



PRESS RELEASE

UNDER MALICK SIDIBÉ'S EYE and a Song against AIDS ARTS OF MALI

June 19, 2019 – January 12, 2020

The Musée Barbier-Mueller is holding **an exhibition in tribute to Malick Sidibé** (1935-2016), a famous Malian photographer who was awarded the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale in 2007, among other prizes. He is the first African photographer and artist to earn that prestigious distinction.

Visitors will first discover the photographer's body of work through about fifteen unpublished portraits taken within the framework of **a competition featuring songs against AIDS**, organized by Monique Barbier-Mueller and held in Mali in 2005. Malick Sidibé photographed the finalists of the competition against the unchanging black-and-white striped backdrop in his studio. Their songs, bearing messages about AIDS prevention, were broadcast over the regional radio stations to the Malian population. Screen shots of the finalists' performances are projected at the exhibition.

Photographic prints, which the collector André Magnin was kind enough to lend to the museum, allow visitors to explore in greater depth Malick Sidibé's oeuvre, described by the collector as "simple images, full of truth and complicity. His photos are imbued with an insouciance and a spontaneity, an ambience of celebration, games, laughter, and life."

The museum, faithful to its mission to make the non-Western arts held in its collections known to the greatest number of people, displays conjointly **an extraordinary set of pieces from Mali**, including pendants, metal ornaments and figurines, masks, seats and statues belonging to the Soninke, Dogon, and Bamana people, to cite only a few. Brought together for the first time in the museum, these works show the admirable creativity of the artists, while opening a window on the many rites and beliefs they sustain.

Malick Sidibé

Malick Sidibé was born to a Fulani family in Soloba, in southwestern Mali. His father was a livestock breeder and farmer, and for a time Malick took part in that life of toil. After studying at the School of Sudanese Craftsmen in Bamako, in 1955 he learned photography from Gérard Guillet, also known as "Gégé la Pellicule." He opened the Malick Studio in 1962 in the working-class neighborhood of Bagdadji, in the heart of Bamako. His work was featured at the inaugural African Photographic Encounters in that city in 1994. A first monograph, written by André Magnin, was devoted to Malick

Sidibé in 1997. In 2003 he received the prestigious Hasselblad Award, granted for the first time to an African photographer; and in 2007 he was awarded the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale for his entire body of work. He died from complications of cancer at the age of eighty, in Bamako, where he had always lived and worked.

Exhibition Catalogue

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue (available in French), which reproduces the photographs of Malick Sidibé, as well as the Malian works on display, with contributions from:

- Monique Barbier-Mueller, president of the Musée Barbier-Mueller and founder of the song competition
- Alexandra Calmy, professor at the Geneva University Hospitals (HUG) specializing in infectious diseases
- Michel Sidibé, Minister of Health and Social Affairs for the Republic of Mali
- André Magnin, collector, general curator of the exhibition *Malick Sidibé, Mali Twist* at the Cartier Foundation for Contemporary Art
- Pierre Amrouche, expert on African art
- Bernard de Grunne, also an expert on African art
- Entries by various specialists on the art of Mali



Photograph by Malick Sidibé of Oumou Bakayoko from Koulikoro. The singer won the song competition.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Under Malick Sidibé's Eye and a Song against AIDS

Arts of Mali

Musée Barbier-Mueller

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Vernissage, June 18, 2019, 6 to 8 p.m.

June 19, 2019, to January 12, 2020

- The Musée Barbier-Mueller is open 365 days a year, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Admission: adults, 8 Swiss francs; students, retirees, persons with disabilities, the unemployed, and groups, 5 francs; children under 12 and schools, FREE.
- Guided tours on request and one Sunday each month.
- The exhibition catalogue *Under Malick Sidibé's Eye and a Song against AIDS* (available in French) is for sale in bookstores, online, and at the museum shop for 35 Swiss francs (32 euros).
- All books published or co-published by the museum are for sale at the entrance to the exhibition halls.
- The Association of Friends of the Museum provides many benefits. For information, contact jcmappus@barbier-mueller.ch, +41 22 312 02 70.

For all requests for high-definition visual materials:

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