

AFRICAN ARTISTS' FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES ARTIST LINEUP FOR LAGOSPHOTO FESTIVAL'S LARGEST EXPANSION

THEME: 'GROUND STATE – FELLOWSHIP WITHIN THE UNCANNY'

On View: October 27 – December 31, 2023

Curated by AAF's founder and director **Azu Nwagbogu**, and East Wing Artistic Director (Dubai, UAE) **Peggy Sue Amison**, the 14th edition of the international photography festival will bring together 38 national and international artists igniting hopeful visions of change, showcasing their photographic works in Nigeria and in the festival's first-ever geographical expansion, the Republic of Benin.



October 9, 2023 (Benin and Nigeria) – The **African Artists' Foundation**, a non-profit organization and art space based in Lagos reveals the final selection of artists participating in the 14th edition of the **LagosPhoto Festival**, an international photography festival taking place from **October 27 – December 31, 2023**. Bringing together 38 national and international artists, this year's edition welcomes talents from all over the world including *Nigeria, Republic of Benin, United States of America, Ireland, and Australia*, showcasing myriad of artistic visions for hopeful change. The final selection includes returning artists such as Raquel van Haver and Zanele Muholi, and newcomers including Arko Datto, Eugenia Lim, and Rehab Eldalil. This year's theme, 'Ground State – Fellowship Within the Uncanny' will bring together photographic works exploring the present moment and envisioning repair, syncopation, putrefaction, restitution, and restoration. Marking the first time in its history that the event is held beyond Lagos, the festival extends to Cotonou, Ouidah, and Porto-Novo in the Republic of Benin. This geographical expansion offers a wider audience the opportunity to engage with the powerful works of talented photographers, challenging our own complicity in a culture of desire founded on consumption.

Photography has always held a mysterious power. In the past two decades, it has played a significant role in the rise of post-truth ideologies encouraging divisive and tribal societies. The malaise of the twenty-first century presents unsettling possibilities and anxieties surging from dystopian post-covid realities, growing conflicts, and the indelible signs of climate change. Recalcitrant colonial mindsets continue to judge worth through an impossible hierarchy. Efforts to imagine decolonized and sustainable futures have been captured in recurring hierarchies of different entities delivering the same results. As society reaches a *Ground State*, where everything humanity knows as 'common sense' no longer applies, there is an urge to restore, repair and reconstitute the mysteries of oral histories and aspects vital for survival. For its 2023 edition LagosPhoto Festival invites artists to showcase new perspectives of humanity's revival and equilibrium through hopeful visions of social, political, environment and spiritual change.



Initiated in 2010, LagosPhoto has since created a community of local and international artists united through contemporary photography encapsulating individual experiences and identities from the African continent. Through an extensive program of exhibitions, workshops, screenings and large-scale outdoor installations, the festival promotes education and reclaims public spaces, engaging local and global audiences with the continent's historical and contemporary stories narrated through photography.

As in this year's edition taking place in the Republic of Benin and Nigeria, the festival's recurring topics of restitution and cultural heritage have set the tone for groundbreaking programs. In 2020's 'Rapid Response Restitution – The Home Museum', audiences were invited to produce a fast shutter retrieval of their personal and family's cultural heritage to be presented in an inclusive digital exhibition, sparking an interest and conversation on cultural heritage and a visual intellect amongst citizens. 'Searching for Prince Adewale Oyenuga' in 2021 presented a project about a missing suitcase with a historic archive of photos and paintings left in Barcelona and repatriated to Nigeria, highlighting the thematic of restitution. In 2022 'Remember Me—Liberated Bodies; Charged Objects' interrogated the photography's influence in shaping, archiving, and ordering the stories of communities and individual identities, determining the way the present and future are constructed.



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NOTES TO EDITORS:

LagosPhoto Festival will be on view from October 27 – December 31, 2023, in select venues in Lagos, Nigeria and Cotonou, Ouidah, and Porto-Novo, Benin.

**For updates on additional venues and programming in Nigeria and Benin, please follow us on our social media for agendas and updates.*

Grand Opening in Cotonou, Benin: October 27, 2023

*Venue to be announced

Grand Opening in Lagos, Nigeria: November 2, 2023

African Artists' Foundation | 4:00 p.m.

Address:

3B Isiola Oyekan Close, Off Adeleke Adedoyin St, Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria

Additional Venues in Benin

Fondation Zinsou,

936P+J44, Ouidah, Benin | Mon: 1:00 PM – 6:00 PM, Wed – Thu: 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM

Route du Gondouana, Cotonou, Benin | Mon: 2:00 PM – 7:00 PM, Wed – Thu: 10 AM – 7:00 PM

Borna Soglo Gallery

9C5P+CHM, Cotonou, Benin | Tue – Fri: 11:00 AM – 7:00 PM

Galleries Les Ateliers Coffi

Fidjrosse 01BP7774, Cotonou, Benin

Gallery A

Cotonou, Benin

Maison Rouge Cotonou Hotel

Boulevard de la Marina, Cotonou – Benin

Gallery 3.0 (Maison Samuel Degnon)

Porto Novo, Benin

Additional Venues in Nigeria

Alliance Francaise de Lagos

9 Osborne Rd, Ikoyi 106104, Lagos, Nigeria | Mon – Fri: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM, Sat: 9 AM – 2 PM

Falomo Under Bridge

CCRG+FC4, Akin Adesola St, 106104, Lagos, Nigeria

Federal Government Printing Press

No. 9 Broad Street, Lagos Island, Lagos, Nigeria

Soto Gallery

10, Omo Osagie Street, Ikoyi, Lagos, Nigeria.

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.

ABOUT LAGOSPHOTO:

Launched in 2010, LagosPhoto is the first international arts festival of photography in Nigeria. In a month-long festival, events include exhibitions, workshops, artist presentations, discussions, and large-scale outdoor prints displayed throughout the city with the aim of reclaiming public spaces and engaging the general public with multifaceted stories of Africa. LagosPhoto aims to establish a community for contemporary photography which will unite local and international artists through images that encapsulate individual experiences and identities from across all of Africa. LagosPhoto presents and educates about photography as it is embodied in the exploration of historical and contemporary issues, the sharing of cultural practices, and the promotion of social programmes.

Image Credits:

- 1. Fikayo Adebayo, The Flesh Is Here but The Soul Is Gone - What Remains, courtesy of Fikayo Adebayo.*
- 2. Arko Datto, Shunyo Raja (Kings of a Bereft Land) - Tara Mutata, courtesy of Arko Datto.*
- 3. Federico Estol, Shine Heroes, courtesy of Federico Estol.*