

## Celebrating Tradition

10 April 2018



“These are the fresh faces of the continent’s urban culture.” – Omar Victor Diop (b. 1980). In a rapidly changing world, it is increasingly important to foreground the viewpoints of the next generation. Evora Africa, Évora, is a celebration of African heritage and cultural production, offering a diverse programme of exhibitions, concerts and performances. Interweaving tradition and innovation, the festival celebrates the continent’s growing contemporary arts and music scene whilst exploring the historical connections between Africa and Portugal. Forging cultural bonds, it represents the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Senegal, South Africa and Burkina Faso, providing a platform for international creative exchange.

The main contemporary exhibition, *African Passions*, offers a variety of fresh perspectives on the modern world and the experiences of young people. The show features work by Malian photographer Malick Sidibé (b. 1936), who is known for recording Mali’s exuberant youth culture in the 1950s. As part of a new generation of practitioners embodying their subject matter, the artist’s spontaneous, playful images (shown above) document the parties, festivities and social life that defined the moment, capturing groups dancing, laughing and celebrating life.

In a similar way, Diop’s images, also on display, use photography to capture the diversity of modern African lifestyles. An interdisciplinary approach combines photography and design, creating compositions that bridge the boundaries between fashion, advertising and portraiture. Drawing on themes of diaspora and protest, the collection offers a timely and powerful insight that reaches beyond aesthetic representation and delves into urban culture.

Other notable practitioners include emerging artist Phumzile Khanyile (b. 1991), whose series of intimate self-portraits, *Plastic Crowns*, explores the female experience. By breaking down

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social taboos through an explicit investigation into sexual politics, the work provides a frank and informal look at a woman's everyday life. It is through this unique visual language that Khanyile blends personal and universal narratives, forging an emotive and revealing collection of snapshots that read like a private journal. As the artist notes: "I wanted to unveil the dysfunction and speak about what really happens behind closed doors."

From 25 May.

### **Credits:**

**1. Malick Sidibé, Nuit de Noël (Happy Club), 1963. © Malick Sidibé, Courtesy galerie MAGNIN-A, Paris.**

<http://www.aestheticamagazine.com/celebrating-tradition/>