or drawings, and then the text, which is the main idea. Am I working on melancholy, attraction, natural fiber? So text and context – I really work with that duality. After that, it moves quickly. Sometimes I’m alone at the beginning, but I go straight to the studio. We put everything on the table and say, “Let’s go.”

Do you know exactly what a work will look like, or do you let the process guide you?

The process has to be a surprise, and the result too. When you're drawing, you know your desire, your intention, but the best moment is when you do the lines, and you don't know where they'll stop. That little crazy moment – that's art. Even in my studio, when we work on textile pieces, I do the drawings and the first tests, but there's always a moment of surprise – I'm always looking for that. It can be bad, it can be good, but that's the point. When I work with an art producer, it's very boring. Of course, I can't make a 10 x 10-meter sculpture by myself, so I need them. But it's very technical. You get the satisfaction that the work is done, but there's no story. You send the drawings, it comes back – it's all validation, validation, validation. There's no discovery. And as an artist, I love discovering something during the process.



Presented at Hakanto Contemporary in Antananarivo, Madagascar, Please Sing Me My Song Before You Go is the first film that Joël Andrianomearisoa...
PHOTO COURTESY OF JOËL ANDRIANOMEARISOA STUDIO



What sparks your ideas? Do you collect materials or moments?

Yes, there's also the process of collecting. On this idea of materializing emotion, I collect a lot of materials. It can happen suddenly in the market, it can happen from a discussion. I have a funny story. I was in Barcelona for my show at the Centre Grau-Garriga. I launched my book, and the night before, I was at a restaurant. There were carnations on the table. I thought, "Wow, I want to explore this idea." The next day, I visited the contemporary museum, and when I came out, I saw a shop full of carnations. I bought all of them – thousands – and went back to Paris carrying them. It can be anything. Even your business card – maybe I'm interested in the design. A frame, a picture, some small detail. I'm very open. I'm not a multidisciplinary artist – I'm just very curious about everything. Sometimes it's a problem – I get too much information. But it's part of being contemporary. I think that's important.

Does challenge make a project more satisfying?

Challenge brings satisfaction, and sometimes, deception. You find different sensations. It's really up and down. It's always like that.



View of Joël Andrianomearisoa's exhibition "Tokotany" at Primo Marella Gallery in Milan

PHOTO COURTESY OF PRIMO MARELLA GALLERY

Do you have mentors who have influenced your journey?

Someone very precious for me is Odile Decq, in terms of architecture. Pascale Martine Tayou as an artist. *Revue Noire* – the magazine and the people around it – were very important for me too. There's also an older woman from fashion called Alice Morgaine. She started this magazine called *Jardin des Modes* in Paris many years ago. She's someone very important to me, not only in terms of career. Over time, of course, there are others. In Istanbul, I have two artist friends called mentalKLINIK. I met them when I was 21, and they opened another vision, another opportunity. The list is not too long, but as a starting point, *Revue Noire*, Odile Decq and Pascale Martine Tayou are very important.

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By [Y-Jean Mun-Delsalle](#). Y-Jean Mun-Delsalle is a reporter focusing on art, design, architecture, horology and jewelry, and has been writing for Forbes since 2014. She has interviewed [Ai Weiwei](#), [Bernar Venet](#), Jeff Koons, Takashi Murakami, [Julie Mehretu](#), [David Rockwell](#), Frank Gehry, [Ma...](#)

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