



Exhibition «Bamako 07. 7th African Photography Meeting. In the City and beyond»
24/02/2009 - 01/06/2009

Beyond Bamako

For the third time – and with aim of making it a tradition – the CCCB is presenting a selection of the works showed at the Bamako biennial. The «African Photography Meeting» has now reached its seventh event and has become consolidated as a cultural happening of the highest order, one which marks out paths and trends of an international scope.

Photography is one of the most developed spheres of creation in Africa. And yet, despite its geographical proximity, it is still a great unknown among us. By bringing Bamako to Europe, the CCCB's intention is very simple: to regularly publicise one of the finest expressions of the African continent's creative vitality. And to strengthen cultural relations with artists of countries and traditions that, all too often, we observe through distorting lenses that prevent us from seeing their modernising and transforming potential.

This time, furthermore, the theme of the 7th event was “In the city and beyond”. A title that, it goes without saying, is in perfect harmony with the work of the CCCB. The city and creation understood as urban culture in the broadest sense of the term, without strict restrictions of a geographical or administrative nature. The city as the capacity to create relations that favour exchange and communication between cultural, individual or collective subjects. The city as the driving force behind an open culture whose vocation is to not get trapped in the rigidity of the symbolic structures of belonging, but rather, to the contrary, to open up the spaces, question ideas received and broaden the spheres of connection and interaction.

If the organisers of the “7th Meeting” wanted to go beyond the cities, thus breaking down the frontiers that it is creation's vocation to overcome, we want to contribute to the biennial extending its influence far beyond Bamako and the African world. For example, to Barcelona. This is a permanent vocation of the CCCB: introducing creators from all over, not just the three or four capitals of Western culture. In this sense, this exhibition is related directly with many others that we have put on here. I will recall three of them: «Africas. The Artist and the City», which presented twenty-one artists from African cities, including Paris and London, because artists carry an enormous suitcase when they go from one place to another. «Harem Fantasies and New Scheherazades», which gave expression to the new Scheherazades of universal culture. And «West by East», where we inverted the viewpoint, as a way of treating our topics.

Among the artists featured in the exhibition, is Samuel Fosso. He was also featured in «Africas. The Artist and the City». Now he returns, acknowledged as one of the great contemporary artists. Against those who insist on leaving Africa as a battlefield for forgotten wars, against those who, as Achille Mbembe says, haven't wanted to understand that violation begins with words, the CCCB proposes that we allow ourselves to soak in the African creative universe. And perhaps thus we will start to better understand that great unknown and our fellow citizens who hail from those lands.