

## AFRICAN ARTISTS' FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES THE SECOND EDITION OF 'DIG WHERE YOU STAND' | ARTISTIC PRACTICES AS TRANSFORMATIVE VESSELS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

*On view in the former colonial palace Palais de Lomé in Togo, the nomadic art exhibition will showcase over 166 artworks by Zanele Muholi, Victor Ehikhamenor, Renzo Martens & CATPC, Michael MacGarry, Kongo Astronauts and Dodji Efoui among other African talents who break away from linear systems and invest back into their communities.*

**On View:** August 12 – December 31, 2023



AUGUST 3, 2023 (Lomé, Togo) – Following the successful inaugural edition of the travelling exhibition 'Dig Where You Stand' in 2022 in Ghana, **African Artists' Foundation (AAF)**, a non-profit organization and art space based in Lagos, Nigeria, is proud to announce its second iteration, titled '**Dig Where You Stand - From Coast to Coast: Seke**'. Exploring the regenerative potential of art in Africa and its diasporas, this year's edition takes place in Lomé, Togo, using art as a restorative medium to investigate the impact of colonial systems in coastal cities and develop new ways of addressing decolonization, restitution, and repatriation. On view from August 12 – December 31, 2023, this year's edition will be held at the former colonial palace Palais de Lomé, Togo's first major contemporary art museum, and satellite venues in various locations in Lomé. Curated by Rosemary Esinam Damalie, General Manager and Workshop Coordinator at the Savannah Centre for Contemporary Art (SCCA) in Tamale, Ghana, with curatorial advisory from AAF founder Azu Nwagbogu, the exhibition will showcase over 166 artworks from various mediums, including painting, photography, video, sculptures, and installation pieces, presenting new and returning artists including Zanele Muholi, Bright Ackwerh, Joana Choumali and Victor

Ehikhamenor, engaging exclusively with artists who break away from linear systems and invest back into their communities.



'Dig Where You Stand - From Coast to Coast: Seke' envisions a symbolic 'Door of Return' as a ship coming back to Africa. Using the Ewe/Eʋegbe word 'Seke' (meaning anchor) as a unifying symbol, the exhibition connects Lomé, Togo, to other Ewe-speaking countries, aligning with the call for African unity. Inspired by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's call for African solidarity, the exhibition explores themes of voyage, displacement, migration, and labor, while addressing the ongoing dialogue of repatriation and restitution. Presenting a multifaceted view of the African continent through visual arts, design and installations, the exhibition showcases the work of African artists with unconventional perspectives.

To broaden accessibility, mobile photo exhibitions, film screenings, and workshops will take place beyond the Palais de Lomé. These initiatives will bring replicas of the exhibition to rural areas, engaging students and teachers in workshops and presenting case studies for inspiration. Texts, captions, and audio will be translated into Ewe, ensuring the participation of local communities in the exhibition. Taking place primarily in the Palais de Lomé, a former symbol of colonial power revived into a contemporary art museum, its transformation strongly aligns with the exhibition's commitment to decolonization through the restorative power of art. For the next six months, the space will be showcasing works by returning artists from 'Dig Where You Stand's inaugural edition, such as Zanele Muholi, Bright Ackwerh, Joana Choumali, Victor Ehikhamenor, Renzo Martens & CATPC, and new participating artists including Michael MacGarry, Kongo Astronauts and Dodji Efovi.





The inaugural edition of 'Dig Where You Stand' was conceived as more than just an exhibition. It was the beginning of a cultural experiment 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. Held at the Savannah Centre for Contemporary Art (SCCA), Tamale, Ghana, in 2022, and at the Palais de Lomé, Togo in 2023, 'Dig Where You Stand' will continue its journey to other locations across Africa, from Benin and Abidjan to Dakar, Senegal tentatively from 2024 - 2026.

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#### NOTES TO EDITORS:

'Dig Where You Stand' will be on view at Palais de Lomé Togo, from August 12 – December 31, 2023.

For more details about Satellite Venues in various locations of Lomé: please follow African Artists' Foundation on social media for agendas and updates.

**Soft Opening:** August 12, 2023

Palais de Lomé, Togo | 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

**Grand Opening:** September 15, 2023

Palais de Lomé, Togo | 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

#### Opening Hours:

Palais de Lomé, Togo

Tuesday - Sunday: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

#### Address:

382 avenue de la Marina- Entrance at Avenue Sarakawa  
Lomé, Togo



## **PARTICIPATING ARTISTS**

Bright Ackwerh, Sika Akpalo, Michael MacGarry, Renzo Martens & CATPC, Joana Choumali, Date Kodjo Amouzou, Dodji Efoui, Camille Tété Azankpo, Victor Eikhamenor, Tessi Kodjovi, Kongo Astronauts, Kugbe Koffi Apelete (KUKOFF), Kwami Da costa, Leopold Ankude Kossi Krampah (LAKA), Zanele Muholi, Thierry Tomety, Jerry Doe-Orlando, Atisso Goha, Chris Parker Edzordzi Sefogah (MEGBORNA), and Hodin Senyon.

## **ABOUT ROSEMARY ESINAM DAMALIE:**

Rosemary Esinam Damalie (b.1993) in Accra, is an artist and curator based in Accra and Tamale, Ghana. Educated in Fine Art at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, Ghana, Damalie's artistic talent flourished in exhibitions such as "Cornfields in Accra" (2016) and "Orderly Disorderly" (2017) organized by blaxTARLINES KUMASI. Recognized as the 2nd runner-up for the Kuenyehia Prize for Contemporary Ghanaian Art in 2018, she has made a mark in the local art scene. Damalie serves as the General Manager and Workshop Coordinator at the Savannah Centre for Contemporary Art (SCCA) in Tamale, significantly contributing to retrospectives of esteemed artists and facilitating numerous art workshops. In 2022, she participated in Documenta Fifteen as an artist in residence, stimulating discourse on the theme of education in the art community. Damalie's artistic journey and extensive involvement in the art community speak volumes about her passion, dedication, and profound contributions to the contemporary art scene in Ghana. With her boundless creativity and unwavering commitment to her craft, she continues to inspire and shape the landscape of the art world, both as an artist and curator.

## **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](#) | [Instagram](#)

## **ABOUT PALAIS DE LOMÉ**

A former colonial palace, serving first as the German, then French governors' residency from 1905 to 1960, the Palais de Lomé is Togo's first major contemporary art museum. After being abandoned for 20 years in the 1990s, the majestic 120-year-old building was revived by Togolese artisans and companies into a space that celebrates cultural heritage and empowers artistic expression, acting as a catalyst of hopeful change for a country. Stretching down to the seafront, the Palais' expansive twenty-seven-acre botanical Park is home to a precious biodiverse environment.

Established in 2019, the Palais de Lomé is a unique art and culture center in West Africa. It mixes heritage, art and biodiversity, and ambitions to "reinvent natural and historical heritage to foster creative talents in Africa" (Sonia Lawson, Founding Director of the Palais de Lomé).

The Palais de Lomé showcases cultural production in visual arts, design, new media, science and technology, culinary arts, performing arts, such as dance, music and theater through diverse settings, exhibition spaces and the many discovery trails that the Park has to offer.

It is a one-of-a-kind space, as Lomé is the only coastal capital city in West Africa to boast such a large Park in a sea-front area. [Website](#) | [Instagram](#)

The second iteration of 'Dig Where You Stand' at the Palais de Lomé, Togo is:

Supported by Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA)



Supported by Outset Partners

outset.

#### About Outset Contemporary Art Fund:

Established in 2003, Outset Contemporary Art Fund is the leading international, independent charity supporting innovative art projects that engage the widest possible audiences. With a presence in nine countries, the charity has raised over £16 million worldwide in support of the creative ecosystem. Outset is recognised for creating influential models of responsive arts philanthropy with its innovative public-private schemes and initiatives. Practising catalytic philanthropy means not only offering crucial funding support but also activating networks and initiating new relationships and partnerships.

Transformative funding models that Outset has established include:

- the [Outset Frieze Tate Fund](#), inviting international curators to join the Tate in selecting and acquiring 100 works of art over 10 years from Frieze for the Tate Collection;
- [Studiomakers](#), providing new solutions to securing the physical spaces needed for creative production and cultural consumption. The initiative co-founded The Creative Land Trust with the Mayor of London, Arts Council England and Bloomberg Philanthropies, now an independent charity purchasing property to be used as artist studios in perpetuity;
- [theVOV](#), a virtual ecosystem presenting monumental exhibitions for the public to enjoy live and on demand. For the first time, museums and galleries join forces on one centralised digital platform, demonstrating unprecedented solidarity and showing a united front to generate funds for the creative sector, whilst making culture more accessible than ever online.

Outset is powered by inspiration, driven by expertise, renowned for its engagement, and focused on effective energy and ideas, with a commitment to being there at the outset of impactful change.

#### About Outset Partners:

Established in 2018, the Outset Partners are a dynamic collective of international philanthropists who work together to meet the evolving needs of the global cultural sector. Awarding impactful grants through a consensus-driven process, the partnership has invested over £1million in the creative ecosystem to date.

A diverse group of leaders, the Outset Partners have a marked international profile, including individuals from Brazil, France, Colombia, Germany, Greece, Japan, the Philippines, South Africa, Taiwan, the United States of



America and the United Kingdom. All are experts and entrepreneurs in their respective fields of philanthropy, education, the art market, fashion, finance, museums, architecture, and jewellery, amongst many other activities, committed together to championing brave and intelligent projects to provoke discourse and transformation in the creative sector.

The application and selection process for the Outset Partners Grants Programme is managed by the Outset team. The group is directed by a Strategy and Research Lead for each cycle, crafting a framework for Outset Partners' deliberations and decision-making, and supporting their uniquely iterative and consensus-driven approach to funding transformation.

*Image Credits:*

1. *'Intrication quantique – Rivière Kwenge, DR Congo'* by Kongo Astronauts, 2021, Courtesy Axis Gallery, NY.
2. *AGAMA* by Dodji Efoui, 2023, Courtesy of Dodji Efoui.
3. *Palais de Lomé building exterior*, Courtesy of Studio Erick Sallet
4. *Palais de Lomé Park*, Courtesy of Studio Erick Sallet