



September 14, 2016

**The 1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair is taking place at Somerset House in London from October 6 – 9 and founder Touria el Glaoui told us what to watch out for.**

The fourth year of the fair promises to be bigger and better; Touria and her team are preparing a cracker of a show.

Get set for Malick Sibidé's first UK solo show, Zak Ové's Nubian army of masked men in the courtyard and music from Gilles Peterson's Worldwide FM.

Diversity is key to the fair, Touria explained, as it seeks to 'reconfigure the misconceived ideas of a single "African aesthetic".'

We've listed the eight unmissable things to do at 1:54, but we can't help but agree with Touria: 'In terms of my favourites at the fair, I can never choose!'

1.

Visit 16 Africa-based galleries in one afternoon

There's no need for you to traipse around the continent; you can visit lots of galleries from the north, south, east and west of Africa in an afternoon.

'We are thrilled to have 16 Africa-based galleries, of which 6 are from North Africa, exhibiting at 1:54.' Touria told us. 'Many of these are joining us in London for the first time, including Village Unhu from Harare, Zimbabwe; Mashrabia Gallery of Contemporary Art from Cairo, Egypt; and L'Atelier 21 from Casablanca, Morocco.'

2.

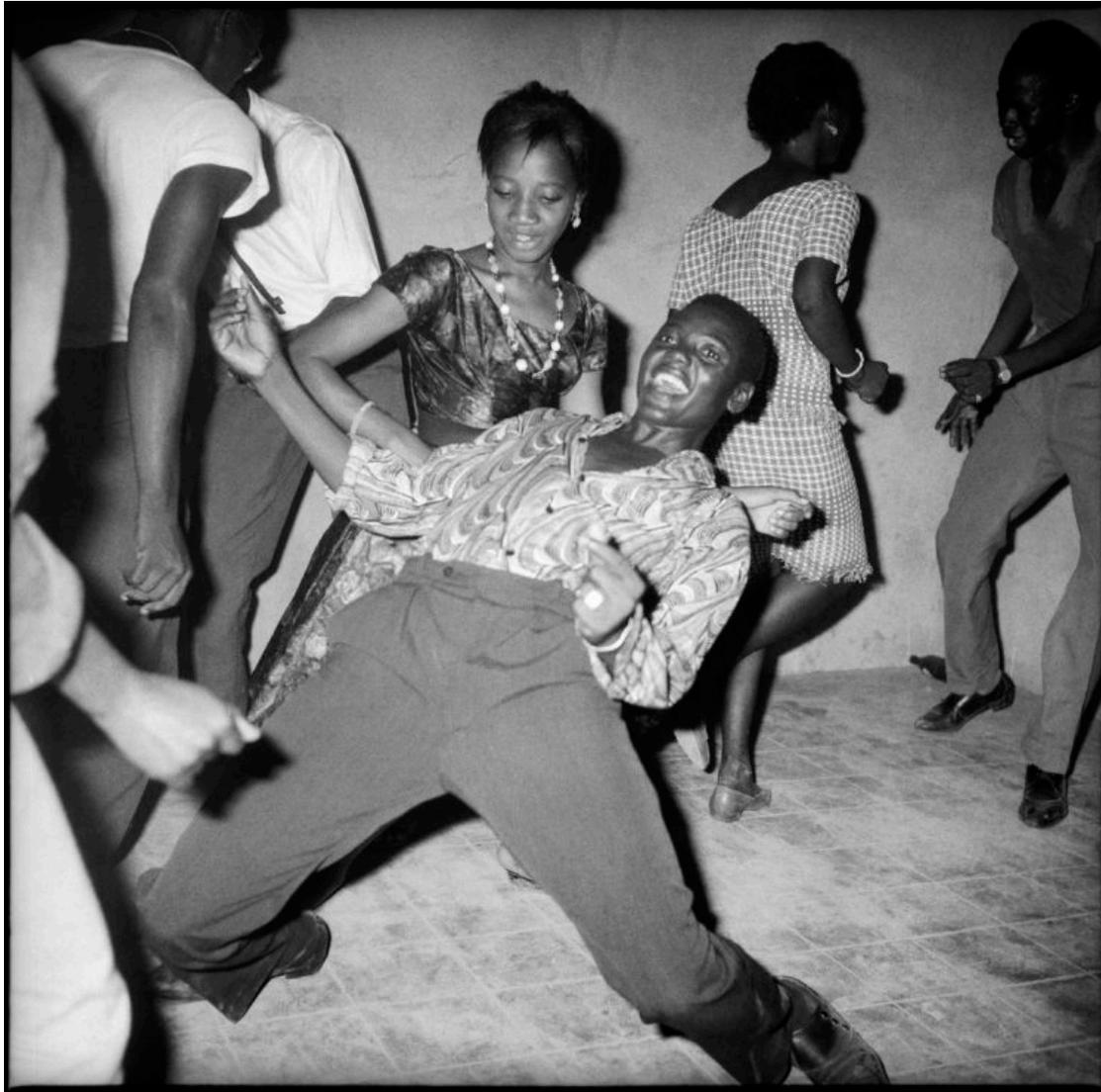
Listen up as 1:54 hits the airwaves

There will be a live three-day broadcast by Gilles Peterson's new global music-radio platform Worldwide FM during the fair. Artists and musicians will be passing through and Thris Tian will be officiating.

3.

**Catch Malick Sibidé's first major UK solo show**

**Put on in collaboration with Somerset House and the Magnin-A gallery, this exhibition will be at the heart of the 1:54 fair. Touria calls the Malian photographer 'extremely influential' and is 'thrilled to have been able to help facilitate his first major UK show.'**



**Malick Sidibé, Look at me!, 1962. Courtesy of the artist and MAGNIN-A gallery, Paris.**

The show will present 45 original prints from the 1960s and 1970s around three themes: 'Au Fleuve Niger / Beside the Niger River', 'Tiep à Bamako / Nightlife in Bamako', and 'Le Studio / The Studio'.

He's the original street-style photographer.

4.

Grab lunch at Barthélémy Togo's Mobile Cafe

The cafeteria will be a bit like the 'tournedos cafés' you can find in Africa and will give you the chance to taste the coffee produced in Bandjoun, a town and commune in western Cameroon.

Barthélémy Togo is an artist but he's also the founder of Bandjoun Station, a gallery, museum, studio space, performance hall and farm based in Bandjoun, where his parents are from.

The cafeteria will give us a taste of his amazing non-for-profit art centre.

5.

Walk among Zak Ové sculptures in the courtyard

These resin and jesmonite sculptures will populate the imposing courtyard of Somerset House. It's the first time 1:54 have taken over the courtyard and it should be spectacular (and offer lots of selfie opportunities).



Somerset House before the Nubian takeover.

6.

Lounge around in Ifeanyi Oganwu's curated space

Artist and designer Ifeanyi Oganwu will collaborate with Galerie Armel Soyer, a textile design firm Toghla and visual artist Phoebe Boswell on a group of works for the 1:54 Lounge.

7.

Educate yourself at the FORUM talks

The FORUM is one of our favourite parts of 1:54 and this year curator Koyo Kouoh has assembled a programme around contemporary art (of course) but also fashion, photography, object and furniture design, urbanism and architecture.

Curator Ekow Eshun will be talking about dandyism and black masculinity (see our review of the exhibition here); artist Serge Attukwei Clotte will discuss his work; and there will be a host of talks about African architecture – its distinctiveness and development – with representatives from RA Projects, Adjaye Associates and NLÉ (who built the Makoko Floating School in Lagos).

8.

See some of the best art out there

Some of our favourite artists will be represented at the fair, including Aboudia, Billie Zangewa, Hassan Hajjaj, Mustafa Maluka (see the header image), Abdoulaye Konaté and Namsa Leuba.



Billie Zangewa, Mood Indigo, 2016

There will also be a chance to see *The Arab Spring Notebook* by Ibrahim El Salahi. Remember: the Arab Spring started in Africa.

You can check in on the restaurant chain Nando's art collection (they boast one of the largest contemporary southern African art collections in the world); a special exhibition straight from the Addis Foto Fest; and Alexandra Karakashian's *PASSAGE*, a site-specific exploration of her family's migration from Armenia, down through Africa, to Joburg.

<http://trueafrica.co/lists/8-things-to-look-forward-to-at-1-54-contemporary-african-art-fair/>