

AFRICAN ARTISTS' FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES THE FOURTH EDITION OF 'DIG WHERE YOU STAND' IN BENIN | EXPLORING THE REGENERATIVE POWER OF ART

Building on successful collaborations with Benin through LagosPhoto Festival 2023 and the Benin Pavilion at La Biennale di Venezia 2024, the African Artists' Foundation (AAF) deepens artistic exchange in the country, reflecting on contemporary Identities in Africa And Its Diaspora.

On View: September 27 – December 1, 2024



September 19, 2024 (Ouidah and Cotonou, Republic of Benin) – Following the successful third iteration of traveling exhibition **'Dig Where You Stand: From Coast to Coast'** in Portugal, the **African Artists' Foundation (AAF)**, a non-profit organization and art space based in Lagos, Nigeria, announces its upcoming edition in Benin. Taking place at the Fondation Zinsou Musée, Ouidah, and Les Ateliers Coffi, Cotonou, from September 27 – December 1, 2024, the programming will feature roundtables, workshops and exhibitions focusing on how art can aid in the understanding the collective self. Curated by photographer Delali Ayivi with curatorial advisory from AAF founder Azu Nwagbogu, the exhibitions will showcase over 50 artworks including paintings, photographic works, and installations, by 22 returning and new participating artists.

Creativity and imagination, which are essential for a society to envision its future and make progress, have been neglected or suppressed in West Africa and its diaspora. As a result, people in these regions have struggled to use their own history and culture to shape their evolution. Committed to showcasing art as a means to forge

new, restorative narratives, this edition of *'Dig Where You Stand'* will showcase artists whose practices reflect a modern, self-directed vision of Africa's culture, reconnecting with their roots through their own experiences and histories. Taking place in various cultural spaces in Ouidah and Cotonou, the exhibition will showcase artworks by returning artists from previous editions including Zanele Muholi, and Joana Choumali, as well as new participating artists, such as Beninese artists Charbel Coffi and Roméo Mivekannin and American multimedia artist Bayeté Ross Smith.



Emphasizing the importance of community-centered spaces, the programming will include workshops and roundtables with local and international thinkers, transcending societal boundaries, class divisions, and geographical borders. Examining relations towards nature, religion, (geo-)politics, socio-economics, and time, and how these are linked to the creation of culture and identity, discourse will be centered in exploring homegrown identities from the African continent.

'Dig Where You Stand' was conceived as more than just an exhibition. It was the beginning of a cultural experiment and movement to explore the role of art in shifting the decolonial paradigm away from Western museums towards a location-specific, solution-oriented approach. Emphasizing on travel, migration and (dis)placement, artists and local communities examine the economies of the colonial systems that have historically marginalized vulnerable communities and find new methodologies in the art world, creating a toolkit for commencing regenerative economic processes. *'Dig Where You Stand'* will continue its journey to other locations across Africa, from Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, to Dakar, Senegal, tentatively in 2025.

MEDIA CONTACT:

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

'*Dig Where You Stand*' will be on view from September 27 – December 1, 2024.

For more details about Satellite Venues in Ouidah and Cotonou, please follow African Artists' Foundation on social media or visit www.africanartists.org

Opening Weekend:

Les Ateliers Coffi Cotonou, Benin | September 27, 7 p.m.

Fondation Zinsou Musée, Ouidah, Benin | September 28, 6 p.m.

Fondation Zinsou-Le LAB: Ouidah, Benin | September 29, 5 p.m.

Addresses:

Les Ateliers Coffi
Cotonou Fidjrosse
01BP7774, Benin

Fondation Zinsou Musée
936P+J44,
Ouidah, Benin

Fondation Zinsou-Le LAB
936P+J44,
Ouidah, Benin

Participating Artists:

Bayete Ross Smith, Bruno et Brice ZOUNTOUNNO, Caleb Kwarteng Prah, Charbel Coffi, Dodji Efoui, Enar de Dios Rodríguez, Enrique Ramírez, Joanna Choumali, Kapwani Kiwanga, Kwami Da Costa, Louis Oke-Agbo, MAR+VIN, Natalia Lassalle Morillo, Nedja Were, DJ Orlando, Oroko Radio, Renzo Martens and CATPC, Roméo Mivekannin, Salu Iwadi Studio, Silvia Rosi, Victor Ehikhamenor and Zanele Muholi.

About Delali Ayivi:

Delali Ayivi is a Togolese and German photographer. Delali was born in the US in Baltimore but grew up in Germany. At the Age of 15 she moved to Lilongwe in Malawi. After finishing high school, Delali moved to London to enroll at University of the Arts London. Delali started by photographing her friends and Family in Germany, Togo and Malawi. Finding her great-great-grandfather's work, one of the first Togolese photographers Alex A. Acolatse, inspired Delali to document her surroundings with a focus on fashion. Delali is now based between London and Lomé.

About AAF:

African Artists' Foundation (AAF) founded in 2007, Lagos, Nigeria, is a decentralized, multivalent, metamorphic art space that embraces community values, experimental artistic principles in supporting boundary-breaking and artistic ideas. Over the years, AAF has evolved beyond the limiting shell of a non-profit, to embody an art space that is responsive, attuned to social justice issues, ecology, freedom, community initiatives by empowering creative expression.

AAF is dedicated to fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of contemporary art, design, and culture through residencies, workshops, innovative exhibitions, and educational programs. We aim to further challenge and inspire our community, unearth and develop more talents while also promoting inclusiveness. Our goal is to be a dynamic and interactive space that sparks meaningful dialogue and encourages critical thinking, celebrates community programs and ultimately to become a change-maker through the power of art. [Website](http://www.africanartists.org) | [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/africanartistsfoundation)



The fourth of 'Dig Where You Stand' is supported by:



Image Credits:

1. MAR+Vin, *Symbiosis*. 2021. Courtesy of MAR+Vin and Galerie Gomis.
2. Zanele Muholi, *Aphelile X*, 2020. Courtesy of the artist and African Artists' Foundation.
3. Silvia Rosi, *ABC VLISCO 1*, 2022. Courtesy of the Artist and African Artists' Foundation.