

MiBACT  
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PALAZZO LITTA CULTURA  
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Il progetto di



Ministero dei beni  
e delle attività culturali  
e del turismo

Segretariato Regionale  
per la Lombardia



Milan, February 2018

Press release

## CONTEMPORARY AFRICA IS ON EXHIBITION AT PALAZZO LITTA CULTURA

Starting from March 15<sup>th</sup> in Milan, the exhibition *AfricaAfrica, exploring the Now of African design and photography* will describe the transformations in Africa through design and photography.

**Palazzo Litta Cultura**, the cultural project born from the cooperation between the Ministry of Culture and Tourism for Lombardy and MoscaPartners, continues its exploration of the contemporary world in 2018, moving from Japan to Africa with the *AfricaAfrica, exploring the Now of African design and photography exhibition*, sponsored by the Embassy of the Ivory Coast, the South African Consulate and the Burkina Faso Consulate.

With a look at the contemporary design of **sub-Saharan Africa** - the area of over 24 million square kilometres extending from east to west on the southern Sahara line - **design, photography, music and cinema** are once again intertwined in programming an interdisciplinary proposal: twenty-two creatives, through forty design products of the last two years (2016-2017) and fifty-five photographic works express their unprecedented point of view, giving back the image of a dynamic, innovative and vital reality.

The creators of the exhibition are **MoscaPartners and MIA Photo Fair Projects**, respectively curators of the design and photography section; at the same time, the musical programming is curated by **Ponderosa Music&Art**.

"We have chosen designers who represent the great heterogeneity of this extensive and semi-unknown area of a world very close to us, as is Africa", says **Elisa Astori**, curator for MoscaPartners in the section dedicated to design, with the contribution of the South African designer **Cara Judd**.

The natural materials, the inspiration to archetypal forms of the land of origin, the constant presence of colour, the reuse of recycled materials such as plastic, metal sheet and wood

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are recurring features in the works of the designers on show. The great freedom expressed in the design approach allows them to give shape to objects with a highly original aesthetic.

Examples are the works of **Birsel&Seck** and the intertwining of **Stephen Burks**, the metal sheet and oil barrels artifacts by **Hamed Ouattara** and **Ousmane Kouyate**, the interpretations of daily objects of **Inoussa Dao**, the lamps made with plastic bottles by **Haeth Nash**.

The unusual seats and cupboards made with weapons and projectiles by **Gonçalo Mabunda** and the poetic reinterpretations of the hulls of abandoned wooden boats by **Jean Servais Somian** are surprising.

The natural materials are at the centre of the research by **Peter Mabeo**, **Pate** and **Francis Kéré**, **Nifemi Marcus Bello** designs for self-construction, **Cara/Davide's** sculptures are a tribute to the primitive forms of African aesthetics.

The photographic section, curated by **MIA Photo Fair Projects** in cooperation with **Maria Pia Bernardoni**, curator of the international projects of **LagosPhoto Festival**, offers a selection of contemporary African artists who explore the communicative potential of the photographic medium through a modern language, which goes beyond the limits of traditional function of document or portrait.

"The artists on show offer us a vision of contemporaneity, because they represent the ferment, energy, vision and aesthetics of the local people and tell us about Africa today. But above all, with their work they individually face contemporary socio-political issues that don't concern only the continent but have a global resonance", says **Maria Pia Bernardoni**.

The examples are the Ivorian photographer **Joana Choumali** who, in her delicate fully hand embroidered images, explores the theme of migrations and ties that are broken or lost and are constantly interrupted in many African countries; **Siwa Mgoboza** and **Nobukho Nqaba**, both South Africans, question their identity in relation to social and cultural influences; **Maurice Mbikayi**, Congolese, unmasks the phenomenon of the abandonment of digital waste by creating garments of sinister elegance; the South African **Andile Buka**, with his elegant black-and-white reconstructions, or the Kenyan **Osborne Macharia**, with colourful images and attention to detail. **Omar Victor Diop's** work, presented in cooperation with the Magnin-A gallery, is an important reflection on the presence of African historical figures and the key role they played in shaping European economic and cultural history.

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For the entire duration of the exhibition, **every Thursday at 6:30 pm, in-depth meetings** on current events and African culture are planned, with experts and critics from the fields of design, architecture, photography, music and cinema.

The first meeting ***AfricaAfrica, exploring the Now of African design and photography*** on **March 15th** - will focus on contemporary creativity in Africa, with the participation of some exhibited artists, such as **Cara/Davide, Conrad Hicks, Jean Servais Somian, Peter Mabeo** and the photographers **Siwa Mgoboza** and **Joana Choumali**; on **March 22<sup>nd</sup>**, **Carlo Vezzoli** and **Elisa Bacchetti**, professors of the Milan Polytechnic - Design Department, will discuss during the talk ***Sustainable Energy for Africa by Design*** the theme of sustainable energy; in ***Made in Slums, necessary waste*** the problem of waste in the African slums and their possible re-use through design will be discussed on **March 29th** by **Francesco Faccin**.

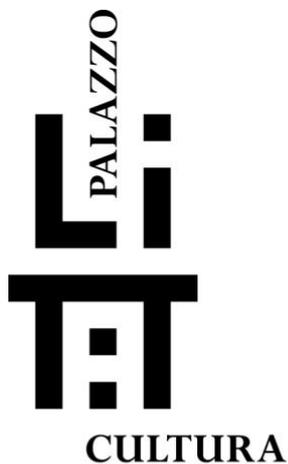
*AfricaAfrica, exploring the Now of African design and photography* is an exhibition that breaks with the stereotypes, with the obsolete imaginary of the needy and helpless continent, and offers a current analysis of society, a vision for the future, an awareness to be taken into consideration that represents a moment of reflection and a source of inspiration for the whole world.

**BonelliErede** has decided to support the *AfricaAfrica* photography exhibition as sponsor. A commitment that follows that of the South Africa Pavilion Partner at the last Venice Art Biennial and shows how BonelliErede is particularly interested in everything related to the African continent, including the rapid growth of the art market, participating with interest also to initiatives related to contemporary art in Africa, the continent where it operates with two offices in Egypt and in Ethiopia.

The products are granted by **Moroso Spa** for Birsell&Seck, **Dedon** for Stefan Burk, **Riva 1920** for Francis Kéré.

The historical brand **Visco** - exhibition partner - tells about African colors and creativity through textiles selected for the display and through two videos, the Afro-futuristic short film *An Alien in Town* by **Daniel Obasi** shows the story of an alien within the Lagos metropolis; the second video is an animation made by the colors and the graphics of the textiles.

Technical partners of design exhibition: **Foscarini Illuminazione** e **De Castelli**.



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Technical partners of the photo exhibition: **Hahnemühle FinArt FinArt** for fine art printing on Photo Rag® Baryta paper and **BIG / CiaccioArte**.

**Cape Best** - boutiques of South African products in Corso Garibaldi 44 in Milan - offers for the inauguration event three wines among the directly imported labels, among the best accredited by the Guida Platter's.

The exhibition is produced in collaboration with the **African, Asian and Latin American Film Festival**.

The complete press kit is available at the link:  
[press.rotajorfida.com/palazzolittacultura](http://press.rotajorfida.com/palazzolittacultura)

**PALAZZO LITTA CULTURA**  
*AfricaAfrica, exploring the Now of African design and photography*  
March 15 - April 2, 2018

Opening hours: Thursday to Sunday from 12pm to 7pm

Inauguration: Wednesday, March 14, 2018 at 6:30 pm  
By invitation.

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