

STUDIO MUSEUM HARLEM

For Immediate Release

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Flow

Contemporary African artists in the twenty-first century

On view: April 2 - June 29, 2008



Otobong Nkanga
Alterscape Stories: Spilling Waste (detail), 2006
Courtesy the artist

NEW YORK, NY, March 14, 2008—The Studio Museum in Harlem is proud to open the spring season with *Flow*, a survey of new work by twenty emerging African artists. With more than eighty works, this exhibition reflects the multiple influences and thematic breadth of these artists, who live and work throughout Africa, Europe and North America.

“*Flow* is both an exhibition and a concept concerned with the multiple ways people, resources, cultures and ideas move,” says Christine Y. Kim, Associate Curator, who organized the exhibition. “*Flow* reflects a critical moment in the connected histories of African, African-American and transnational black life, and we expect that New York and Harlem will be particularly responsive to this unprecedented group of international artists.”

Born after the African independence struggles of the 1950s, 60s and 70s, this generation of artists has witnessed changes in political, economic and social realities, from the shifting of national borders to an influx of foreign investment and renewed exploitation on the African continent. The work they produce extends beyond geographic borders and is informed by the complexities that underlie Africa’s recent history and facile representations of the continent in global mass media.

The diversity of media in the exhibition—painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, video and installation—reflects the artists’ multidisciplinary training and experience, as well as their critical approaches. Their idiosyncratic imaginations move between discourses of visual art and aesthetics, philosophy and critical theory, and popular and material culture. Through an innovative use of materials such as broken Moroccan tea glasses, horse-jumping poles and rubber, some of the artists in this exhibition explore themes of immigration, violence and the failures of

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assimilation. Other artists reinterpret the more traditional medium of portraiture by depicting their subjects as displaced, fragmented or masked. And still others call upon everyday objects such as vinyl records, televisions, soap and furniture as they question mass consumption and the production of images in capitalist culture, as well as sexual taboos.

Flow is the third in a series of emerging artist exhibitions presented by the Studio Museum that includes *Freestyle* (2001) and *Frequency* (2005). Like its predecessors, *Flow* illustrates the individuality and complexity of twenty-first-century contemporary art, this time from creators around the world. While the majority of these artists have exhibited abroad, many are new to U.S. audiences. This exhibition is an extension of the Museum's mission to serve as a nexus for artists of African descent locally, nationally and internationally.

The exhibition includes work by:

Adel Abdessemed	b. 1971, Constantine, Algeria, lives and works in Paris, France
Joël Andrianomearisoa	b. 1977, Antananarivo, Madagascar, lives and works in Paris, France
Ananias Léki Dago	b. 1970, Abidjan, Ivory Coast, lives and works in Paris, France
Modou Dieng	b. 1970, Saint-Louis, Senegal, lives and works in Portland, Oregon
Latifa Echakhch	b. 1974, El Khnansa, Morocco, lives and works in Paris, France, and Martiny, Switzerland
Mounir Fatmi	b. 1970, Tangiers, Morocco, lives and works in Paris, France
Thierry Fontaine	b. 1969, Saint-Denis, Réunion, lives and works in Nouméa, New Caledonia and Brisbane, Australia
Nicholas Hlobo	b. 1975, Cape Town, South Africa, lives and works in Johannesburg, South Africa
Olalekan B. Jeyifous	b. 1977, Ibadan, Nigeria, lives and works in Brooklyn, New York
Moshekwa Langa	b. 1975, Bakenberg, South Africa, lives and works in Amsterdam, the Netherlands and Paris, France
Michèle Magema	b. 1977, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, lives and works in Paris, France
Mustafa Maluka	b. 1976, Cape Town, South Africa, lives and works in Berlin, Germany
Thando Mama	b. 1977, Butterworth, South Africa, lives and works in Cape Town, South Africa
Trokon Nagbe	b. 1977, Bassa County, Liberia, lives and works in Brooklyn, New York
Grace Ndiritu	b. 1976, Birmingham, United Kingdom, lives and works in London, United Kingdom
Otobong Nkanga	b. 1974, Kano, Nigeria, lives and works in Amsterdam, the Netherlands and Paris, France
Dawit L. Petros	b. 1972, Asmara, Eritrea, lives and works in Brooklyn, New York
Elias Sime	b. 1968, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, lives and works in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Nontsikelelo "Lolo" Veleko	b. 1977, Bodibe, South Africa, lives and works in Johannesburg, South Africa
Lynette Yiadom-Boakye	b. 1977, London, United Kingdom, lives and works in London, United Kingdom

The exhibition will be accompanied by an extensive full-color catalogue with essays on each of the twenty artists by contemporary historians, critics and writers, including Virginie Andriamirado, Rory Bester, Elizabeth Harney, Sarah Kent, Mariam Sharp and Kristina Van Dyke. The catalogue will also include several in-depth essays to provide context and offer analyses of African politics, global image-making and the contemporary international art world these transnational artists inhabit. Writers of these essays include Segun Afolabi (author, *A Life Elsewhere*), N'goné Fall (former Managing Editor, *Revue Noire*), Achille Mbembe (Senior Researcher, Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research) and Gabi Ngcobo (Curator and Head of Research, Cape Africa Platform).

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EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS

In conjunction with the spring 2008 exhibition and project season, The Studio Museum in Harlem's Department of Education and Public Programs offers a range of programs, activities and events that will incorporate artists, scholars and critics in thought-provoking discussions on a wide variety of issues central to the works on view. For more information on public programs, please visit www.studiomuseum.org, or call 212.864.4500 x264.

Wednesday, May 28, 6–8pm

Topic in Focus Panel: Black Transculturalism

Several scholars and artists convene to discuss how notions of diaspora have been used to frame an international or globally relevant black art. They will consider both the appeals and the critiques of this paradigm and explore the possibilities for renewed or alternative frameworks to describe the experience of trans-nationality.

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Topics in Focus is FREE. Seating is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis. Please call 212.864.4500 x264 to reserve a space.

ABOUT THE STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM

The Studio Museum in Harlem is a contemporary art museum that focuses on the work of artists of African descent locally, nationally and globally, as well as work that has been inspired and influenced by African-American culture, through its exhibitions, *Artist-in-Residence* program, education and public programming, permanent collection and archival and research facilities.

The Studio Museum in Harlem is committed to serving as a unique resource in the local community, and in national and international arenas, by making artworks and exhibitions concrete and personal for each viewer. The Museum provides a context within which to address the contemporary and historical issues presented through art by artists of African descent.



Photo: Ray A. Llanos

Since 1968, the Studio Museum has earned recognition for its catalytic role in promoting the works of artists of African descent. The Museum's *Artist-in-Residence* program has supported over ninety graduates who have gone on to highly regarded careers. A wide variety of education and public programs have brought the African-American experience alive for the public by means of lectures, dialogues, panel discussions and performances, as well as interpretive programs, both on- and off-site, for students and teachers. The exhibitions program has also expanded the scope of art historical literature through the production of scholarly catalogues, brochures and pamphlets.

The Studio Museum's permanent collection contains over 1,700 works, including drawings, pastels, prints, photographs, mixed-media works and installations. It is comprised of works created by artists during their residencies, as well as pieces given to the Museum to create an art-historical framework for artists of African descent. Featured in the collection is Terry Adkins, Romare Bearden, Robert Colescott, Melvin Edwards, David Hammons, Richard Hunt, Lois Mailou Jones, Jacob Lawrence, Norman Lewis, Julie Mehretu, Senga Nengudi, Chris Ofili, Martin Puryear, Betye Saar, Nari Ward and Hale Woodruff, among others. The Museum also is the custodian of an extensive archive of the work of photographer James VanDerZee, the quintessential chronicler of the Harlem community from 1906 to 1984.

The Studio Museum in Harlem is supported, in part, with public funds provided by the following government agencies and elected representatives:

The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency; Council Member Inez E. Dickens, 9th C.D.; Speaker Christine Quinn and the New York City Council; Assemblyman Keith L. T. Wright, 70th C.D. through New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and Manhattan Borough President, Scott M. Stringer.

ADDRESS

The Studio Museum in Harlem is located at 144 West 125th Street, between Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard and Lenox Avenue. Subway: A, B, C, D, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 to 125th Street. Bus: M-2, M-7, M-10, M-100, M-101, M-102 or BX-15.

ADMISSION

Suggested donation: \$7 for adults, \$3 for students (with valid identification) and seniors. Free for children 12 and under. The first Saturday of every month is free for everyone.

HOURS

The Museum is open Wednesday through Friday, and Sunday from 12:00 to 6:00 p.m., and from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Saturday. The Museum is closed on Monday, Tuesday and major holidays. Phone: 212.864.4500. Fax: 212.864.4800. www.studiomuseum.org.