

SOMERSET HOUSE PRESS RELEASE



Malick Sidibé: The Eye of Modern Mali **6 October 2016 - 26 February 2017**

Free entry

Terrace Rooms, Somerset House, London

The first UK major solo exhibition of Malick Sidibé, the 'Eye of Bamako' who gave the world a vivid glimpse into African youth culture

This autumn, Somerset House and 1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair, in collaboration with MAGNIN-A Gallery, Paris, is proud to present *Malick Sidibé: The Eye of Modern Mali*, the first major solo exhibition in the UK of the late Malian photographer.

Sidibé is acclaimed for his black-and-white images chronicling the lives and culture of the Malian capital, Bamako, in the wake of the country's independence. Curated by André Magnin and Philippe Boutté, the exhibition will showcase 45 original prints from the 1960s and 1970s around three defined themes: 'Au Fleuve Niger / Beside the Niger River', 'Tiep à Bamako / Nightlife in Bamako', and 'Le Studio / The Studio'.

With the arrival of rock 'n' roll, cutting-edge fashions, and independence in 1960, his images capture the essence of joie de vivre – the energy and exuberance of young, newly independent Africans, experiencing an era of significant social and cultural change.

Sidibé once said "music freed us". Accompanying the photographs, the gallery soundtrack will recreate the spirit and soul of the nightclubs where he shot and his own Studio Malick, where "often it was like a party". Curated by DJ, presenter and African music expert Rita Ray, it will feature an eclectic mix of music and urban sounds to which Sidibé's photographic subjects may have listened, from the familiar rock 'n' roll, pop songs and fusions of the continent in the 60s and 70s to timeless Malian roots music.

Inspired by the exhibition, a pop-up shop compiled by Somerset House and Darkroom will open in the Courtyard Rooms from 19 October, with a collection of one-off, unusual and hard-to-find wares, sourced in or influenced by Mali and Africa. It will include vintage vinyl, contemporary and vintage decorative jewellery, printed and woven bags, scarves and cushions, plus posters, books and stationery.

Sidibé was the first photographer, and first African artist, to receive a Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale in 2007. Other significant awards include The Hasselblad Foundation International Award in Photography in 2003, as well as the Infinity Award from the International Center of Photography in 2008 and winning the Arts and Entertainments category at the World Press Photo competition in 2010.

The exhibition will launch at *1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair* and continue as a standalone show throughout Somerset House's winter season.

**For press enquiries and images, please contact Nina Sandhaus, Press Officer:
press@somersethouse.org.uk / 020 7845 4624**

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Notes to Editors

Dates: 6 October 2016 – 26 February 2017

Open Daily: Saturday – Tuesday: 10:00 – 18:00, Wednesday – Friday: 11:00 – 20:00

Address: Terrace Rooms, South Wing, Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 1LA

Admission: Free

Transport: London Underground: Temple, Embankment, Covent Garden; Network Rail: Charing Cross, Waterloo, Blackfriars

Somerset House public enquiries: 020 7845 4600 | www.somerset.org.uk

Somerset House Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/SomersetHouse>

Somerset House Twitter: @SomersetHouse

Somerset House Instagram: @SomersetHouseLondon

Hashtag: #MalickSidibe

About Somerset House

A unique part of the London cultural scene, Somerset House is an historic building where surprising and original work comes to life. From its 18th century origins, Somerset House has been a centre for debate and discussion – an intellectual powerhouse for the nation. Somerset House is today a key cultural destination in London in which to experience a broad range of artistic activity, engage with artists, designers and makers and be a part of a major creative forum – an environment that is relaxed, welcoming to all and inspirational to visit while providing a stimulating workplace for the cultural and creative industries. Since its opening in 2000, Somerset House has built up a distinctive outdoor public programme including Skate, concerts, an open-air film season and a diverse range of temporary exhibitions throughout the site focusing on contemporary culture, with an extensive learning programme attached. It is one of the biggest community of creative organisations in London including The Courtauld Gallery and Institute of Art, King's College London Cultural Institute and over 100 other creative businesses. It currently attracts approximately 3.2 million visitors every year.

About 1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair

A reference to fifty-four countries that constitute the African continent, the title of 1:54 establishes the parameters of the fair's ethos as a platform that strives to represent multiplicity and showcase the diversity of contemporary African art and cultural production on an international stage. Initiated by Touria El Glaoui in 2013 in London, 1:54 is the leading art fair in Europe and the United States focusing on contemporary art from Africa and the African Diaspora. May 2016 marked the second edition of 1:54 New York, while 1:54 London will return for the fourth consecutive year from 6 – 9 October 2016 at Somerset House.

About MAGNIN-A

MAGNIN-A is a gallery founded in 2009 in Paris by André Magnin, an acknowledged expert in Contemporary and Modern African Art, and directed by Philippe Boutté. MAGNIN-A gallery represents established and emerging artists with a mission to promote Contemporary African Art on the international art market.

An independent curator since 1979, André Magnin started working on non-western Contemporary Art in 1986 for the historic exhibition "Magiciens de la Terre" at the Centre Pompidou and at the Grande Halle de la Villette in Paris. Following this exhibition, he became the head of the C.A.A.C.-The Pigozzi Collection, the most important contemporary African art collection in the world. For 20 years, he split his life between Europe and Africa. He met Malick Sidibé in 1991 in Bamako, and curated his first exhibition in Europe at the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain in Paris in 1995. Since that time, André Magnin and Malick Sidibé worked closely together until his death, and became his worldwide agent.

About Darkroom

The Darkroom concept is defined by a love for the bold and the brave, the crafted and the curious. It strives to make good design accessible, whilst also questioning the norm. Darkroom launched as a design store and brand in 2009 by partners Rhonda Drakeford and Lulu Roper-Caldbeck. For 7 years, its black-walled, joyous graphic interior and unique aesthetic changed the landscape of retail in London. In 2016 the brand has evolved to meet the challenges of contemporary retail with a focus on Darkroom-designed products accessible through e-commerce, wholesale and special pop-up experiences.