

DAK'ART 2016
BIENNALE of DAKAR
May, 3 – June, 2 — 2016

12th Edition of the Dakar Biennale
«The City in the Blue Daylight»

Simon Njami, Artistic Director

PRESS RELEASE

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1. WHAT IS DAK'ART

Dak'Art, The Dakar Biennale, is the first and the major international Art event dedicated to the Contemporary African creation.

Initiated in 1996 by the Republic of Senegal, the biennale is organized by the Ministry of Culture and Communication. Its 12th edition will take place from May 3, to July 11, 2016.

The aims of Dak'Art are to offer the African artists a chance to show their work to a large and international audience, and to elaborate a discourse in esthetic, by participating to the conceptualization of theoretical tools for analyse and appropriation of the global art world.

Mahmadou Rassoul Seydi is the General Secretary of Dak'Art.

Simon Njami, writer and independant curator, is the Artistic Director of the 12th Edition of the Dakar Biennale.

As a departure for Dak'Art 2016, with the title « *The City in the Blue Daylight* », Simon Njami chose an extract from a poem written by Leopold Sedar Senghor :

*« Your voice tells us about the Republic that we shall erect the City
in the Blue Daylight
In the equality of sister nations. And we, we answer: Presents,
Ô Guélowâr ! »*

Those verses inspire Simon Njami's ambition for the Biennale: to make Dak'Art a « new Bandung for Culture ».

2. THE CITY IN THE BLUE DAYLIGHT

« Your voice tells us about the Republic that we shall erect the City in the Blue Daylight In the equality of sister nations. And we, we answer: Presents, Ô Guélowâr ! »

Léopold Sédar Senghor

The title of the pan-African exhibition is closely linked to the general theme of the biennale that invites artistes and beyond the artists all Africans to invent new strategies and aesthetics in order to re-enchant the world and the continent. That for me, how to translate the erection of that City in a Blue Daylight that Senghor was wishing for and that is yet to be build. Africa once had the useful dream of freeing it self from any form of domination. During the independences period, all countries chanted and danced, caught in the enchantment of a world to invent, relationships to forge. More than half a century later, some have been abused; others have lost that enthusiastic flame that was enlightening their gazes. That flame that is the only drive capable of giving the strength to change things. The re-enchantment is the ability to instil a new energy, a new creativity, and a new driving force.

The equality of the sisters nations forces us, once we have declared the role of the Dakar biennale in Africa, to reflect on the strategies

that could apply on a global level, to insure Dakar's role in the development of a more balanced international art scene. If, indeed, Dakar's role in Africa, in the transformation and dissemination of contemporary practices is crucial, thanks to President Senghor who understood the importance of culture of any development, the danger the Senegalese biennale might be face with is the replication of what is conceived in the West. If Africa remains our priority, we must, nevertheless, create some new tools of reflection and implementation of new ways and new ideas regarding theories, practices and production.

This is the reason why I have decided to invite five guest curators from regions that are not explored enough, to rebuild new networks of communication and to exchange on social and curatorial experiences. These new dialogues, I believe, will bear fruits for the future. And set a space for new platforms of interactions.

3. WHO'S SIMON NJAMI

Simon Njami (born in 1962 in Lussan) is a writer and an independent curator, lecturer, art critic and essayist.

He has published his first novel "Cercueil et Cie" in 1985, followed by "Les Enfants de la Cité" in 1987, "Les Clandestins" and "African Gigolo" in 1989, notably. He wrote two biographies, about James Baldwin and Léopold Sédar Senghor.

Njami is the co-founder of *Revue Noire*, a journal of contemporary African and extra-occidental art, and he was Visiting Professor at UCSD (University of San Diego California).

After conceiving the *Ethnicolor Festival* in Paris in 1987, he curated many international exhibitions being among the first ones to think and show African contemporary artists work on international stages. He has served as Artistic Director of *Bamako Encounters*, the *African Photography Biennale*, from 2001 to 2007. Njami is the curator of "Africa Remix", showed in Düsseldorf (Museum Kunst Palast), London (Hayward Gallery), Paris (Centre Pompidou), Tokyo (Mori Museum), Stockholm (Moderna Museet) and Johannesburg (Johannesburg Art Gallery), from 2004 to 2007. He co-curated the first African Pavilion at the 52nd Venice Biennale. He curated the first African Art Fair, held in Johannesburg in 2008, and was the Artistic Director of Luanda Tri

ennale (2010), Picha (Lumumbashi Biennale – 2010), SUD (Douala Triennale – 2010), among others exhibitions and international art events.

The exhibition "The Divine Comedy – Heaven, Hell, Purgatory by Contemporary African Artists" was shown at MMK, The SCAD Museum of Art and at Smithsonian Institution/ African Art Museum, Washington, from 2014 to 2015.

He recently curated the *Walther Collection* at *Maison Rouge* (Paris), end of 2015, beginning of 2016.

4. THE PROGRAM OF DAK'ART 2016

The international exhibition:

Re-enchantments

The title of the main exhibition is closely related to the overall theme of the biennial which invites artists, and above all Africans, to invent new ways to re-enchant the world and the continent. Africa, the practical dream of a liberated Africa, responsible for herself, the dream of a continent whose sons sang and danced the freedom recovered at independence, caught in the spell of a future to be reinvented, has had its ups and downs. Some have been disillusioned, others have lost, in their gaze, this enthusiastic flame which alone can give the strength to change things. The re-enchantment is the reintroduction of new energy, a new creativity, a new momentum. List of the artists below.

A Tribute to the Senegalese artist: Issa Samb aka Joe Ouakam (Sénégal)

And Tributes to:

Great artists have passed away in the course of the past months: Oumar Ly (Sénégal), Souleymane Keita (Sénégal), Amadou Sow (Sénégal), Ismaïla Manga (Sénégal), Sidy Diallo (Sénégal), Leila Alaoui (Marocco-France) and Kiripi Katembo (DR of Congo). The biennial will bestow upon these artists the recognition they deserve.

Carte Blanche

This first carte blanche will be offered to the Doual'art space in Cameroon, in tribute to Didier Schaub. Last year, Didier Schaub, co-founder and artistic director of the Doual'Art space, left us. Since the early 90s, Didier Schaub and Marilyn Douala Bell, his wife, have been promoters and defenders of contemporary creation in Africa. It is a tribute to their pioneering commitment and through them, to the work produced by private organizations across the continent, that is given.

Invited Curators

Dakar capital of the world is the principle that underlies this section, as it does that of the invited countries section. The Senegalese capital must become the place where contemporary spaces are discovered and appreciated that even Europe has not had the curiosity to explore. By inviting people who, thousands of kilometers away, are asking the question of art with the same terms that it is debated on the continent, we are expanding the range of possibilities by breaking the frustrating North / South dichotomy that has prevailed for too long. We intend to assert the international character of Dak'Art, its openness to the world, to mutual exchange and confrontation. For this, six curators from four continents will be invited to pro-

pose an exhibition of three to five artists who would globally reflect the theme of the 2016 edition. We will ensure that these exhibitions are financed by the countries of origin of the guest curators. The invited curators, their projects and the participating artists are:

Nadine Bilong (Cameroon)

Title: Le Manifeste de la Cité dans le jour bleu

With: Jean-François Boclé, Fred Ebami, Myriam Mihindou, Marc Alexandre Oho Bambe & Albert Morisseau Leroy, Barthélémy Togo.

Orlando Britto (Canary Islands)

Title: About denaturalizations, cartographies and legends
With: Idaira del Castillo, Marc Latamie, Valeriano Lopez.

Solange Farkas (Brazil)

Title: Crossings

With: Sonia Gomes, Daniel Lima, Thiago Martins de Melo, Paulo Nazareth, Moises Patricio.

Valentina Levy (Italy)

Title: The witnesses of the invisible

With: Stefano Canto, H.H. Lim, Emo de Medeiros, Chai Siris

Sumesh Sharma (India)

Title: India's search for power 1966-1982

With: Yogesh Barve, Kemi Bassene, Zied Ben Romdhane, Judy Blum,

Ouso Chakola, Martin Chramosta, Samit Das, Julien Froment, Pisurwo Jitendra Suralkar, Raphaël Julliard, Naresh Kumar, Saviya Lopes, François Mazabraud, Aurélien Mole, Charlotte Moth, Somnath Mukherjee, Seema Nusrat, Amol K Patil, Mai-thu Perret, Chloé Quenum, Fazal Rizvi, Mithu Sen, Janek Simon, Eric Stephany, Sawangwongse Yanwghwe.

Sujung Song (Korea)

Title: Hybrid/ Metamorphosis

With: Wang Qingsong, Phan Quang, Noh Suntag, Pradeep Thalawatta, Anida Yoeu Ali.

URBI

Co-curated by Simon Njami and Delphine Calmettes, this programme has been designed to build a network throughout the city and re-enchant popular places which up until now had been left dormant. La Corniche, on which we plan to install shipping containers that will be artist studios and information kiosks, the Market, the Place de L'Indépendance whose hotel's facade could be revitalized by graffiti artists and many other places will be invested to give each Dakarois, and beyond that each Senegalese, the opportunity to participate, each in his or her own measure, in this celebration of African creativity. We plan to move some

of the immobile railroad cars from the station on the Avenue ... where these unconventional places will be invested by artists and will also serve as information kiosks.

States of Opacity

This symposium is curated by Elvira Dyangani Ose and Mara Ambrožič. Alioune Diop had opened the conference of Black writers and artists held at the Sorbonne in Paris in 1956 with these words: "After Bandung, the first most important event for non-European consciences, the 1st World Congress of men of black culture is the second event of the decade." Alioune Diop, *Présence Africaine*, n°8/9/10, 1956

It is up to us to awaken this useful dream through the precious tool that is the Dakar Biennale. We must return to the beginning of things, not to reproduce a pale and outdated copy, but to update the terms of the debate and forge the weapons of a creative sustainability of re-enchantments.

With: Kader Attia, N'Gone Fall, Kodwo Eshun, Jorge Fernandez Torres, Cheryl Finley, Henriette Gunkel, Srećko Horvat, Aliocha Imhoff, Joasia Krysa, Achille Mbembe, Doreen Mende, Miran Mohar, Nana Oforiata-Ayim, Bisi Silva, Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung, Ivor Stodorovky, David Zerbib.

Workshops

Many artists have, quite rightly, expressed the desire for information on international events, market movements, copyrights, etc.

Two workshops are organized for young Senegalese professionals:

- A workshop dedicated to Cultural mediation, directed by Dagara Dakin, to introduce them to the exhibitions of the Biennale. They will thus become the mediators for the local and international audience to the art works.

- A workshop dedicated to the Art critic, directed by Frédérique Chappuis. During the opening week, a daily newspaper will be produced by the participants of the workshop.

The catalogue

A catalogue in two volumes is produced, in partnership with the Kerber publishing House, that will bring together the different sections of the event.

The Dakar Biennale is organized by the Ministry of Culture and Communication of Senegal.

With support from:

The City of Dakar, Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), Royal Air Maroc Transporteur officiel, UEMOA, Ambassade de France à Dakar, Institut français, Wallonie Bruxelles, Ministère des Affaires étrangères du Maroc, Ambassade du Luxembourg au Sénégal, Ambassade des Etats-Unis au Sénégal, Tigo, ASPT, Conseil National du Patronat du Sénégal (CNP), Total, Eiffage, Senegal Handling Services, Senbus Industries, GSIE Technology, Port Autonome de Dakar, Senegal Hotels, Necotrans, Amnesty International, Galeria Mendes wood DM, Ministerio da Cultura do Governo Federal (Brazil), Ministerio des Relações Exteriores do Governo Federal Itamaraty (Brazil), Embaixada do Brasil no Senegal, Associação Videobrasil, Ministry of Culture of Thailand.

With the participation of :

Lettera27, 1:54, Londres, Also Known as Africa, L'Agence à Paris.

Media partners:

TV5, Canal +, Radio Television Suisse (RTS), le Soleil.

5. PARTICIPATING ARTISTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION

66 artists are part of the international exhibition which includes a "Special projects" section:

Akirash AKINDIYA (Nigeria/ USA)

Heba AMIN (Egypt)

Héla AMMAR (Tunisia)

Kader ATTIA (Algeria / France)

Abdulrazaq AWOFESE (Nigeria)

Yassine BALBZIOUI (Marocco)

Sammy BALOJI (DRC)

Arébénor BASSENE (Senegal)

Yesmine BEN KHELIL (Tunisia)

Nabil BOUTROS (France/ Egypt)

Poku CHEREMEH (Ghana)

Mimi CHERONO NG'OK (Kenya)

Julien CREUZET (Martinique)

Gopal DAGNOGO (Ivory Coast)

Dalila DALLEAS BOUZAR (Algeria)

Monica DE MIRANDA (Portugal)

Mbaye Babacar DIOUF (Senegal)

Victor EHIKHAMENOR (Nigeria)

Badr EL HAMMAMI (Marocco)

Yesmine ELMELEEGY (Egypt)

Theo ESHETU (Ethiopia/ UK)

Modupeola FADUGBA (Togo)

Franck FANNY (Ivory Coast)

Jellel GASTELI (Tunisia)

François-Xavier GBRE (Ivory Coast)

Yo-Yo GONTHIER (Ile de la Réunion)

Simon GUSH (South Africa)

Delio JASSE (Angola)

Mouna JEMAL SIALA (Tunisia/ France)

Euridice Getulio KALA (Mozambique)

Samson KAMBALU (Malawi)

Mouna KARRAY (Tunisia)

Bronwyn KATZ (South Africa)

Ala KHEIR (Sudan)

Wanja KIMANI (Kenya)

Moridja KITENGE BANZA (DRC)

Moshekwa LANGA (SA)

Youssef LIMOUD (Egypt)

Michèle MAGEMA (DRC / France)

Anna MAPOUBI (Cameroon)

Safaa MAZIRH (Marocco)

Fatima MAZMOUZ (Marocco)

Yara MEKAWEI (Egypt)

Nandipha MNTAMBO (SA)

Aïda MULUNEH (Ethiopia)

Lavar MUNROE (Bahamas)

MWANGI/ HUTTER (Kenya / Germany)

Moataz NASR (Egypt)

NDOYE DOUTS (Senegal)

Aimé NTAKIYICA (Burundi)

Folakunle OSHUN (Nigeria)

Amira PARÉE (Egypt / Netherlands)

Maurice PEFURA (Cameroon)

Tracey ROSE (SA)

Henri SAGNA (Senegal)

Hippolyte SAMA (Burkina Faso)

Kemang WA LEHULERE (SA)

William WAMBUGU (Kenya)

Ouattara WATTS (Ivory Coast)

Special projects :

Joël ANDRIANOMEARISOA (Madagascar)

Jean-Pierre BEKOLO (Cameroon)

Bili BIDJOCKA (Cameroon)

Anne HISTORICAL (South Africa)

Jems KOKO BI (Ivory Coast)

Fabrice Monteiro (Benin)

Alexis PESKINE (Brazil/ France)

PUMÉ (DR of Congo)

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