

**For Immediate Release**

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## Africa Comics

The first-ever exhibition of comic art from Africa comes to The Studio Museum in Harlem  
On view: November 15, 2006 through March 18, 2007



Tuf, *Komerera*, 2001  
Courtesy of the artist, Africa e Mediterraneo, Bologna and CEFA – Il seme della solidarietà, Bologna

**NEW YORK, NY, October 18, 2006** – A new generation of African artists is expressing itself through a medium most Americans associate with superheroes and funny pages. Using comics, this talented group depicts the rage, desperation, hope, and humor of daily life in Africa. In partnership with Africa e Mediterraneo, a non-profit organization based in Bologna, Italy, The Studio Museum in Harlem is thrilled to present *Africa Comics*, the first-ever exhibition in the United States dedicated exclusively to comic art from across the continent. The work, which

addresses issues as wide-ranging as corruption, human rights, immigration, and the plight of women, provides an unprecedented glimpse into modern Africa.

As a project, *Africa Comics* was developed by Africa e Mediterraneo in 2001. The organization had just completed a series of projects and publications centering on African contemporary art as a way of establishing cross-cultural communication between Italy and Africa. Comic art presented itself as an ideal medium by which to address the wide range of social and political issues facing Africa—including refugees, public health, political conflicts, poverty, oppression, tribal traditions, and religion—from the point of view of its citizens. Africa e Mediterraneo then held a series of competitions and exhibitions that would include the work of prominent African comics artists (many of whom live in Europe), including T.T. Fons of Senegal and Gado of Tanzania, as well as unknown artists who brought new perspectives, ideas, and artistic styles to the field.

*Africa Comics* includes 32 artists or 2-person artists' teams from all over the continent of Africa, including Angola, Benin, Central African Republic, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, and Togo.

*Africa Comics* will be on display from November 15, 2006, to March 18, 2007, in the Studio Museum's Mezzanine Gallery. The exhibition will be accompanied by a full-color catalogue of approximately 200 pages. It will be fully illustrated with reproductions of all work included in the exhibition and English translations. This catalogue will be the first major publication on the subject in English, and will stand as an authoritative resource.

There will be a wide range of essays examining the comics from multiple perspectives. These include three essays from Africa e Mediterraneo: a curatorial statement by Mary Angela Schroth; an essay entitled *New Comics from Africa* by anthropologist Massimo Repetti, which examines the role of African comics within the context of the continent's emerging democracies; and a third essay by Senior Editor, Sandra Federici. The Museum has commissioned a foreword from Okwui Enwezor, Dean of Academic Affairs at San Francisco Art Institute and Adjunct Curator at the International Center of Photography, New York, and additional essays from Calvin Reid and Valerie Cassel Oliver. Reid is senior News editor at *Publishers Weekly* and founder of both the magazine's regular comic column and *PW Comics Week*, an email newsletter on comics and graphic novel publishing. Cassel Oliver was curator of *Splat Boom Pow!*, a major exhibition of comic art at the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, in 2003. Her essay will provide an analysis of African comics as art. The catalogue will also include a complete checklist of work and artist's biographies.

*Africa Comics* is co-curated by Sandra Federici, Thelma Golden, Andrea Marchesini Reggiani, and Mary Angela Schroth.

*Africa Comics* is presented in conjunction with Africa e Mediterraneo, Bologna. The exhibition is made possible by the American Center Foundation.

## **Africa e Mediterraneo**

Africa e Mediterraneo is a non-profit organization dedicated to international cooperation, education, and development. The organization was created in 1997 to promote intercultural exchange of knowledge between Italy and Africa, and was officially constituted in 2002. Among the group's activities are the publication of the quarterly journal *Africa e Mediterraneo*, and organization of many cultural initiatives, including expositions, conferences, special projects, and teacher training. Since its inception, in collaboration with Lai-momo cooperative, Africa e Mediterraneo has organized activities for and promoted African artists in Europe. Its goal is to support and communicate on behalf of African cultures in the belief that cultural understanding leads to development, peace, and justice.

## **Participating Artists**

- **Al'Mata** (Alain Mata Mamengi) & **Sapi Gampez**, Democratic Republic of Congo/Republic of Congo
- **Amanvi** (Bertin Prosper Amanvi), Ivory Coast
- **Anani & Mensah** (Anani Accoh and Mensah Accoh), Togo

- **Asimba Bathy**, Democratic Republic of Congo
- **Conrad Botes**, South Africa
- **Chrisany** (Francis Taptue Fogue), Cameroon
- **D'Dikass** (Didier Kassaï), Central African Republic
- **Didier Mada BD** (Didier Randriamanantena), Madagascar
- **Kola Fayemi**, Nigeria
- **Gado** (Godfrey Mwampembwa), Tanzania
- **Jamón y Queso** (Ramón Esono Ebalé), Equatorial Guinea
- **Joe Dog** (Anton Kannemeyer), South Africa
- **Laércio George** (Laércio George Mabota), Mozambique
- **Pat Masioni** (Patrice Masioni), Democratic Republic of Congo
- **Tounkara Massiré**, Mali
- **Mendoza y Caramba** (Maxime Aka Gnoan Kacou), Ivory Coast
- **Mfumu'Eto** (Mfumu'Eto Nkou-Ntouala), Democratic Republic of Congo
- **Fifi Mukuna & Christophe N'Galle Edimo**, Democratic Republic of Congo/Cameroon
- **Mussie A.** (Mussie Asgedom), Eritrea
- **Anthony Mwangi**, Kenya
- **Jean Claude Ngumire**, Rwanda
- **Pahé** (Essono Patrick), Gabon
- **Cisse Samba Ndar**, Senegal
- **Romão Segunda**, Angola
- **Themba Siwela**, South Africa
- **T. T. Fons** (Alphonse Mendy), Senegal
- **Tayo** (Tayo Fatunla), Nigeria
- **Faustin Titi & Eyoum Nganguè**, Ivory Coast/Cameroon
- **Tuf** (Samuel Mulokwa), Kenya
- **Didier Viode**, Benin
- **Adérito Wetela**, Mozambique
- **Zapiro** (Jonathan Shapiro), South Africa

## EDUCATION & PUBLIC PROGRAMS

In conjunction with the summer 2006 season of exhibitions and projects, 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 into thought-provoking discussions on a wide variety of issues central to the works on view in the exhibition. For more information on public programs, please visit [www.studiomuseum.org](http://www.studiomuseum.org), or call 212-864-4500 (ext. 264).

## 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, Artists-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 its local community and in national and international arenas by making art works and exhibitions concrete and personal for each viewer and providing a context within which to address the contemporary and historical issues presented through art created by artists of African descent.



Photo: Ray A. Llanos

Since opening in a rented loft at Fifth Avenue and 125th Street in 1968, The Studio Museum has earned recognition for its catalytic role in promoting the works of artists of African descent. The Museum's Artists-In-Residence program has supported over 90 graduates who have gone on to establish 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 1,600 works, including drawings, pastels, prints, photographs, mixed media works, and installations. It is comprised of works created by artists during their residency, as well as pieces given to the Museum to create an art historical framework for artists of African descent. Featured in the collection are Terry Adkins, Romare Bearden, Skunder Boghossian, Robert Colescott, Melvin Edwards, Richard Hunt, Hector Hyppolite, Serge Jolimeau, Lois Mailou Jones, Jacob Lawrence, Norman Lewis, Philome Obin, 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.

Operation of the Studio Museum in Harlem is supported with public funds provided by The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and Council member Inez E. Dickens, 9th C.D.; Speaker Christine Quinn; and the New York City Council. Major funding is also provided by The Peter Jay Sharp Foundation and The Carnegie Corporation of New York, with additional support from the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency; The Starr Foundation; The New York Times Company Foundation; David Zwirner; Estate of Irene Wheeler; The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation; JP Morgan Chase; the Scherman Foundation, Inc.; Tishman Speyer; The Norman and Rosita Winston Foundation, Inc.; Estate of Bobby Short; The Joyce A. Wein Memorial Fund; Citigroup Foundation; LEF Foundation; gifts in honor of William P. Lewis, Jr.; American Express Company; The Cowles Charitable Trust; Goldman Sachs; Corine Pettey; Altria Group Inc.; Credit Suisse First Boston; Pfizer, Inc.; Tiffany & Co.; Sandra Grymes; Gordon J. Davis and Peggy Cooper Davis; Federated Department Stores; Oliver Kramm; Pierre and Maria-Gaetana Matisse Foundation; The Moody's Foundation; H. van Ameringen Foundation; and Jide Zeitlin.

#### **ADDRESS**

The Studio Museum in Harlem is located at 144 West 125th Street, between Adam Clayton Powell Jr. 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 id) 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 – 6, and from 10 – 6 on Saturday. The Museum is closed on Monday, Tuesday and major holidays.

Phone: 212 864 4500/ fax: 212 864- 4800/ Web site: [www.studiomuseum.org](http://www.studiomuseum.org).

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