



Exhibition «BAMAKO'05. African photography meetings. Another world»
05/10/2006 - 28/01/2007

Points of View

For the second time around the CCCB is presenting a selection of works originally shown at the Bamako Biennale, whose official name is *Rencontres Africaines de la Photographie*. The exhibition will coincide with a debate led by Cameroonian professor Achille Mbembe on “The world seen from Africa”. With these two initiatives we are reiterating the CCCB’s strategic option to stand as a platform for what we could call emerging cultures. By this we mean cultures that for economic, political or cultural reasons have previously been eclipsed by the powerful western culture industry, which has limited itself to incorporating some of their creators or to siphoning some of their proposals, and that are now starting to enjoy a presence in the world for their own sake, as the homogeneous vision imposed by the West and its powerful propaganda apparatus are broken down.

We live in a post-colonial world in which an irony of history has meant that citizens from the colonies have an increasing presence in the old metropolises to cover the demographic deficits of well-to-do societies which are installed in the present continuous. Within this new cultural and social context, the most elementary principle of intellectual curiosity together with the more primary empathy between fellow citizens mean it is essential to take heed of other views, to try to understand how the world is seen from diverse perspectives different to ours as old Europeans, worn out by history. In all spheres of knowledge and creation the surprises come increasingly from what we used to call the peripheries. And that is true of thought and artistic creation alike. The CCCB aims to be a nodal point in the crossover of views and attitudes from diverse origins.

Europe is finding it very hard to emerge from its ethnocentric enclave. The power of immigration and of global processes of space reduction and time acceleration will, however, mean that the shell will inexorably be cracked. For that reason, it is a priority for the CCCB to incorporate creative views and intellectual considerations impregnated with a much more real cosmopolitanism – the reality of a continent permanently subjected to diaspora, occupation and hybridisation – than the exclusive cosmopolitanism of the European elites. The view of African art still falls under the prism of “arts premières”, the revaluation of a heritage with a halo of magic, the majority of whose works reached Europe through plundering. Deep down there is a latent idea: that these cultures have a past but no modernity. This preconception has to be broken because of its deceitful and discriminatory nature. The politically correct discourse that accompanies it cannot conceal a certain discrimination at its core.

In Africa there is a long tradition of photography. Every two years African photographers have a rendezvous in Bamako. Its Biennale has become one of the continent’s main cultural events. In this 6th edition, the *Rencontres de la Photographie Africaine* have become the *Rencontres Africaines de la Photographie*, in a subtle change of title that indicates a desire to avoid any ethnicist or particularist demarcation. Acting as a showcase for the Bamako Biennale is our contribution towards receiving the culture that is coming out of different African countries. It allows us to get to know the protagonists of photographic history on the African continent, to learn about the contributions and innovations of



Prologues by Josep Ramoneda to the CCCB's catalogues

photographers from different countries, and to see conflicts – such as the civil war in Algeria, for example – which we have followed in the western press, from another viewpoint. And overall it can also help us in getting closer to those of our fellow citizens who hail from the same countries as these artists. A multicultural society is a society open to all cultural manifestations. Broadening the range of landmarks and references in the field of all symbolic is a way of contributing towards creating public space, i.e. places open to everyone, which is what the CCCB aims to be.